

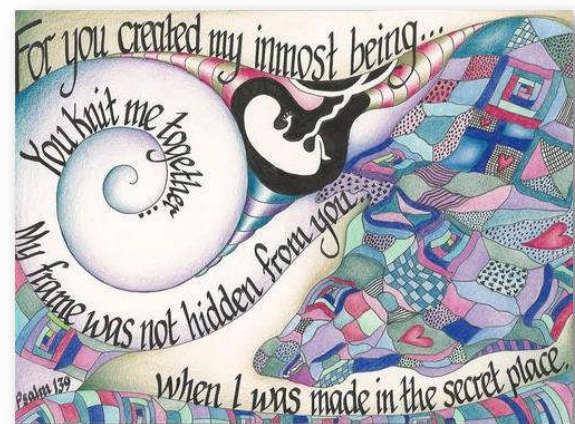
Confidence

As members of the human family we are uniquely made and gifted because God created us in His awesome image with talents that He established in the beginning. ***“Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”***

(Genesis 1:26NIV) Each of us has tremendous potential. We are woven together in our mother’s womb and gifted by God to do those things that He planned in advance for us to do.



“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the



depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.”
(Psalm 139:13-16NIV)

The first step in developing confidence is to uphold the truth of what God says about us. When we believe the negative things that others say, or have said about us in the past, then we will define ourselves by those words and our behaviour will follow what we have chosen to believe. To develop confidence we will need to admit that our thinking process has been



damaged and make an effort to bring our thinking into line with what God says about us. We need to look at those things we have been fearful of and tell ourselves that we can conquer the fear because, ***“..God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”*** (2 Timothy 1:7NKJV)



Armed with the truth of who we truly are, how do we start the process of renewing our confidence?

We take a risk and do something we haven’t done before. We leave the safety and security of our comfort zone and work to learn something new. This might mean having a talk with a counselor or pastor, signing up for a class , volunteering our time, doing service work in a support group, participating in a small group Bible fellowship, or applying for a job or a training course. People who never leave their comfort zone, never grow in confidence. We develop confidence by gritting our teeth and saying, "If God is for me and I am a wonderfully made human being, and, if I have all of this divine potential within me, then I'm going to try something new and see what happens."

God was not lying when He said that He gave gifts to everyone. God wants me to make a difference for good today. God has equipped and empowered me to do that. Will I confidently step forward to live fully as the amazing person He's created me to be? Will I “PUT OFF” the old self image and “PUT ON” the new one, created in God’s likeness?

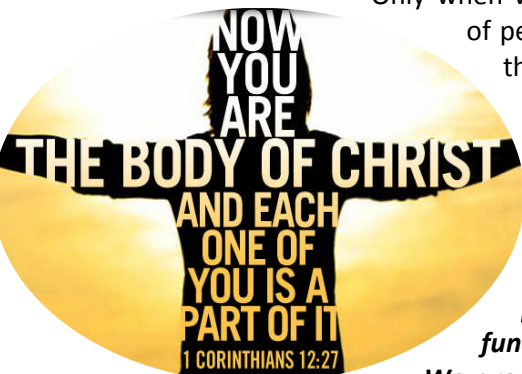
For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago. (Ephesians 2:10 NLT)



As it is with a physical body, so it is with us and other individuals in our community. If we isolate any one part of a body and examine it, apart from its proper place among the other members, it may seem odd and useless.

Only when we are connected to a community of people and find the appointed place that God has designed for us are we able to realize our full potential. As we do the job we were made for, we will grow in our confidence.

Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ's body.



We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other. In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love. (Romans 12:4-6, Ephesians 4:16 NLT)

Once we begin to build our confidence in the work God has given us, we need to become "confidence builders" in others. People in relationship need to communicate with each other in a positive way. We need to stretch each other and challenge each other to take

a confident step and be willing to take a risk for the sake of growth. We need to let each other know that we'll be there for support as the challenge is accepted. We need to faithfully and generously stay alongside them as they learn through their stumbles and their failures. No one, including us, ever gets everything right the first time.



Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and compassionate? Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose. (Philippians 2:1-2NLT)

With full knowledge that Peter would betray Him, Jesus built confidence into Peter by praying for him to "build up His brothers". Peter grew into an amazing leader. Jesus is our role model for building confidence in others. Am I willing to affirm with God what He says about me and live confidently in that truth? Am I willing to follow Jesus' example and serve others by building confidence in them?



Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. How am I growing in confidence?
2. How am I supporting the growth of confidence in others around me?

