

MORNING DEVOTIONS

How Can I Accept Myself?

You may have heard the story of a lady named Fanny Crosby, an American born in 1820. At age six weeks she had an eye inflammation which required some medical action. A local doctor applied the wrong medication to her eyes which blinded her for life.

It was a terrible mistake. Her vision was destroyed. But it was the beginning of an amazing life of service to other people through her writings and poetry. This little girl could have been bitter and resentful about what happened. She could have hated the one who had made such a tragic mistake. She could have even blamed God for letting it happen. But she did none of these things.

She had a grandmother who held her in her arms and taught her to know and love God. As a small child, she opened her heart to Him. As Fanny Crosby learned more of God and of His love for her, she gave herself to Him completely. She did something else. She made up her mind to be contented. Though she did not understand why God had allowed her to become blind, she was confident of His love for her.

When she grew up Fannie Crosby began writing hymns of praise and thanksgiving to God. She wrote over 6,000 hymns! Christians around the world have sung her songs – songs such as, "To God Be the Glory", "All the Way My Savior Leads Me", and "Blessed Assurance".

Though she was blind and spent her life in darkness, Fannie Crosby was one of the happiest Christians who ever lived. What was the secret of her happiness? She trusted in the love and wisdom of God. She did not understand why God had allowed her to become blind, but she trusted in His love and wisdom. She accepted herself and her circumstances, and God made her a blessing to the whole world. But what impresses me most is that she accepted herself, despite the blindness.

This story tells me a lot depends on my attitude. Do I accept myself for who I am, or am I often wishing I were different, or better looking, or living in regret of "what might have been". This attitude toward myself has a name. It's called "Self-image". Our self-image is the way we see ourselves.

We live in an age that seems to be preoccupied with self-image. We talk about the "selfie" today mainly using our cameras. But it's much more than that. Problems arise when we have a faulty self-image – and say to ourselves, "I am unlovable and worthless; "I've been a failure all my life"; "What hope is there for me? If people really knew what I was like, they wouldn't like me". How often do we cut ourselves off from others because we cannot accept ourselves? It was Mark Twain who said, "The worst loneliness is to not be comfortable with yourself."

This is where the Christian faith can be a great help. The Bible says you are a valuable person. Psalm 139:14 (The Voice): "I am your unique creation, filled with wonder and awe"; Verse 15: "You see all things, nothing about me was hidden from You"; Verse 16: "Every detail of my life was already written in Your book".

You are supremely valuable because you were created in God's image. And you are loved and forgiven. God says in Jeremiah 31:3 (The Voice): "I have loved you with an everlasting love". And because of that you are unique. You can cheerfully accept yourself because of this. God looks at our heart, our motives. Let's stop comparing ourselves to others.

Many times, our lack of self-confidence comes from hating how we look. We believe we aren't pretty enough, thin enough, or have the right clothes. The truth is what we see on the outside really isn't important. The apostle Paul said, "So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal" (2 Corinthians 4:18).

We should be focusing on God's love, and how He accepts us unconditionally. Through His teachings, mercy and love we will also learn how to love ourselves. Only the Good News of Christ offers true hope.

I think many of us go about life with a kind of bravado – bold confidence and self-assurance. The truth, however, is that most of us wish we were different somehow. If only you were as outgoing as Jack; if you were as physically fit as Mary; if you had the financial sense of Tom; a full head of hair like John; or the quick wit of Connie. While it's okay to admire good traits in others, often this desire to be like someone else is actually a form of covetousness, or envy. So, how about learning to accept yourself as God has made you.