

211221 - He is suffering from doubts and a lack of self-confidence

the question

I am a young Muslim man; I became religiously committed more than a year ago. I am facing two basic problems having to do with diseases of the heart. The first problem is doubt about religion, and the second is that I am extremely sensitive when dealing with the people around me. For example: I like a girl, and every time I see her I feel the effect of that in my heart. Another example is that I may start to like some people very much within a short period of time, and I try to imitate them. Of course this stems from a lack of self-confidence. In fact, I suffered these problems even before I became religious, but now I am more concerned about them. How can I be more confident of my religious commitment and that I am on the right path, and how can I gain more self-confidence and rid myself of this lack of self-esteem and feeling less than others?

Detailed answer

First of all, we want to reassure you that these transient negative feelings that you are going through will not affect your faith and religious commitment, in sha Allah. In fact, Allah, may He be Glorified and Exalted, does not bring people to account because of them. The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) gave us the glad tidings that Allah, may He be Glorified and Exalted pardons all of these passing thoughts and intrusive thoughts. Al-Bukhari (5269) and Muslim (127) narrated from Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Allah has forgiven my ummah for whatever crosses their minds so long as they do not speak of it or act upon it.”

We also want to reassure you that negative feelings such as these – whether they are doubts or a lack of self-confidence – are something normal that people of your age go through. It is very common for young people to look for a role model to follow, and they are usually influenced by success stories. Every time a young man sees someone achieving success – even if it is only partial success – he feels inferior in comparison to him, and he feels that he needs to emulate

him in the hope of achieving success like him in the future. But then the young man quickly regains some self-esteem and realises that he is independent in his thoughts and choices, and this happens more and more as he grows older, and as he gains more experience of life and begins to mature. Then, by Allah's will, you will look back on these negative feelings and see they are something from the past that is now gone. In fact you will wonder how these negative feelings could have haunted you and caused you such worry and confusion.

But here we can suggest some ideas that will help you to gain self-confidence. These include:

Firstly:

Setting goals that you want to achieve in your life, then setting out a plan that you can follow to achieve these goals and ambitions, whether that is through work, education, business and so on. Planning for life is one of the most important means of success, and in most cases a person will be absorbed in following the steps to carry out his plan, so he will focus on himself and not worry about other people, and he will become more and more focused on his ambitions and striving to achieve one success after another. In this way he will gain more self-confidence and become more independent.

Secondly:

By reading widely about the lives of leaders, scholars and reformers in Islamic and world history, the reader will realize how weak are the efforts of those who came after them, or he will become familiar with (and no longer shocked by) such success and brilliant achievements throughout history, and he will no longer become easily attached and influenced by every story of success he hears or every strong character he reads about.

Thirdly:

You should focus your mind on the positive aspects of your character, pay attention to them and remember them every time you feel inferior to someone else, for every human being has many brilliant aspects to his character for which the people around him praise him. In this manner

you will be able to increase your self-confidence, when you think of the blessings that Allah has bestowed upon you, and the many good qualities with which He has blessed you.

Fourthly:

Increase your love for Allah and your connection with Him, may He be Glorified and Exalted, to the exclusion of people, for the person who is sincere to Allah, may He be Exalted, has rid himself of the shackles of servitude to anything and anyone other than Him. At that point, he will have no attachment in his heart to any human whatsoever, other than love and respect because of the other person's status or position. This is a high level of servitude to Allah which no one can attain except through lengthy effort, persistently striving to attain this heartfelt love of Allah in every sense.

Fifthly:

Finally, we advise you to take some useful courses on this topic, develop self-esteem and help increase your ability to connect with others, awaken the potentials that are latent in all of us through smart thinking, and realise the importance of willpower and resolve in this context. There is no reason why you should not consult some specialists in psychology, for perhaps consulting them directly could bring to light some aspects of your character that others would not notice.

And Allah knows best.