

**# 104 10/22/01 We must teach self-acceptance**

I have been writing about teaching our children to reach out to those who seem friendless. What if your child is the one who needs others to reach out to him? He may have poor social skills or may have a characteristic or handicap that makes him different. As parents, we can help our children be more accepted by others.

There are four tasks to accomplish. We must help our child accept himself, teach him social skills and teach him to reach outside himself to others. Finally, we must teach him how to respond to rejection. Today, I want to address the first task: self-acceptance.

Self-acceptance is a key issue in a person's Christian walk. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." John 3:16. Teach your child that God sees him as very valuable or He would not have sent His Son to the cross. God would not make that kind of sacrifice for someone without worth.

In reply to a Pharisee's question, Jesus said that the second commandment is "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Matthew 22:39. Not only is this a command to love your neighbor, but it is also an instrument by which to measure that love. We must teach our child that only by loving himself will he be free to love others.

Finally, teach your child the verse: "I praise you because I am wonderfully and fearfully made...All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be." Psalm 139: 14a, 16b. God created each of us unique and wonderful with a plan for our lives. Our role as parents is to help our child know and accept his gifts as well as his limitations. Help him to find God's plan for his life using those gifts.

As your child comes to understand the significance of the sacrifice that God made for him through Jesus, his opinion of his own worth will be elevated. He will also begin to understand why he must love himself in order to love others. Finally, knowing that God had a plan for his life even before he

developed in his mother's womb will give him the reason to accept himself just exactly as God intended him to be.