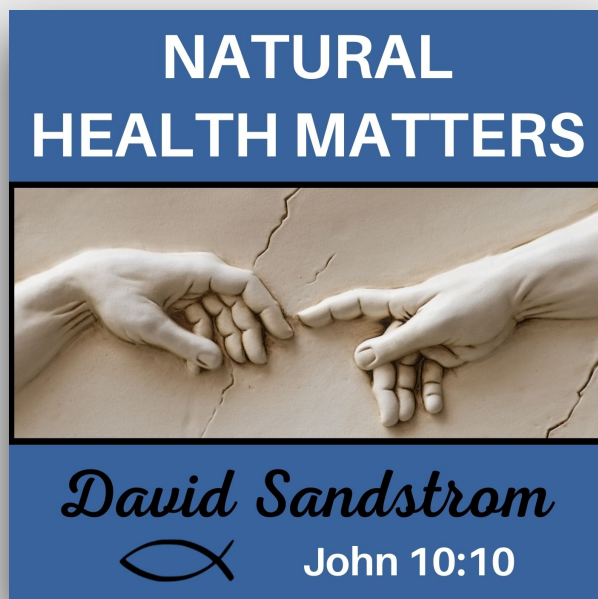


(NHM - 59) Spiritual Health part 6: Knowing Our True Identity



David Sandstrom 0:00

Here's a sample of what you'll hear on this episode of natural health matters. Ken Boa says in his book conformed to his image, quote, a biblical understanding of grace addresses both human depravity and human dignity. It avoids the extreme of worm theology. I'm worthless, I'm no good. I'll never amount to anything. I'm nothing but a rotten sinner, and the opposite extreme of pride and autonomy. End quote, Warren theology is based on lies and must be rejected if we're going to believe that we deserve to be healthy. Welcome to the Natural Health Matters podcast where it's all about maximizing

your health potential, so that you can pursue the abundant life more effectively. I'm your host, David Sandstrom, naturopathic doctor, and biblical health coach. And this is episode number 59.

David Sandstrom 0:54

Last week, we took a break from our series on the spiritual components of health in this week, we're going to jump back in. This is Part Six, in our series on the spiritual components of health. And today we're going to be talking about our sense of identity or self worth. The spiritual component to health is all about relationships, or love relationship with God, our love relationship with one another, and our love relationship with ourselves. That's what we're going to be addressing today. Now, before we get started on this episode, I need to say a couple of things about the last episode in this series, not last week's episode, but the last episode in the series on spiritual health. It's Episode Number 57, two weeks ago, that episode was on spiritual warfare. And I always listened back to every episode that I make. And when I listened back to that one, I realized that I talked a lot about obedience to the Word of God.

David Sandstrom 1:51

Now, I want you to know that I'm not advocating hyper legalism. legalism, is adding layers of rules and do's and don'ts on top of what God has already defined. For instance, let's say someone has a personal conviction, since they're married, that they do not want to have lunch with a member of the opposite sex

alone. Now, that's can't be found in the Bible. But that might be a good personal boundary that someone has established. legalism, would be enforcing that expectation on other people. Just because you have a personal preference, or a boundary that you personally observe, doesn't mean that we can impose that boundary on other people. That's legalism. I'm not advocating legalism. What I am advocating is obedience to the revealed Word of God, and nothing more.

David Sandstrom 2:45

When we do what God says, There's no assurances to our health outcomes. But what we can be assured of is when we're obedient, we do reduce our levels of stress, and therefore lower our total body load. In that way, we increase the chances of a desirable health outcome. When we surrender to the goodness of God, we enjoy a supernatural peace. In my book, the Christian Guide, to Holistic Health, I dedicate a whole section to our minds, or our mental emotional component, what we believe really matters, because what we believe determines what we think, and our thoughts send instructions to our brains, which respond to thoughts in our brains run our bodies.

David Sandstrom 3:30

Now, perhaps the most important belief we can hold is what we believe about God. A W. Tozer said, the most important thing about us is what we believe about God. That belief is paramount because all areas of life flow from a connected relationship to him. Now, you've heard me say this before we maximize our health potential. by aligning our lives more fully with God's natural design for spirit, mind and body. We're gonna have a hard time doing that. If we don't believe in God's goodness, and we've still got ourselves on the throne of our life. We want to be in charge. Jesus said, If you love me, you'll keep my commandments. JOHN 14:15. He also said, Why do you call Me Lord, and do not do as I say, Luke 6:46. It's only by surrendering to God's goodness and making him Lord of our lives. That makes us able to loosen our grip a little bit, and arrange our lives more fully with the will of God. When we do, there is some fringe benefits.

David Sandstrom 4:34

I've found that there are essentially three ways to view God. Some people view God as a passive god that is distant and uninvolved in human affairs. And perhaps he's too busy running the universe to be concerned with our little old lives. Another way to view God is as an angry tyrant, just waiting for us to mess up and standing by with lightning bolts ready to zap us When we mess up, those are both unhealthy views of God. The third and perhaps the best and healthiest way to view God is as a loving Heavenly Father that's concerned about every aspect of our lives down to the most minute detail. When we see God this way, that's when we enter into his piece. It's kind of like, I don't know if

you ever seen the movie Terminator two, when the young John Carter finds out that he has his own personal Terminator, and he finds out this, this Terminator is not out to kill him, but to protect him. John Connor knew that as long as he stuck close to his personal Terminator, this machine that looked like a man that would never abandon its mission, was willing to give everything it had, and if necessary, sacrifice itself for John's protection. After John knew the Terminator was his protector, he experienced a transformation, he became a lot less fearful, and more confident and bold. At the end of the movie, if you've seen it, the Terminator actually did sacrifice himself for John's sake. The same is true with us. In the movie, The Terminator is actually a picture of Jesus Christ. So the same is true with us. We are transformed by sticking close to our Savior, this God that became man, and already demonstrated that he's willing to lay down his life in exchange for ours has our best interest in mind. The issue of God's goodness, was settled on a cross over 2000 years ago. By knowing God and walking with Him, we experienced more fruit of the Spirit. Love, joy, peace, hope, we get more wisdom, we get guidance, we get strength for the day, and it brings more meaning and purpose to our lives. We enjoy more loving relationships, and we gain a supernatural piece. All of that is health promoting. That's what the spiritual component to health is all about.

David Sandstrom 7:06

Now, a secondary belief that's related to what we believe about God is what we believe about ourselves and how we see ourselves in what is our sense of self worth. It's only by understanding what God says about us that we can truly appreciate our intrinsic value as human beings. That's why in my book, the Christians guide to holistic health, I included this subject, our sense of identity and self worth, as a follow up chapter to the chapters on spiritual warfare, because the enemy wants us to forget what our true identity is. As we're brought to see in this episode, he's been pretty effective. Psalm 17 eight says, keep me as the apple of your eye, hide me in the shadow of your wings. Notice, he says, keep me not put me He already knows that he's the apple of God's eye, and he wants to stay there. He wants to stay in right standing with God. So we are all the apple of God's eye. It's an amazing thought. Now, we've talked about the mind body connection and how important it is that we believe that we deserve to be well. One of the things that stands in the way of us believing we deserve wellness is a distorted view of our own self worth. When I'm counseling people about their health, I found that distortions centered around a poor self image are all too common. It seems odd. But my Christian friends tend to struggle with this more than my non Christian friends. Yes, we're all born with a sin nature. We all have a bent towards selfishness. No one has to teach a toddler how to throw a temper tantrum when he doesn't get his way. That is what we Christians like to call the flesh. We all have to contend with our flesh on a daily basis. However, we've also got to acknowledge our intrinsic value as human beings. Romans five

eight says, but God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. We need to appreciate our true worth. I found that most of us tend to be overly critical of ourselves. We all heard the expression, we're our own worst enemy. Well, when it comes to our self image, this is often the case. When we make a mistake or fail to live up to our personal standards, we tend to beat ourselves up over it. Many of us linger far too long, with the guilt associated with our poor or sinful choices. This is a big one for me, I can beat myself up for weeks after discovering that choice I made was less than ideal. This constant self deprecation, creates stress and can become a significant blocking factor to our health and wellness. The way to navigate this landmine is to see ourselves as God's sees us. We must learn to live in the tension between our human depravity and our human dignity. To do it effectively, we've got to see things through spiritual lenses.

David Sandstrom 10:11

When Jesus was asked, What is the greatest commandment? He quoted from Deuteronomy, chapter six. And his reply was to love God, love others, and love ourselves. When I think about the teachings I've heard in this passage over the years, the last part about loving ourselves, often gets overlooked. Pastors tend to shy away from teaching people to love themselves, as if there's something wrong with that. What's wrong with loving ourselves well? I'm not talking about an egotistical, self serving, narcissistic kind of love. That would violate the command to love your neighbor. I'm talking about an accurate view of our human dignity. In fact, I would go as far to say that if we don't first receive love, well, we can't share it effectively. In the next episode, we're going to be covering this topic in more detail about love. But receiving love starts with giving ourselves permission to love ourselves in a balanced way. That permission begins with believing we deserve to be loved. Ken Boa is the author of more than 40 Christian books. And he's a contributing editor to the New American Standard Bible, which is a translation I personally read. He talks about this balance between our depravity in our dignity. Ken Barr says in his book conformed to his image, quote, a biblical understanding of grace addresses both human depravity and human dignity. It avoids the extreme of worm theology, I'm worthless, I'm no good. I'll never amount to anything. I'm nothing but a rotten sinner. And the opposite extreme of pride and autonomy, end quote, we're in theology is based on lies and must be rejected if we're going to believe that we deserve to be healthy. The idea that we have no worth is a twisted lie in is designed to weaken us.

David Sandstrom 12:12

Satan uses deceit and misunderstandings to accomplish his schemes. Referring to Satan, Jesus says, He does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he's a liar,

and the father of lies. John 8: 44. One of the biggest lies going is that there's nothing good in us. We're nothing more than worthless pond scum. And we're sure not deserving of good things. One of the misunderstandings that leads people to question their own self worth is their definition of the word grace. Most Christians believe Grace is simply God's unmerited favor or getting what we don't deserve. Yes, we're saved by grace through faith, and we don't deserve God's forgiveness. No one ever deserves forgiveness. Forgiveness always goes to the undeserving. We'll have more on forgiveness in future episodes in the series. But for now, understand this, believing God's grace begins and ends with unmerited or undeserved favor, dismisses the intrinsic value of a human being. That idea suggests that there's nothing good in us whatsoever. No, we don't deserve forgiveness or salvation. But that doesn't mean that there's no goodness or worth in us at all. The fact is, all human beings have great value because we're made in the image of God. Genesis 1:26.

David Sandstrom 13:44

The Greek word for grace is cherish. The Strong's Concordance defines grace or cherish, as of the merciful kindness by which God, exerting His holy influence upon souls, turns them to Christ, keeps, strengthens, increases them in Christian faith, knowledge, affection, and kindles them to the exercise of the Christian virtues. biblical Grace is God's divine influence on the human heart. God's influence on our hearts is much more than just getting what we don't deserve. Often, the Bible serves as its own dictionary. Here's the best biblical definition for grace. For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for his good pleasure. Philippians 2:13. God desires that we become more whole, His good pleasure is being a part of our personal growth and sanctification. He wants us to become the men and women he had in mind when He created us. Therefore, God is continually at work and pressing spiritual truths on our hearts. That that's what grace is all about. Grace is God's divine in What's on our hearts? We shouldn't let an incomplete definition of grace lead us to believe there's nothing good or worthy in us whatsoever. This is going to distort our dignity and our self image and can end up becoming a troublesome source of stress and a blocking factor to our health.

David Sandstrom 15:17

We can see God's divine influence in the life of Paul, referring to his own thorn in the flesh. We see Paul saying this, because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh. Second Corinthians two seven. Now, I believe it's not possible to say with certainty what Paul's bone in the flesh was. But I'd like to offer one possible explanation with the more accurate expanded definition of grace as God's divine influence on the human heart. I believe Paul's thorn in the flesh could have been temptation, referring to his thorn in the flesh. Paul says

this. Concerning this, I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me and he has said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, or power is perfected in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast in my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Second Corinthians 12, eight, nine. If you would allow me to paraphrase this passage, using the Strong's definition of grace. Paul, Lord, I really would rather not have to deal with this temptation on daily basis. My life is tough enough. God, this is not too much for you, Paul, you can do this. I'll help you through it. My Divine influence on your heart is sufficient. Now man up, and I'll give you a way of escape. Paul, you're right, God. Thanks for reminding me that you're always working in and through me. Interpreting this exchange between Paul and God makes perfect sense, when we understand grace this way, as God's divine influence on our hearts his empowering inputs.

David Sandstrom 17:17

Now, someone may be saying, but doesn't the Bible actually teach that there is no good in us? What about Romans seven and Jeremiah 17? In Romans seven, Paul is talking about his personal struggle with sin. He says, quote, nothing good dwells in me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me that is in my flesh, where the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not Romans 7:18. in context, Paul is not saying that there's nothing good in him at all. He says, there's nothing good quote, in my flesh, but his flesh is not the real him. as followers of Jesus Christ, we have a new identity. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature, the old things passed away, behold, new things have come. Second Corinthians 5:17.

David Sandstrom 18:12

In the last episode, in this series, we discussed spiritual warfare. This warfare takes place in our minds, there is no neutral in this battle. We either serve God by pursuing righteousness, or serve Satan, by continuing and dead works, Hebrews 9:14. God desires to train us to think, feel, speak and act according to His loving nature. He wants to see us transformed out of the pattern of this world Romans 12, two and conformed to the image of His Son, Jesus, Romans 8:29. He lovingly leads and teaches us by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit speaking to our hearts. Satan and his demons are also training us to think feel, speak and act according to their evil nature. They offer us suggestions. When we come into agreement with their ideas, we take ownership of them, and they become our sins. If you haven't listened Episode 57, I suggest you go back and listen to that episode now. Because there is a battle going on. And ignoring the battle doesn't make it go away. We're the ones responsible for our actions. We can't pull up Flip Wilson, and say, the devil made me do it. We have a choice to me. When we choose to follow after God, we turn from darkness, to light from the dominion of Satan to the authority of God. This is what Paul is teaching us in

Romans seven. We are not our sin. We're new creatures, and our salvation secure. However, when we allow our flesh to rise up and get the best of us, we're serving the wrong kingdom.

David Sandstrom 19:50

Galatians 5:16 says, but I say walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. First John three eight. As the one who practices sin is of the devil. The devil has sinned from the beginning, the Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. Victory is ours for the taking, we need to reject the falsehoods and choose righteousness. Now, I have a definition for the flesh, I would define it this way. The flesh, our flesh, is Satan's influence on our thinking since birth, possibly even before we're born. Often, we've been dealing with this deception for a long time. As a result, this way of thinking becomes natural. It feels like us, but it's not acting on our flesh is not part of our redemptive design. This is not us. It's sin dwelling in us, as Paul said, In Romans chapter seven, not once, but twice, Paul separates himself from his sinful behavior. So now, no longer Am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me, verse 17. But if I'm doing the very thing I do not want, I no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me, verse 20. I've learned over the years that when the Bible repeats itself within the same passage, it's because there's a crucial point that shouldn't be missed. It's kind of like a teacher stomping sport during the review for a final exam. When that happened at school, I made sure I took detailed notes. In the same fashion, we should take note of the fact that the Apostle Paul does some foot stopping on the concept of separation from his sin. Paul knows who he is. His pure heart's desire is to follow after God, His flesh or sinful nature is in opposition to that. Paul knows his flesh is not his true identity anymore. In our sinful nature, is not our identity either.

David Sandstrom 22:00

The Bible clearly teaches that all followers of Christ are saints. Paul often starts as epistles or his letters to the churches with the phrase to the saints in Rome, to the saints in Corinth, to the saints in Ephesus. To get a clear picture of our own self worth, we must apply this principle of separation from sin. Sin is not our identifying characteristic anymore, were children of the Most High God, But as many as received Him, to them, he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name, John 112, were heirs to the kingdom. And if children, heirs also, heirs of God, and fellow heirs with Christ, Romans 8:17, your father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom, Luke 12:32. Each of us is the apple of God's eye, for he who touches you, touches the apple of his eye." Zechariah, two, eight. This changes everything. We are not our sin. we're much more than just sinners saved by grace. You know, when I first read those verses, it seemed too fantastic. It's like the news is too good to be true. But when you let that sink in, it changes everything. We are not our sin. we're much

more than just sinners saved by grace. This worm theology is a lie from the pit of hell, and it must be rejected. We have great value and it's time we started believing it. Without this understanding, it'll be difficult to accept that we're deserving of health. Remember, what we believe can powerfully affect our physical health and well being. We've talked about this in previous episodes. The enemy has come to steal, kill and destroy. God's people are destroyed for lack of knowledge Hosea four six, and the wages of sin is still death. Choosing to serve the wrong kingdom. By buying into distortions and twisted lies, is bad for our health. We need to stop believing the myth that we have no worth understanding who we are, is about accepting what God says about us and acting accordingly.

David Sandstrom 24:32

The first that most often comes up when people are dismissing our intrinsic value and engaging in warm theology is this one. The heart is more deceitful than all else, and is desperately sick. Who can understand it? Jeremiah 17 nine. The King James Version translates the words desperately sick, as desperately wicked. Let me ask you a question. If our hearts are desperate, Wicked, even after salvation, then how is it that they're fit dwelling places for God's Spirit? Second Corinthians 1:22. Our hearts may be sick, or wicked before salvation, but afterward, God gives us new hearts. E`zeke zekiel 11:19 says that I will take the hardest stone out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh. Ezekiel 36:26 says this, Moreover, I will give you a new heart, and put a new spirit within you. And I will remove from you the heart of stone, and give you a heart of flesh. Our hearts are far more than just emotions. The biblical heart is the center of our being. Our hearts, our body, mind, and spirit, all rolled into one. After salvation, not only do we have new hearts, but at the core of our being we've been transformed and made new. You know, the Bible actually teaches that it is possible to have a good heart. Most people don't realize that. In the parable of the sower in the seed, Jesus said, quote, but the seed in the good soil. These are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance. Luke 8:15 sin is not your identifying characteristic anymore, and your heart is good. Let that sink in for a moment. Your heart is good.

David Sandstrom 26:40

As an airline pilot, I like to say we have an office with a view. And one of the most magnificent views we ever get to see is when we're flying on a dark night, we might be over the ocean or flying with an undercast layer of clouds, it's blocking out the city lights. And you look up, we dim down the cockpit light sometimes and look up. And we get to see the stars like few people have seen. And it is absolutely breathtaking. Understand this. at 18,000 feet, half of the atmosphere is below you. were flying it 39, 40 sometimes 42,000 feet, there's

very little air above us. So the visibility is absolutely amazing. We're above most of the weather at that altitude as well. Well, one night, I was flying with a guy who was into astronomy. And we were looking up we dimmed down the cockpit lights. And we looked up at the stars. And it was breathtaking. And I asked this guy who's into astronomy, I said, What's that? cloud? I know we're above most of the weather that looks like a cloud way above us. What is that? He said, Dave, that's not a cloud. That's billions and billions of stars. And I was floored that I mean, it was magnificent and breathtaking enough what I was looking at. But then when I understood that the milky way that that milky appearance that you see in the sky is actually billions of stars. That really changed my position that changed my outlook, and it made it far more worshipful. In the same way, I'd like you to do that with this idea of your heart is good. If you let that sink in. It changes everything.

David Sandstrom 28:21

Now let me be clear, our worthiness has nothing to do with our salvation. We cannot earn salvation. It's a work of God, and it's a free gift. We're saved by grace through faith and nothing else. God uses his divine influence on our hearts - grace to lovingly and gently revealed truth that helps us acknowledge Him as Lord of our lives. From there, he uses grace to help us become more whole or complete. Not only that, I want to be clear about something else. I'm not saying that because of our intrinsic value. God has to solve our health problems. God is sovereign and in control. He's a loving father, and he does discipline us. God disciplines us for our good in order that we may share in His Holiness. In addition, God does work everything in life, including our trials are our benefit. Romans 8:28 says, and we know that God causes all things to work together for good for those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. God's more interested in our personal growth and sanctification than our comfort. He sometimes permits trials in our lives, any uses them to help us grow and mature. It can be entirely possible that a health challenge is exactly what the great physician uses to grab our attention. Through this process, though, we've got to hold on to the idea that we have great value, and we are deserving of health in body, mind, and spirit.

David Sandstrom 29:56

So let's summarize. Most of us are weighed too critical toward ourselves. Our self-worth is not based on how we feel. It's based on what God says about us. We must believe that we deserve to be healthy, lingering guilt and feeling unworthy can become a serious blocking factor to our health. To maximize our health potential, we need to love ourselves in a balanced way. as followers of Jesus Christ, sin is not our identifying characteristic anymore. Finally, all faithful followers of Jesus Christ have good hearts. I think that's a great place to end up. Just try to dwell on that for a little while. Your heart is good. You are good at the

core. If you let that belief sink in, it'll change everything. For more, go to [DavidSandstrom.com](https://david.sandstrom.com). in the show notes for each episode, you'll find links to all the resources that were mentioned, as well as a full transcript with timestamps that you can download for free. In addition, I always include a content upgrade with each show, which is a free download that is designed to help you go deeper with that subject. Once again, thank you for listening, and I'll talk with you next week. Be blessed

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