

Bible Study

Selfishness



...Shall Not Inherit the Kingdom of God

- Galatians 5:19-21
- "...selfishness...those who do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God."



Will Jesus Christ Find Living Faith?

■ II Corinthians 13:5-6

- Test ourselves to prove that Christ lives in us.
- We will not fail the test if we draw close to Him and truly work to make the changes we need to make as individuals to take on the very nature and life of God.



Selfishness: Deterrent to Overcoming

■ Selfishness?

- Selfishness is defined as,
 - Being concerned excessively or exclusively with oneself
 - Seeking or concentrating on one's own advantage, pleasure or well-being without regard for others
 - Being concerned with one's own welfare or advantage, in disregard of others
- Selfishness is a deceiving and insidious sin, in that you don't see or understand its impact of it, until much damage has been done.



Selfishness: Deterrent to Overcoming

■ Selfishness?

- The English language has many words for selfishness, showing the universal scope of human selfishness.
- A person might be
 - Arrogant, Boastful or Vain
 - Self-serving or Self-Possessed
 - Self-absorbed or Self-Important
 - Self-centered or Self-Focused
 - Conceited, Haughty or Proud
 - Egomaniac, Narcissistic, or Presumptuous.



Selfishness: Deterrent to Overcoming

■ Selfishness?

- Likewise the Bible uses a variety of words and constructions to describe selfishness, including:
- **Arrogant (Titus 1:7)**
- **Selfish ambition (James 3:14-16)**
- **Vain conceit (Philippians 2:3)**
- **Lovers of themselves (2 Timothy 3:2)**
- **Self-seeking (I Corinthians 13:5)**
- **Pleasing ourselves (Romans 15:2)**
- **Seeking our own good (I Corinthians 10:24)**
- **These traits are never presented in the Bible in a positive way, but always by way of warning.**



Selfishness: Deterrent to Overcoming

■ Selfishness?

- If you're a me-centric type of person, it means you are more likely to consider your own needs ahead of the people around you. Some would argue it's human nature, but the Bible gives us the tools we need to become people who are considerate – putting others' needs above our own.
- Selfishness misleads us by promising pleasure, relief, and prosperity that it can't really deliver. Life is much better and more satisfying when we follow God instead of our own selfish desires.



Cain and Abel

■ Genesis 4:1-10

- Although the Bible does not explicitly state how Cain erred in presenting his sacrifice, we can draw conclusions based on what it does not tell us: the fact that Abel gave God the “fatty portion” of his flock implies that he gave God the best of what he had, while the fact that no distinction is made regarding Cain’s sacrifice implies that he did not offer God the best of his crop.
- Rather than having a contrite heart and seeking to determine why God was not gratified with his offering, Cain jealously turned against Abel. Cain’s failure to respond in humility ultimately came from his unwillingness to admit his mistakes. Instead, Cain chose to give in to his jealousy and continue in a pattern of arrogance and sin.



Nabal

- **I Samuel 25:2-11, 18-22, 26-28, 32-33, 36-38**
 - Nabal is an Old Testament example of the kind of person that Romans 1:28–32 describes: filled with wickedness, greed, insolence, and arrogance. Drunken, slandering, and hostile to those outside his circle, Nabal is the epitome of what God hates.
 - Nabal's fate should be a warning to us all. God will not be mocked (Galatians 6:7).
 - Nabal lived to please himself. In the final analysis, it is only God's pleasure that matters. (Matthew 6:19–20)



Haman

■ Esther 6:1-12

- Using his connection with the king, Haman was able to pass a law commanding the genocide of the Jews (Esther 3:13).
- Haman had selected the day for the slaughter by casting lots (in Hebrew, purim). Wanting to make an example of Mordecai, Haman built a special gallows, about 75 feet high, to hang his enemy on (Esther 5:14).
- God turned the tables. King Ahasuerus (unaware of Haman's plan against Mordecai) commanded that Mordecai be honored for thwarting an assassination attempt against the king. To Haman's utter mortification, the king commanded that Haman do the honors—Haman had the task of walking Mordecai through the city on horseback and proclaiming the king's admiration for him (Esther 6:10–11).



Symptoms of Selfishness

■ Luke 11:34

- “The only source of light for the body is the eye. When you look at people and want to help them, you are full of light. But when you look at people in a selfish way, you are full of darkness.”

■ James 4:2

- “You jealously want what others have so you begin to see yourself as better than others. You scheme with envy and harm others to selfishly obtain what you crave-that’s why you quarrel and fight. And all the time you don’t obtain what you want because you won’t ask God for it!”

■ I Corinthians 3:3

- “You are still not following the Spirit. You are jealous of each other, and you are always arguing with each other. This shows that you are still following your own selfish desires. You are acting like ordinary people of the world..”

Symptoms of Selfishness

■ Haggai 2:14

- “You people,” he said (speaking for the Lord), “were contaminating your sacrifices by living with selfish attitudes and evil hearts-and not only your sacrifices, but everything else that you did as a ‘service’ to me.”

■ Proverbs 23:7

- “Selfish people are always worrying about how much the food costs. They tell you, “Eat and drink,” but they don’t really mean it.”

■ Proverbs 11:24-26

- “One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want. Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and none who waters will himself be watered. The people curse him who holds back grain, but a blessing is on the head of him who sells it.”

What Does Selflessness Look Like?

■ **Philippians 2:4**

- “Abandon every display of selfishness. Possess a greater concern for what matters to others instead of your own interests.”

■ **Matthew 16:24**

- “Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone wishes to follow Me [as My disciple], he must deny himself [set aside selfish interests], and take up his cross [expressing a willingness to endure whatever may come] and follow Me [believing in Me, conforming to My example in living and, if need be, suffering or perhaps dying because of faith in Me].”

■ **I Corinthians 13:3**

- “Love is kind and patient, never jealous, boastful, proud, or rude. Love isn’t selfish or quick tempered. It doesn’t keep a record of wrongs that others do. Love rejoices in the truth, but not in evil. Love is always supportive, loyal, hopeful, and trusting. Love never fails!”

Application

■ Study the Scriptures

- Abram dealt unselfishly with Lot when he gave Lot his choice of land (Genesis 13).
- Joseph provided for his brothers and their children even after all his brothers had done to him (Genesis 50).
- Daniel refused any gifts or rewards from King Belshazzar for his interpretation so that he would not gain from God's inspiration and that God would receive the glory (Daniel 5).
- These examples show that unselfishness is the way of give—of outgoing concern.



Application

■ Study the Scriptures

- Paul writes of the best way to overcome selfishness: "whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." Throughout his ministry, he sought not his own profit but to help others prepare for God's Kingdom (I Corinthians 10; 13; II Corinthians 8:9).
- Jesus Christ's example of His sacrifice for us is the ultimate unselfish act.
- Since selfishness is the seeking of our own lusts regardless of its impact on others, it is sin and must be overcome.
- We must avoid seeking our own pleasures, instead seeking the good of others and putting Christ first.



Application

■ Focus God's Word on Our Life

– Free of Ourselves of Selfishness

- God calls us to abandon every display of selfishness and instead possess a greater concern for what matters to others. The mark of a person with a close walk with God is love, and the ability to deny oneself to make others greater

– Deny Ourselves

- Jesus made incredible and lasting impact because he decided to set aside his own selfish interests every day in order to care about other people. He didn't own a home, have a fancy job title, or have a lot of "me time" as far as we can tell in the Scriptures. He wasn't burned out, dissatisfied, or lonely.

– Performs Acts of Love for Others

- Love is the opposite of selfishness, as it is fundamentally describing the consideration and serving of others. It's helpful to think less about not being selfish, and more about becoming loving people.

