

EM Vision & Values 2

1. Upward: Love God supremely
2. Inward: Love ourselves rightly
3. Outward: Love and serve others unconditionally

FCBCEM V & V statement: FCBC English Ministry is a multi-ethnic, multi-generational, mission-shaped ministry that exists to lead people to love God supremely (Upward), love ourselves rightly (Inward), and love and serve others unconditionally (Outward).

Scriptures: Mark 12:28-34; Luke 9:46-48; Romans 8:1, 12-17; 12:3-8

Inward: Love ourselves rightly

This is probably the confusing value of the three. Is this just modern psychology? Am I mixing modern psychology with theology? It is based on "Love your neighbor as you love yourself."

Read Mark 12:28-34.

Love neighbor AS YOU LOVE YOURSELF. This may be written "AS YOU LOVE YOURSELF, so love your neighbor." The question here is not "Who is my neighbor?" (That's the Parable of the Good Samaritan.) The question is "HOW am I supposed to love my neighbor?" The answer is "As you love yourself." So, do you know how to love yourself rightly?

The phrase "love your neighbor as yourself" first appears in Leviticus 19. It gives several examples of what it means to love your neighbor as yourself. Be kind to the poor and foreigner. Don't steal, lie to or about, or cheat your neighbor. Why? Because you don't want anyone to do those things to you. Just don't do anything bad to your neighbor.

Jesus stated it positively. It's the Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12): "**So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.**" Love is more than *passively* not doing bad. Love is *actively* doing good. Actively doing good proceeds from loving ourselves rightly.

It is natural for us to love and care for ourselves. When we get married we make a commitment to love and care for someone else as we do ourselves. I watched a movie on Pure Flix (*Born to Win*) about a man in South Africa

who didn't love himself rightly and it lead to severe problems in his marriage. He couldn't love himself rightly until he received Christ and healing of the past rejection and pain.

Loving ourselves rightly is not selfishness; it is selflessness.

NOT loving God supremely (upward) combined with NOT loving ourselves rightly (inward) leads to many mental, psychological, and social pathologies... which we are seeing more and more of in our culture. Pathologies from narcissism to gender confusion to loneliness. *Narcissistic symptoms include an excessive need for admiration, disregard for others' feelings (lack of empathy), an inability to handle any criticism, and a sense of entitlement.* "Inward" doesn't mean narcissism. Loving yourself is not a license to be selfish. If loving yourself becomes selfish, then it isn't right.

It is natural for us to take care of ourselves. Take care of others as you take care of yourself. But some people are broken and have very low sense of self-worth which produces selfishness. They cannot take care of others because they cannot take care of themselves.

Not thinking of yourself rightly leads to this - **Mark 9:32-35:** ³³ And they came to Capernaum. And when he was in the house he asked them, "What were you discussing on the way?" ³⁴ But they kept silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest. ³⁵ And he sat down and called the twelve. And he said to them, "If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all."

The disciples argued about this more than once! If you love yourself rightly then you will never argue about who is the greatest.

Loving ourselves rightly means knowing our value.

This is expressed in the song *Who You Say I Am*. (Read the lyrics.)

This means a right understanding of your worth/value in the eyes of the heavenly Father who created you in His image, and the Son who died for your sins, and the HS who lives in you. When you know the Father created you to be his child and He enjoys a relationship with you (and you with Him), then you are loving yourself rightly. Then you can love outwardly.

Who is so valuable to you that you would sacrifice your life to save that person? You are so valuable to God the Father that he sent his Son to die for you so he could have a relationship with you. You are so valuable to Christ that he suffered horrible torture and crucifixion to know and love you. You are so valuable to the HS that he desires to live inside you and make you a holy temple.

In the Parable of the Prodigal Son the value/worth of the son to the father never changed. The rebellious son was just as valuable to the father feeding pigs as his good-boy brother at home. The prodigal son had to repent of his sins and be reconciled to his father, but his value to the father never changed.

You are the Christ's Dulcinea. (Watch Don Quixote in *Man from La Mancha* call Aldonza "My Lady.") At his deathbed she finally says, "I am your Dulcinea." When we look at Christ dying on the cross we can say to God the Father, "I am your son. I am your daughter."

I watched another Pure Flix movie *Fat Chance*, based on a true story. It has the theme of loving yourself rightly.

(People will fail to love you. Even the dad and mom who gave birth to you cannot love you perfectly. You don't need to be a victim of that. You can survive that unmet expectation. Live in the love of God.)

Loving ourselves rightly is thinking with sober judgment.

Romans 12:3-8: ³ *For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to **think with sober judgment**, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. ⁴ For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. ⁶ Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; ⁷ if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; ⁸ the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.*

- “Think with sober judgment” is one word in GR. It means to think clearly, be sensible or reasonable, use common sense, and use mental self-control. Have you ever appealed to someone, “Be reasonable!?”
- Thinking with sober judgment also means not thinking too highly or too lowly of yourself. It’s proper balance. It’s knowing what you can and cannot do. We all have natural talents.
- The context of this verse is finding your place in the body of Christ. It means knowing your measure of faith, your spiritual gift, assigned by the head of the body, Jesus Christ.

Loving ourselves rightly means forgiving ourselves. After I was scammed and lost money the hardest part was forgiving myself. “How could I be so stupid?” After we sin again, the same sin, we may engage in self-condemnation. We may think God doesn’t love us as much as before we sinned. Self-condemnation does not promote loving yourself rightly.

Romans 8:1: *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*

8:31-37: ³¹ *What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? ³³ Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?... ³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.*

The HS doesn’t do self-condemnation. That comes from our flesh or the Accuser, Satan. The HS does conviction that leads to repentance and redemption. Self-condemnation feels like anger and hate. The HS’s conviction doesn’t sound like an impatient angry parent! The HS’s conviction feels like an embracing love.

Your Christian life doesn’t need to be “sin, repent, repeat.” There is victory over sin in the power of the Holy Spirit. Read Romans 8:12-17: ¹² *So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. ¹³ For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴ For all who are led by*

the Spirit of God are children of God. ¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” ¹⁶ The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

Conclusion: Loving ourselves rightly proceeds from Loving God Supremely and precedes Love and Serve Others Unconditionally. It's in the middle. It's the necessary value in between loving God and others.