

J U S T A M I N U T E

meditations to
grow in

self-
esteem



Marie Paul Curley, FSP

Meditations to Grow in

Self-Esteem

J U S T A M I N U T E

Meditations to Grow in
Self-Esteem

By Marie Paul Curley, FSP



Pauline
BOOKS & MEDIA
Boston

The logo features a stylized globe icon with a large letter 'P' superimposed on it. The word 'Pauline' is written in a serif font, with the 'P' being significantly larger and overlapping the globe. Below this, the words 'BOOKS & MEDIA' are in a smaller, all-caps sans-serif font, and 'Boston' is in an even smaller sans-serif font at the bottom.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2018021774

CIP data is available.

ISBN 10: 0-8198-4986-3

ISBN 13: 978-0-8198-4986-1

The Scripture quotations contained herein are from the *New Revised Standard Version Bible: Catholic Edition*, copyright © 1989, 1993, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Cover design by Rosana Usselmann

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

“P” and PAULINE are registered trademarks of the Daughters of St. Paul.

Copyright © 2018, Daughters of St. Paul

Published by Pauline Books & Media, 50 Saint Pauls Avenue,
Boston, MA 02130-3491

Printed in the U.S.A.

www.pauline.org

Pauline Books & Media is the publishing house of the Daughters of St. Paul, an international congregation of women religious serving the Church with the communications media.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

22 21 20 19 18

Introduction

When I was ten or eleven years old, I knew that I lacked self-confidence. At the time, I had no idea what self-esteem was, but I felt imprisoned by feelings of self-doubt and fear. Thankfully, every Sunday when my family attended Mass, two of my parish priests preached repeatedly about God's love. Their words challenged how I thought about myself and about God.

During my difficult, early-teen years, one thought resisted my self-doubt and looming hopelessness—the possibility that God loved me, or that at least God might eventually love me. My hope in this possibility eventually gave me the courage to follow my vocation in the religious life, despite serious doubts about my self-worth. Gradually, I started to believe what my faith, the word of God, trusted mentors, and my experiences in prayer told me—God truly loves me!

And God loves *you* too!

You may wonder if self-esteem is something that a person of faith should care about. You may

have heard that followers of Christ don't need self-esteem because they are supposed to be selfless. But growing in a healthy self-esteem is not about being selfish. A healthy self-esteem allows us to embrace God's will for our lives and to live life with more joy.

Perhaps you have been haunted by a lack of self-esteem that has, even at times, completely debilitated you at important moments in life's journey. Lacking a healthy view of self can easily lead to self-hate, self-loathing, and even self-destructive behavior. It can be hard—sometimes impossible—to love others selflessly when we don't love ourselves and know our own worth.

Do you know your own worth?

I know how it feels not to know my own worth. But over time, God's love has become the bedrock of my self-esteem, my life, and my joy. God's love for me enables me to love others more deeply. The happiness, strength, and peace that comes from knowing God's love can transform your life too. These treasures can grow in you.

The Bible tells us in countless ways that God loves us. Praying with and meditating on the word of God has become my daily path for living in the

light of God's love. I am excited to share this little collection of Scripture passages followed by reflections based on my experience in growing in self-esteem. I hope and pray that they will help you come to know just how much God loves and cherishes you!

God Chose to Create You

O LORD, you have searched me and known me.
You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
 you discern my thoughts from far away.
You search out my path and my lying down,
 and are acquainted with all my ways.
Even before a word is on my tongue,
 O LORD, you know it completely. . . .
For it was you who formed my inward parts;
 you knit me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully
 made.
 Wonderful are your works;
that I know very well.
 My frame was not hidden from you,
when I was being made in secret,
 intricately woven in the depths of the earth.
Your eyes beheld my unformed substance.
In your book were written
 all the days that were formed for me,
 when none of them as yet existed.

Ps 139:1–4, 13–16



There is one truth that cannot be twisted no matter how much wounded human nature might try—God chose to create you. God *wants* to share his life with you. God wants you in the world.

You may feel convinced deep down that you are no good, or that there is something fundamentally wrong with you. But God your Creator, who is all-wise and all-good, created you as you are, with your particular personality and potential. God lovingly created you and sustains you. This reality is bed-rock upon which you can build a new foundation for a positive sense of self-worth.

O God, you made everything (including me!) and indeed, it was very good (see Gen 1:31). Thank you for giving me life. I trust your love that holds me in being at every moment.

God Will Never Forget You

Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth;
break forth, O mountains, into singing!
For the LORD has comforted his people,
and will have compassion on his suffering
ones.

But Zion said, "The LORD has forsaken me,
my Lord has forgotten me."

Can a woman forget her nursing child,
or show no compassion for the child of her
womb?

Even these may forget,
yet I will not forget you.

See, I have inscribed you on the palms of my
hands;

your walls are continually before me.

Your builders outdo your destroyers,
and those who laid you waste go away from you.

ISA 49:13–17



God's love is the model for all human love, not
the other way around. Love between humans is just

a faint likeness of God's astonishingly faithful and completely unconditional love. Nevertheless, we often base our ideas of God's love on the love we received (or did not receive) from our parents, family, or friends.

Perhaps at times you have doubted God's love because of the way someone has treated you. But in the moments when you doubt God's love, remember—God will never forget his love for you. When you feel the pain of rejection or abuse, or the limitations of another person's love, you can remind yourself that God does not reject you. God understands you and is tenderly faithful. God will always be at your side. Jesus' entire life, but especially his passion, death, and resurrection, is constant proof that God is faithful and will *never* abandon you.

Lord, your love for me is trustworthy and reliable. When the pain of rejection and abandonment wells up in me, help me to trust in your promise: "I will never forget you."

God Never Makes Mistakes

Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and do not forget all his benefits—
who forgives all your iniquity,
who heals all your diseases,
who redeems your life from the Pit,
who crowns you with steadfast love
and mercy,
who satisfies you with good as long as you live
so that your youth is renewed like the
eagle's. . . .

The LORD is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast
love.

He will not always accuse,
nor will he keep his anger forever.
He does not deal with us according to our sins,
nor repay us according to our iniquities.
For as the heavens are high above the earth,
so great is his steadfast love toward those
who fear him;
as far as the east is from the west,
so far he removes our transgressions
from us.

Ps 103:2–5, 8–12



Do you see your mistakes and sometimes count them as evidence that you are worthless and no good? At times like this, you can remember that God does not see your mistakes as an insurmountable problem. God's mercy is much bigger than any mistake. God is not, as some may imagine, like a judge in an Olympic competition. God does not give marks for your performance, scrutinize mistakes, and replay them from every angle.

God—the only one who doesn't make mistakes—is your Creator. You could never, ever *be* a mistake. You may *make* mistakes but God is bigger than your mistakes. Your mistakes can become reminders that God loves you no matter what. Mistakes are opportunities to learn and to lean on God. At the deepest core of your being, God loves you unconditionally. God is always gazing lovingly into your heart.

O Lord, thank you for loving me with all my flaws and fragility. I believe in your love for me. I trust that no matter what, your grace can renew my life.