

Discovering Your Value



Listen to Your Father, not the Fans

by Jennifer Brady

The score is tied. The bases are loaded. There are two outs in the bottom of the ninth inning. Joey walks up to the plate with his heart racing and his palms sweating. As he looks into the stands filled with anxious Little League parents, the first face he sees is that of his father. With a huge grin on his face, Joey's dad encourages "Come on son, you can do it." As he steps into the batter's box, the pitcher releases a low fast ball (as fast as they come in Little League). "Strike one," the umpire yells. The next pitch comes with similar speed. Joey swings and misses. Strike two. As Joey's heart begins to race, the pitcher winds up for one final throw. In a matter of seconds, the ball whizzes past home plate into the catcher's glove for strike three. With his head hung low, Joey strolls into the dugout overcome with a sense of worthlessness.

Does this story sound familiar? Okay, you may not be a seven year old boy in the ninth inning of a Little League game, but can you relate to his feelings of frustration and self-doubt? Maybe you are an executive putting in hundreds of hours to be on top? Maybe you are a parent who has a need to produce perfect children? Maybe you are a teenager who is doing all you can to be noticed by a certain someone at school?

Why is it that we strive to be perfect in an imperfect world? I believe that at the root of many of our actions and attitudes is an attempt to create a sense of self-worth. You see, we all have been created with a yearning for significance and belonging. We want to feel valuable and loved. However, we typically look in the wrong places to fulfill our need. For many of us, the foundation of our self-

worth and significance is resting in the external world. Just like Joey, we believe that our importance and value is based on our circumstances, opinions and reactions from others, and our performance. We put up a good, hard fight to keep a tight control on our circumstances so that our self-esteem will be somewhat stable. However, as most of us have discovered, this is an impossible task. Anytime our search for belonging or purpose finds its answers in the external world, it will eventually fail us.

The good news is that there is a way to discover genuine acceptance, belonging, and worth that will remain stable in the midst of our changing world. As we look into God's Word, we find some incredible truths about our value, our worth, and our purpose.

- Did you know that "he knit us together in our mother's womb?" (Psalm 139:13).

- How about that he knows everything about us...in fact he knows what we say and think even before we do? (Psalm 139:1-4).

- Can you believe that He loves us...not because of anything we have done or not done but because He wants to? (Romans 5:8, 8:35-39; Ephesians 2:8-9; I John 4:9-10).

- As Christians, we are fully accepted by Him based on the blood of Christ and not on our own deeds. (Romans 3:21-24; Galatians 2:21).

- He longs to fill us with His spirit of peace rather than condemnation. (Romans 8).

When we base our self-worth on the truths from

His Word, the results are incredible. We are able to relate to others without fearing rejection or embarrassment. We can release ourselves from the need to be perfect. We can love and serve God out of pleasure and desire rather than a sense of obligation and fear.

Let's finish the story of Joey. As soon as he reached the bench and the tears began to fall, he felt two firm hands touch his shoulders. He slowly turned around to see a warm and understanding smile on the face of his father. As his father's strong arms embraced his scrawny frame, Joey's hurt and fear disappeared. His dad's gesture spoke volumes to Joey's heart. In essence, he said "You are valuable to me, and I love you no matter what anyone else says, no matter how well you perform, and no matter how much you like or dislike yourself."

Today, God is saying that to you! Let him pick you up off the bench and hold you in his arms. Let him speak His truth to you. But more importantly...Listen to Him! If you do, you will leave the field a different player than when you came.

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