



THE LORD'S FLOCK GROWTH DIGEST

PASTORAL GROWTH SERIES

THE UNHOLY TRINITY: ME, MYSELF AND I Selfishness Series – Part 2

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May 17, 2023

Selfishness leads to conflicts and quarrels which often arise when we want something and we don't get it. We become upset when we witness selfish behavior in traffic, lining up in groceries, and other self-seeking acts. Yet, we, too, sometimes tend to rationalize our own selfishness. Selfishness results in loss of the sense of caring, loss of joy, loss of freedom, and most importantly, loss of connection with God. Considering these dire consequences, we must learn how we can be delivered from selfishness.

A. RESULTS OF SELFISHNESS:

1. We lose our sense of caring. Selfish people tend to focus only on one's own desires and needs above all else, which take a serious toll on relationships and impair the mutual caring needed in any relationship. Moreover, selfishness hinders us from sharing in the joy of others who have been blessed. St. Paul says that love is not self-seeking (1Cor. 13: 4) because loving unselfishly does not focus much of ourselves as better than others.
2. We lose our joy. Selfishness breeds discontent, envy and jealousy, which can lead to anxiety, and anxiety to fear, thus crushing our joy in the process.
3. We lose our freedom. Because of selfishness, we lose the freedom to be what God intends and plans for us. We could also forfeit the freedom to be a blessing to others. Selfishness is a trap that will keep us bound and stuck. It may cause us to miss opportunities to better ourselves and it makes us blind to the world because of our own selfish desires.
4. We lose our connection with God. St. John says: “If someone who has worldly means sees a brother in need and refuses him compassion, how can the love of God remain in him?” (1 Jn. 3: 17) Clearly, being connected with God also means caring for the needs of others. How can we be connected with God if everything is about “me, myself and I”?

We also lose our connection with God if we become selfish with our time, such that there is no more time for Him.

B. HOW TO BE DELIVERED FROM SELFISHNESS

1. Pray for it. By God's grace, we can be freed from selfishness. The Psalmist encourages us to ask God to turn our hearts toward His statutes and not toward selfish gain (Ps. 119:36).
2. Put God first. God should be above all our priorities. We need to seek first His kingdom and His righteousness (Lk. 12: 31; Mt. 6: 33). Objects, goals or desires can easily take out God in our hearts if He is not our priority in our lives. This would mean dying to ourselves.
3. Be generous. The early Christians shared everything they had, and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his/her own. Thus, there was no needy person among them. They would not let anyone suffer when others had plenty. (Acts 4: 32-36) Similarly, we too need to be generous with our time, talent, and treasure.
4. Practice humility. St. Paul says: “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility, consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2: 3-5). Considering others' interests is more important than our own which identifies us with Jesus, who is a true example of humility.

CONCLUSION: There is no room for selfishness in the life of a devoted Christian. Through God's grace, we need to combat selfishness and vainglory through genuine humility, contentment, and dying to self.

REFLECTION: Since selfishness is inherent in our human nature, how have you fought this inward battle?

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