**VICTORIOUS LIFE LEADERSHIP BREAKFAST- PASTOR WILLIAM A.LEE, JR.**

**LESSON: “THE LAW OF THE MIRROR” (John Maxwell)**

**“You Must See Value in Yourself to Add Value to Yourself”**

**“Personal development is the belief that you are worth the effort, time, and energy needed to develop yourself.” (DENIS WAITLEY)**

What keeps people from being successful? All people have the seeds of success within them. All they need to do is cultivate those seeds, water them, feed them, and they will begin to grow.

If a person does not realize that they have genuine value and are worth investing in, then they will never put in the time and effort needed to grow to their potential. If you’re not sure you agree with that, then consider the following.

**“Self-Esteem Is the Single Most Significant Key to a Person’s Behavior.”**

Zig Ziglar says, **“It’s impossible to consistently behave in a manner inconsistent with how we see ourselves. We can do very few things in a positive way if we feel negative about ourselves.”** Zig has a very practical, commonsense wisdom that he has shared with people for years. But experts in the field agree with his assessment. Nathaniel Branden, a psychiatrist and expert on the subject of self-esteem, says, **“No factor is more important in people’s psychological development and motivation than the value judgments they make about themselves. Every aspect of their lives is impacted by the way they see themselves.” If you believe you are worthless, then you won’t add value to yourself.”**

**Low Self-Esteem Puts a Ceiling on Our Potential**

Imagine that you want to do something great in your life that impacts a lot of people. Perhaps you want to build a large organization. That desire, no matter how great, will be limited by your leadership. It is a lid on your potential. Well, your self-esteem has the same kind of impact. If your desire is a 10 but your self-esteem is a 5, you’ll never perform at the level of a 10. You’ll perform as a 5 or lower. **People are never able to outperform their self-image.** As Nathanial Branden says, **“If you feel inadequate to face challenges, unworthy of love or respect, un-entitled to happiness, and fear assertive thoughts, wants, or needs—if you lack basic self-trust, self-respect, and self-confidence—your self-esteem deficiency will limit you, no matter what other assets you possess.**

**The Value We Place on Ourselves Is Usually the Value Others Place on Us**

**Story**: A man went to a fortune-teller to hear what she had to say about his future. She looked into a crystal ball and said, “You will be poor and unhappy until you are forty-five years old.”

Then what will happen?” asked the man hopefully. She answered, “Then you’ll get used to it.”

It is sad to say that that’s the way most people live their lives—according to what others believe about them. If the important people in their lives expect them to go nowhere, then that’s what they expect for themselves. That’s fine if you’re surrounded by people who believe in you. But what if you’re not? You shouldn’t become too concerned about what others might think of you. You should be more concerned about what you think of yourself. **If you put a small value on yourself, rest assured the world will not raise the price.** If you want to become the person you have the potential to be, you must believe you can!

**Numbers 13:23-33**

**23 And they came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bore it between two upon a staff; and they brought of the pomegranates and of the figs. 24 The place was called the Brook Eshcol, because of the cluster of grapes which the children of Israel cut down from thence. 25 And they returned from searching of the land after forty days. 26 And they went and came to Moses and to Aaron and to all the congregation of the children of Israel unto the Wilderness of Paran to Kadesh, and brought back word unto them and unto all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land. 27 And they told him, and said, “We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it. 28 Nevertheless the people are strong who dwell in the land, and the cities are walled and very great; and moreover we saw the children of Anak there. 29 The Amalekites dwell in the land of the South; and the Hittites and the Jebusites and the Amorites dwell in the mountains; and the Canaanites dwell by the sea and by the coast of the Jordan.” 30 And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, “Let us go up at once and possess it, for we are well able to overcome it.” 31 But the men who went up with him said, “We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we.” 32 And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, “The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof, and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. 33 And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, who come of the giants. And we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.”**

**Proverbs 23:7**

**7 For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee.**

**Steps to Build Your Self-Image**

**1. Guard Your Self-Talk**

Whether you know it or not, you have a running conversation with yourself all the time. What is the nature of yours? Do you encourage yourself? Or do you criticize yourself? If you are positive, then you help to create a positive self-image. If you’re negative, you undermine your self-worth. Where does negative, critical self-talk come from? Usually from our upbringing. In their book The Answer, businessmen-authors John Assaraf and Murray Smith talk about the negative messages children receive growing up. They write,

**“By the time you’re seventeen years old, you’ve heard “No, you can’t,” an average of 150,000 times. You’ve heard “Yes, you can, “ about 5,000 times. That’s thirty nos for every yes. That makes for a powerful belief of “I can’t.”**

If we want to change our lives, we have to change the way we think of ourselves. If we want to change the way we think of ourselves, we need to change the way we talk to ourselves. And the older we are, the more responsible we are for how we think, talk, and believe. Don’t we have enough problems in life already? Why add to them by discouraging ourselves every day with negative self-talk? We need to learn to become our own encouragers, our own cheerleaders. Every time you do a good job, don’t just let it pass; give yourself a compliment. Every time you choose discipline over indulgence, don’t tell yourself that you should have anyway; recognize how much you are helping yourself. Every time you make a mistake, don’t bring up everything that’s wrong with yourself; tell yourself that you’re paying the price for growth and that you will learn to do better next time. Every time you lose tell yourself “I don’t lose I learn.” Every positive thing you can say to yourself will help.

**2. Stop Comparing Yourself to Others**

When I started my career I constantly compared myself with the success of the TV preachers. As time went by I realized how harmful that was. What happens when you compare yourself to others? Usually it’s one of two things: either you perceive the other person to be far ahead of you and you feel discouraged, or you perceive yourself to be better than the other person, and you become proud. Neither of those is good for you, and neither will help you to grow. Comparing yourself to others is really just a needless distraction. The only one you should compare yourself to is you. Your mission is to become better today than you were yesterday. You do that by focusing on what you can do today to improve and grow. Do that enough, and if you look back and compare the you of weeks, months, or years ago to the you of today, you should be greatly encouraged by your progress.

**3. Move Beyond Your Limiting Beliefs**

The greatest limitations people experience on their lives are usually the ones they impose upon themselves. As industrialist Charles Schwab said, **“When a man has put a limit on what he will do, he has put a limit on what he can do. “** Author Jack Canfield offers a solution to self-limiting thinking. In his book The Success Principles, he recommends the following four steps to transform limiting beliefs into empowering beliefs.

1. Identify a limiting belief that you want to change.

2. Determine how the belief limits you.

3. Decide how you want to be, act, or feel.

4. Create a turnaround statement that affirms or gives you permission to be, act, or feel this new way.

**“Remember, in the end, it isn’t what you are that holds you back; it’s what you think you’re not.”**

**4. Add Value to Others**

Because people with low self-esteem often see themselves as inadequate or feel like victims (which often starts because they actually have been victimized in their past), they focus inordinately on themselves. They can become self-protective and selfish because they feel that they have to be to survive. If that is true of you, then you can combat those feelings by serving others and working to add value to them. Making a difference—even a small one—in the lives of other people lifts one’s self-esteem. I**t’s hard to feel bad about yourself when you’re doing something good for someone else.** In addition to that, adding value to others makes them value you more. It creates a cycle of positive feeling from one person to another.

**5. Do the Right Thing, Even If It’s the Hard Thing**

One of the best ways to build self-esteem is to do what’s right. It gives a strong sense of satisfaction. And what happens whenever you don’t do the right thing? Either you feel guilt, which makes you feel bad about yourself, or you lie to yourself to try to convince yourself that your actions weren’t wrong or weren’t that important. That does harm to you as a person and to your self-esteem. **Being true to yourself and your values is a tremendous self-esteem builder.** Every time you take action that builds your character, you become stronger as a person—the harder the task, the greater the character builder. **You can actually “act yourself” into feeling good about yourself, because positive character expands into every area of your life, giving you confidence and positive feelings about everything you do.**

**6. Practice a Small Discipline Daily in a Specific Area of Your Life**

When I began my career as a minister, one of the things I did was work a little bit every day on my Sunday sermon. As I talked to my peers, I found out that this was not the way most people in my position did things. Most of my colleagues started their preparation on Friday. I couldn’t understand why they would do it that way. It was like facing a mountain—overwhelming. However, I found that if I chipped away all week, by the time Friday came, I was confident that I could complete the task. If there is an area in your life that seems overwhelming to you—health, work, family, or something else—try chipping away at it a little bit every day instead of trying to tackle it all at once. Since your self-worth is based upon the positive habits, actions, and decisions you practice every day, why not build your self-esteem and tackle your biggest problems at the same time? Don’t fret or worry about it; do something specific about it. Discipline is a morale builder. Boost yours by taking small steps that will take you in a positive direction.

**7. Celebrate Small Victories**

This next suggestion is really a follow-up to the previous ones. When you do the right thing or you take a small step in the right direction, what is your emotional response? What kinds of things do you tell yourself? Are your thoughts like these?: Well, it’s about time, I didn’t do as much as I should have, That won’t make a difference. It’s hopeless—I’ll never succeed.Or are they more like these?: It’s good that I did that, I did the right thing—good for me, Every little bit helps, I’m that much closer to success. If your thinking runs more like the first list, then you need to change your thinking. Taking a break to celebrate is good for you. If nothing is ever good enough, you can lose heart. Celebrating encourages you. It helps to inspire you to keep going. Don’t underestimate its power.”

**8. Embrace a Positive Vision for Your Life Based on What You Value**

When Reese Witherspoon won the 2006 Oscar for Best Actress for her portrayal of June Carter Cash in Walk the Line, she quoted June Carter Cash, saying, **“People used to ask June how she was doing and she would say, ‘I’m just trying to matter.’** We all want our lives to matter. That’s hard to do when we don’t believe we matter. If you have a positive vision for your life and you take action to fulfill that vision, then you will more readily recognize that your life matters. What do you value? What prompts you to see a positive vision for your life? If you don’t have a vision, you are likely to be apathetic. However, if you tap into what you value and try to see what could be, it can inspire you to take “it can inspire you to take positive action. And every positive action you take helps you to believe in yourself, which in turn helps you to take more positive action.

**9. Practice the One-Word Strategy**

In a book by Kevin Hall called Aspire, one of the passages communicates something he does to help people grow:

**“The first thing I do when I’m coaching someone who aspires to stretch, grow, and go higher in life is to have that person select the one word that best describes him or her. Once that person does that, it’s as if he or she has turned a page in a book and highlighted one word. When one does that, it’s as if he or she has turned a page in a book and highlighted one word. Instead of seeing three hundred different words on the page, the person’s attention, and intention, is focused immediately on that single word, that single gift. What the individual focuses on expands.”**

Why do I like this practice of picking one word? Because it tells you a lot about how you think about yourself. Try it. If you could pick only one word to describe yourself, what would it be? I hope it’s positive! If it is, it will help you go in the right direction. If it’s not, then you need to change your word.

WHAT’S YOUR ONE WORD? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**10. Take Responsibility for Your Life**

We tend to get in life what we are willing to tolerate. If we allow others to disrespect us, we get disrespected. If we tolerate abuse, we get abused. If we think it’s okay to be overworked and underpaid, guess what will happen? If we don’t have a plan and purpose for our lives, we will become part of someone else’s! If you’ve had a difficult time and you don’t feel good about yourself, I want to tell you that you do have value. You matter. Your life can change, and you can make a difference—no matter what kind of background you have or where you come from. No matter what traumas you’ve suffered or mistakes you’ve made, you can learn and grow. You can become the person you have the potential to be. You just need to believe in yourself to get started. And every time you take a step, think a positive thought, make a good choice, practice a small discipline, you’re moving one step closer. Just keep moving forward, and keep believing.”