

## The rewards of Confidence

There are many things we possess that the Bible says we should hold on to. Things we should not lose, cast away or get rid of. Things that, when retained and maintained, have a great reward. One such thing is “confidence.” **Hebrews 10:35** says, “*Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward.*” Another translation reads, “*So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded.*” Please take note of two key words - “confidence” and “reward.” This is an important principle if you’re going to succeed in life. Your confidence seriously affects your reward. This verse implies that the measure of your confidence determines the measure of your reward. Therefore, we are told, “DO NOT” throw away your confidence!

During testing and difficult times, it is very easy to lose confidence. The mere fact that it is much harder to achieve our goals often impacts on our confidence. Yet, we are encouraged to hang on to the confidence we already have! The reason? If we do not hang on to our confidence the rich rewards that are due will disappear. What I see from this process is this; holding on to the confidence we have is a faith exercise. We must always have “rich rewards” in mind when holding on to our confidence. Confidence is the ‘attribute’ that produces rich (great) reward. Now these rewards can be anything from financial to relational. But whatever the reward, it will be truly significant!

One of the byproducts of confidence is strength. *Strength* to tough it out and stay the course. *Strength* to still be standing when the victory trumpet is heard. Isaiah 30:15 states, “**Confidence shall be your strength.**” There are probably people here today who feel that they do not have the *strength* to carry on. Maybe your problem is not lack of strength but lack of confidence? Maybe the storms of life have caused you to take your eyes off the great reward? If you cannot see beyond the storm your confidence will be affected, and in turn, so will your strength to carry on!

**Self-confidence** is an attitude that allows you to have a positive view of yourself and your circumstances. Self-confident Christians should have a complete trust in the faithfulness of God, but they should also have trust in the unique abilities that God has given them. They should have a general sense of control in their lives, and genuinely believe that God is working all things together for their good. Having self-confidence does not mean that you will be able to do anything and everything. However, it ensures that what you do is faith-filled. Even when your expectations are low, you will continue being positive.

People who are not self-confident depend on the approval of others in order to feel good about themselves. They tend to avoid taking risks because they fear failure. They generally do not expect to be successful. They often put themselves down and ignore compliments. By contrast, self-confident people are willing to risk the disapproval of others because they generally trust God and the unique abilities He’s given them. They accept themselves at every level because “God is for them,” and they don’t feel they have to conform to be respected.

**Self-confidence** is extremely important in almost every aspect of life, yet so many people struggle with it. Sadly, this can be a vicious circle. People who lack self-confidence can find it difficult to become high achievers and their rewards in life are often low. Mainly because they don’t get results or a positive response from others. After all, would you instinctively want to back someone who doesn’t believe in himself?

**Self-confident** people inspire confidence in others - their peers, their bosses, their families and friends. Trusting God and gaining the confidence of others is one of the primary ways in which a self-confident person finds the strength to carry on. The good news is, self-confidence can be developed and built on. So, whether you're working on your own self-confidence or building the confidence of people around you, it's worth the effort! Remember, the reward for confidence is great! All other things being equal, self-confidence is often the single ingredient that distinguishes an achiever from someone less successful.

### **How is Self-Confidence Initially Developed?**

Surprisingly, lack of self-confidence is not necessarily related to lack of ability. And this is especially true of Christians. Instead it is often the result of focusing too much on the unrealistic expectations or standards of others, especially of the people around you. The people close to us shape our feelings about 'self'. This is why God's word instructs us to be careful who we befriend (**Proverbs 12:26**). Always go where you're celebrated, not where you're tolerated!

### **So how do you create a sense of balanced self-confidence?**

Notice that our opening scripture says, ***"Do not throw away your confidence."*** It doesn't emphasize "self." Therefore, "self" is only to be considered after confidence in God! Self-confidence is being certain and trusting. First in God and then in yourself. Self-confidence is critical to effective performance in ministry, the workplace and in the home. It is the source of boldness (which God can use). However, self-confidence is also about balance and respecting yourself.

At one extreme, we have people with low self-confidence (who disrespect themselves). At the other end, we have people who may be over confident (and puff themselves up). Beneficial self-confidence is a matter of having the right type of confidence. Confidence that's been founded and grounded on God's word will keep you balanced. With the right type of self-confidence, you will operate in faith, take informed risks, stretch yourself (without going beyond your strengths and abilities) and consistently try harder. With the right kind of confidence your rewards are great!

So then... How do you build this sense of balanced self-confidence - founded on God's word and on a firm appreciation of reality? The bad news is that there's no quick fix. The good news is that building self-confidence is readily achievable, as long as you have the focus and determination to see things through. Remember, your confidence has GREAT reward. No one can take this away from you! Only you (yourself) can throw it away - give it up!

### **Strategies for Developing Confidence**

- Emphasise Your Strengths. Give yourself credit for everything you attempt. By focusing on what you can do well, you can applaud yourself for efforts (rather than emphasising end results). Start everything from the base of where your strengths are located, this helps you live within the bounds of your inevitable limitations.
- Use Self-Talk. Use positive confession (in line with God's word). Positive self-talk is your opportunity to counteract harmful assumptions. For example, when you catch yourself expecting perfection, remind

yourself that you can't do everything perfectly, that it's only possible to try to do things your way and to try to do them well (to God's glory).

- Self-Evaluate. Learn to evaluate yourself independently and honestly. Doing so allows you to avoid the constant sense of turmoil that comes from relying exclusively on the opinions of others. Focusing internally and examining how you feel (your emotions), will give you a stronger sense of "self" and it will prevent you from giving your personal power away to others.
- See Yourself as God Sees You. See yourself as God sees you. You are the apple of His eye and He chose you to be His representative here on earth. By looking at yourself through His eyes, you will see the "self confident" person you want to be, and before you know it, you will become that person. If you have a setback, make a quick comeback, and don't let anything get you down. Just remember the times when you exhibited self confidence (and how good it felt) and then try again. Each time you try it will help you to build confidence. Do this until 'confidence building' becomes a way of life. If God be for you - who can be against you!
- Finally, focus on the rich rewards. Every time you exercise self-confidence, think of the rewards that are on their way! Then by faith, 'receive' those rewards - because of your confidence!

The best advice anyone can give you is clearly stated in our opening scripture, "*Never throw away your confidence; for it will be richly rewarded.*" (**Hebrews 10:35**)

Remember, no-one can take your confidence away from you! Only you (yourself) can throw it away! It's your life - it's your choice!