

## WHAT ARE YOU WORTH?

Biting into a chocolate chip cookie from a fresh package, my wife, Connie, discovered too late that some tiny, voracious red ants had begun enjoying the cookie before her. In horror, she spat out the cookie AND the ants—but not in time to avoid the undeserved bites that caused her lips to swell up painfully and grotesquely.

After several uncomfortable days the swelling subsided—to our considerable gratitude, but in the meanwhile, every look in the mirror reminded her of the embarrassingly bulging lips. Connie felt strange about her (temporarily) disfigured face. She was now self-conscious about how people would look at her. This realization led to further reflections on what it's like for people with permanent deformities. We are all sensitive about our appearance. In numerous interviews with people whose appearance is “irregular,” their response is *“I just want to be like everyone else, and to be accepted for the person I really am on the inside.”*

### Universal Need for Affirmation

Deep down every one of us needs affirmation of who we are on the inside. If we are honest, there is an essential longing to be valued, esteemed, accepted, appreciated and loved. In fact, the search for love is, foundationally, a longing for another to say to us: *“You are worth it! I honor you. You are of such value to me that I am ready to give you my whole heart, my whole life!”*

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Life is full of times of testing. Toward the end of his life, I see King Hezekiah in the midst of a test (2 Chronicles 32:31). Throughout his reign, in spite of great adversity he had accomplished much. Then, when the Babylonians came and “lusted” after the fruit of his labors, the condition of King Hezekiah’s heart was once again tried and revealed, in this case through his desire to flaunt his wealth before the Babylonians. His riches were the evidence of his *accomplishments*. Most of us can relate to this temptation to “show off” our accomplishments.

1 Corinthians 10:13 declares that hardships and trials come into our lives, not to break us, but to build and strengthen us that we might persevere and ultimately overcome. Our time here on earth is temporary, a “security deposit” for the life to come. The challenges we face help us “graduate.”

What is it that we have to look forward to? **“Blessed is the man who endures temptation, for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him”** (James 1:12).

In 1 Corinthians 4:1-2 we are commissioned to be God’s servants here on earth. As His stewards, we should be found faithful, persevering and therefore representing God’s Kingdom on earth. We are to look at ourselves as visitors on this earth, *not allowing the things of this world to possess our hearts. God will test our hearts as he did with King Hezekiah to see if what we have built here on earth, even those things He asked us to do, have replaced God Himself. Have our accomplishments in this world become replacements in our lives for the things of the eternal kingdom?* Have they distracted us from our duty to bring the Kingdom of Heaven to earth?

We are expected to be loyal to His call. Remember you are only a visitor in this world – God’s deposit on this earth. May we hear these words from the Lord, **“Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord”** (Matthew 25:23).

GUY COHEN

# THE TEST & TEMPTATION OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS



## THE VISIONARY & envisioning unfilled niches

When we talk about a “VISIONARY,” we most likely picture someone such as Ezekiel the prophet, or John the disciple of Yeshua. Ezekiel painted prophetic images of heavenly chariots and heavenly creatures, and he prophesied about the future. John also saw visions and the glory of the Son of God, Yeshua, and prophesied about the future. However, this is not what I mean when I use the word “visionary” with a small “v.” Rather, I’m referring to something more modest, being “pioneers,” that which has become our calling today.

Every year I am privileged to visit different countries and see different Christian denominations, organizations and structures. And I say, “Great job! You are well advanced in creating visible expressions of the Kingdom. You have programs and institutions. You assist the elderly and the poor, and you work with young people and children.” To be honest, I am sometimes envious, but in a good way. Then when I return to Israel, though I know that the Lord renews and restores, I see so many niches—places not yet filled with the Kingdom. There is an overwhelming desire to *fill these niches*. I call this pioneering desire being “visionary.” However, I think kingdom *initiatives* are much more important than *titles*. Even more important is the ability to turn initiatives into realities. We want to see the Kingdom of Yeshua gradually and consistently *filling* unfilled niches, despite difficulties and great opposition—even in Israel!

We praise the Lord for all the existing programs—for soldiers, youth and children, and the home for elderly believers in progress, and music schools and art schools. However, from my point of view, we need more of them and better.

Zechariah 12:5 says:

**Then the leaders of Judah will say in their heart, “The inhabitants of Jerusalem are my strength through Adonai-Tzva’ot (the Lord of Hosts) their God.” (TLV)**

It seems to me that this speaks of our times. When I read “the leaders of Judah,” I see Israeli government officials. When I read “inhabitants of Jerusalem,” I see Israeli believers. And indeed some Israeli government officials on different levels are beginning to view Israeli believers in Yeshua as an asset, a *strength* for the country, *through* their faith in the Lord.



What are messianic believers doing today? They are setting up many programs to fill empty kingdom niches. Among these, helping our neighbors has a high priority, and we do it with great desire and motivation. This is just



the beginning, and already the “leaders of Judah” know about it. More importantly God knows about it. He knows our hearts and motives.

Praise the Lord! These are your prayers, *your* gifts and your vision, together with *our* vision, work and efforts.

Please continue to pray for our team here at Return to Zion, for the Music & Art School, our humanitarian projects and the soldiers’ project. Our people are visionaries, with a small “v.” We are taking small steps to implement the great Vision, about which Yeshua said, **“Pray that God’s will would become on earth a physical reality just as it is in heaven.”** And please consider connecting your faith to physical “niche filling” through donations.

Blessings to you and a joyful summer for you and your families!

LEON & NINA MAZIN

If it's not what people view on the outside, then what IS the basis of our worth? Am I to be ever dependent on the feedback of others to feel I'm valuable? Or, in the other trap—can I ever escape the inner critic, the perfectionism that would leave me persistently and agonizingly dissatisfied with ME?

### Discovering my True Worth through the Cross and Creation

I did not know my true worth until I saw Yeshua on the cross. This happened in an absolutely supernatural encounter, which led directly to my receiving Him as Savior and Lord in October, 1972. In a waking vision I saw His eyes transmitting to my heart what my mind could not grasp. *"I know you, your deepest longings and your failures. All your efforts to be good have fallen short. But my love for you is not conditioned on those efforts."* In a moment I understood that He was hanging there as an everlasting statement: *"You, Eitan, are worth the agony I'm going through."* The undeserved death of the perfect Man on my behalf, revealed my true value.

We are informed back in Genesis 1 that mankind—male and female—are made in God's own image and likeness. **"Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness...So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.'**" Even this fact alone imparts an unfathomably great level of worth to each and every person. In fact, the cataclysmic struggle over this "bearing of God's image in the world" began in the same Garden and has continued throughout the horrors of history. The enemy is out to curse, mangle, and accuse us until we are hopeless, dreamless, lifeless. Yet the very effort to subvert the Divine design of God's nature imparted to humans (2 Peter 1:4) *confirms* the centrality of that design. If there is such promise in our innate value that we are hated for it, then it is worth fighting for. If the Author of the Universe has planted in us His own likeness, then no one can rob you of supreme value!



Yeshua intentionally reached out to lepers and prostitutes, the "off-scouring" of society, publicly demonstrating their worth. How then will He not also touch us and impart His authoritative affirmation? For it is His act of total sacrifice that permanently defines your worth and mine. That is what I saw in a vision of His face. This reality destroys the lie that I am a worthless failure. **"Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us"** (Romans 8:37).

"Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Yeshua our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, **that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature**, having escaped the corruption that is in this world through lust" (2 Peter 1:2-4).

**EITAN SHISHKOFF** *Pastor Emeritus*