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James W. Moss, Sr.  
Church Consultant

### ***People Spot Missile: Building a Pastor's Self Esteem***

It has been well established by many people that individual self-esteem is absolutely essential to achievement in life. Motivational speakers such as Zig Ziglar have talked about that for years. You have to believe in your Jesus, in yourself, and your God given abilities if significant achievement is to be a part of your life. I have used one of Zig's exercises in my seminars. Sit down and list 25 things you have done well in your life. For instance, on my list are the following: I played Hiawatha in the school play at Parkway Elementary in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade. I usually get chuckles when I say that. But 60 years later, I'm telling you about it. I batted .320 for the Rotary baseball team in the Babe Ruth League in Frederick, Md. when I was 15. You get my drift. You are about to make an important decision in life. Review your victory list before you make the decision. Zig pointed out the difference between winners and losers. Losers, when they are about to make a decision, review their past defeats. Winners, when they are about to make a decision, review their past victories. The decisions are usually quite different.

Many years ago the Washington Capitals were the worst Hockey team in the history of the NHL. David Poile was hired as their General Manager. They had but one really good player. Poile interviewed the player. He gave all the right answers. But his attitude and body language told Poile he didn't believe they could ever win. So the lone star was traded to another team for three or four players which formed the foundation of many good years.

The pastor is a key player in building healthy self-esteem among people in a church. I have pastored since 1958. I was ordained in 1965. I was 31 years on a Conference staff. I have watched as dysfunctional pastors attracted dysfunctional people and then watched as what they built disintegrated.

The pastor has to work at being a spiritually mature, healthy, functional human being. I suspect that dysfunction is never far around the corner for any of us. For some it is closer than others. Depending on our backgrounds, some professional counseling may be required. Professional help is especially necessary if there is abuse or anger in our background and behavior. Then a Christian counselor will be required to help the person get to know themselves so they can function positively in a manner that God would want. Frankly, I became aware a long time ago, I am not a counselor. My two classes on counseling in seminary don't make me a counselor.

I recently wrote in a Missile of an experience I had in seminary. Elton Trueblood was the guest speaker at Winebrenner Seminary. Trueblood was one of the most prolific Christian writers of

the 1950s-1960s. I recently read again his book “The Incendiary Fellowship.” It is quite relevant even for today. I sat at a table with him and three other students. I can remember him saying, “The greatest hypocrisy of all is to accept a salary as a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and not believe the gospel.” I have never forgotten that moment.

We have to cultivate our spiritual well-being if we truly believe the Gospel. How do we do that. We faithfully read the Word, pray and spend time with some who will be an encouragement. That may mean different things for different people. I strive to read one chapter in the Old Testament and one in the New Testament and spend time in prayer each day. Each person has to develop their own discipline. An accountability partner is essential. As we grow and mature spiritually and truly experience the love of Jesus in our lives we can help others to do the same.

Jericho is an interesting site. In the middle of the desert is a magnificent oasis. There are beautiful flowers, magnificent vegetables and fruit in that glorious oasis. But all around there is absolute desert where nothing grows except an occasional sprout after a rare sprinkle. If the pastor’s spiritual life is a desert, that pastor can’t introduce positive spiritual growth in a congregation. So a key to a healthy church is a healthy pastor.

A pastor who moves closer to Jesus and receives affirmation of the Christ will have the capacity to love others and help them experience the same blessing. Which leads to the next Missile, “Building Self Esteem in a Church.”

*I am now available to present “The Role of the Church in the Civil War”, “Starting a New Service”, “Churches Have Personalities”, “People Spots”, “Does Your Church Really Care About People?” and “A Christian Perspective on Leadership Skills.” “Stewardship and Managing Debt” jm*

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