

Do You Really Need Self-Confidence?

Air Dates: April 18 – 22, 2022

Day One

Self-confidence—a word which defines itself. Would you describe yourself as a person with good self-confidence? Are you confident about your abilities and talents, your accomplishments and experience? The world says you have to have self-confidence in order to succeed, especially in the business world.

When I think of a very self-confident person, I think of the Apostle Peter. Now, here was a man very confident in himself. He was the only disciple who was confident he could walk on water. He was confident in his fishing abilities and knowledge. He was confident that Jesus was wrong to say he was going to die and rebuked him for it. He was totally confident that he, Peter, would never deny Jesus, even if everyone else did, even if he had to die with Jesus.

Peter did not lack self-confidence. However, all that self-confidence failed him at the critical moments of his life. He began to walk on water but very soon started sinking. Self-confidence didn't keep him up. Self-confidence didn't fill his empty nets with fish after a long night of fishing. Only when he followed Jesus' instructions was he able to catch fish. Though he was very confident in rebuking Jesus, Jesus not only did not take his counsel, but considered it to be satanically inspired. And within hours of his most confident assertion that he would never deny Jesus, he did so three times with cursing.

Peter's example tends to give self-confidence a black eye. We've been led to believe that self-confidence is the key to success, but Peter's experiences could cause one to lose confidence in self-confidence.

But, thank God, that's not the end of Peter's story. We see a transformed Peter in the book of Acts. He was still extremely confident, still assertive, still a leader, but the results were very different

If you've been struggling with your own self-confidence, Peter's experience should come as very good news for you today. You really don't need self-confidence, but you do need God confidence, and you can have that.

Day Two

Do you really need self-confidence? Most everyone would tell you that it is absolutely essential to success, but I have discovered that my self-confidence usually lets me down when I need it the most. The same was true of the Apostle Peter. He was extremely self-confident, but over and over again that self-confidence fell apart.

However, there was a great change in Peter which we can see beginning in the book of Acts. You remember the story of Peter and John encountering a lame beggar at the temple. Peter looked at that lame man and said in his most confident manner, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk" (Acts 3:6). And guess what—the man went into the temple walking and leaping and praising God.

When questioned by the religious leaders as to how he had done this, Peter gave a most confident response: "By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is

Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has completely healed him, as you can all see" (Acts 3:16).

This man Peter, who had failed miserably at every turn when he relied on self-confidence and who had cowardly denied Jesus three times, now stood tall among people who were seeking to harm him and proclaimed to them the gospel of Jesus Christ. Verses 13 and 14 of Acts 4 are very revealing: "When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus. But since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say."

Peter's confidence amazed them but notice that it was not self-confidence. These people knew that Peter was not able to heal this man or speak as he did because of his own education or training. Peter was no longer operating on self-confidence. That had been totally shattered. But his confidence and trust in Jesus Christ the Nazarene gave him a boldness he had never known before, and power. The lame man was healed, he was able to persuade thousands of converts, and he led the early church as they changed the course of history.

Day Three

I'd like to ask you to picture two scenes. Picture the Apostle Peter as he stood outside the gate at Jesus' trial and denies that he ever knew Jesus, denying it with cursing and swearing. And only a few short hours earlier he had been totally confident that he never would do that—never! Now, picture a second scene. Peter healing the lame man, who goes leaping and jumping into the temple, praising God for his healing.

What happened to the Apostle Peter in the few intervening days between those two scenes? In the first instance, though totally self-confident, he had failed miserably. In the second scene, he displays a confident approach, and yet the results are quite different. He was not a miserable failure.

What happened was that Peter lost all his self-confidence and gained in its place God-confidence. After he had healed that lame man, he said to the amazed people who were watching: "Fellow Israelites, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go... By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has completely healed him, as you can all see" (Acts 3:12-13, 16)

When Peter spoke now, he was filled with the Holy Spirit. No more shooting off his mouth as before when he operated out of self-confidence. With the self-confidence destroyed and replaced by God-confidence, Peter spoke with great power and was successful in his service for Jesus.

Notice, however, that the loss of self-confidence didn't turn Peter into a sniveling, cowardly wimp of a man. He didn't walk around with his head hanging down; quite the opposite. He was more bold than ever before, because he was controlled by God and his confidence was in someone much more capable and powerful than himself.

My dear friend, self-confidence is a deceptive allurements that this world system has fostered upon us. Maybe like Peter, you have gone from one sad experience to another, as your self-confidence fell apart. Or maybe your self-confidence brought some temporary achievements, you've discovered that it is so fragile and so easily intimidated, that it falls apart at the first adverse wind that comes along.

The good news is, you don't need that undependable self-confidence, you need God-confidence, and you can have it.

Day Four

Have you discovered that self-confidence is very undependable? Just when you think you've got it down pat, it falls apart on you. Just when you need it the most, self-confidence seems to shatter. That's been my experience.

I spent ten years building my life on self-confidence in my own achievements. I could list the successes I had in the business world during those ten years, and you might think I had done pretty well. I had self-confidence, but it kept falling apart on me all the time.

I thank God that my self-confidence was shattered many years ago because then I finally turned to my Savior and said, "I just can't do it anymore. I'm a failure, I can't cope, I'm an emotional yo-yo, I'm just a mess." In spite of the successes I had stacked up in the business world, I was at the end of my self-confident rope.

Once that self-confidence was shattered, then I turned back to God. And then the God-confidence began and each day is another opportunity to grow in my trust of God and to operate now in his power instead of my own. But it began when my own self-confidence was shattered.

Paul wrote to the Philippians: "We are, remember, truly circumcised when we worship God by the Spirit, when we find our joy in Jesus Christ and put no confidence in what we are in the flesh" (Philippians 3:3, Phillips). He was reminding his Jewish brothers and sisters that outward rituals and signs are not the evidence of our relationship to God, but we are truly rightly related to God when we are Spirit-controlled, when we find our joy in Jesus Christ, and when we have no self-confidence.

I wonder, have you been on a misguided search for self-confidence? Though you know God through Jesus Christ, have you been running your life by the world's principles, as I did for so long? Paul wrote to the Galatians: "Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods. But now that you know God—or rather are known by God—how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable forces? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again?" (Galatians 4:8-9).

Self-confidence can be an enslaving principle. We need instead God-confidence.

Day Five

Do we really need self-confidence? As we've looked at the Apostle Peter and his example as well as other Scriptures, self-confidence is not what we need. Indeed, it tends to fail us just when we need it the most. What we truly need is God-confidence.

Why would we want to run on self-confidence when God-confidence is available to us? Can we doubt that God-confidence has much more to offer and self-confidence is unreliable? Then why do we run back to the world's weak and miserable principles?

May I suggest that it is because the philosophy of self-confidence looks good, and it appears to work for some people. So, we swallow the bait, and are deceived again by the master-liar, the father of lies, our enemy, Satan.

If you're still running on self-confidence, you can either make a choice to abandon it, or you can keep on until it runs out of gas on its own, which it will eventually do. Maybe that's happened to you already,

and you're now wallowing in the shambles of that failed self-confidence. Either way, if you will choose God-confidence, it can be yours.

To have God-confidence, you must first have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, which requires repentance and a turning away from your sins. Then, you must pursue knowing God as your highest priority. You must be willing to allow the Holy Spirit to control your life, and that is your choice.

That will not happen by accident; it will happen as you purpose in your heart to know God. I can assure you of this, the more you know him, the more confidence you will have in him. The more his Word is the central focus of your existence, the more confident you will be.

So, I encourage you to abandon your quest for self-confidence. Pursue, instead, a dedicated commitment to know God and have his confidence dwelling in you. Like Peter, you will see a transformation in your life when you go from operating on self-confidence to operating on God-confidence.