



THE LORD'S FLOCK GROWTH DIGEST

PASTORAL GROWTH SERIES

“TALE OF TWO SELVES”

Selfishness Series – Part 3

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The Letter of James tells us of two selves – one that leads to strife, imprisonment, and war, and the other leads to strength, life, and eternity (Jas. 4:1-10). It is a difference between self-gratification and Godly satisfaction. Hence, the ultimate choice here is between living selfishly or selflessly.

1. The first self is selfishness which is the root cause of our committing sin. St. James gives different aspects of selfish behaviors and their effects of it (Jas. 4:1-3).

1.1 Selfish Pleasure is to be so absorbed in the pursuit of personal pleasure, sensual, self-indulgence issue that we will do whatever it takes to pleasure ourselves.

1.2 Selfish Passion is an overwhelming unhealthy excessive craving to get what we want simply because we want it. We covet when we lust for someone that is not ours, not only sexual lust but different kinds of lust. Selfish passion drives us to do things we normally would not do. These desires can be overwhelming or unwanted, so we should fight them by doing the following:

- Set boundaries for ourselves (Jas.1:12-13).
- Make a list of reasons to resist (Gal. 2:20; Eph. 2:10).
- Identify our triggers.
- Find healthy ways to keep ourselves busy.
- Rekindle our romance with our significant other.
- Join a community and be part of a small group.
- Pray for guidance.
- Get advice from a spiritual or religious leader.

1.3 Selfish Prayers

We do not receive what we asked for because we asked wrongly; our selfish motives go against the Word of God (Jas. 4:3). We can ask God for something, but He will look at our motive behind that request.

2. The other self that God desires us to be is selfless self or selflessness (Jas. 4:6). When we choose this self, we will find three real promises that God makes to each one of us.

2.1 Submit to God our past, present, and future and He will make the selfish intentions flee.

2.2 Draw near to God and repent, and God will draw near to us (Jas. 4:8).

2.3 Humble ourselves and relent, and He will lift us and bless us (Jas. 4:10).

Conclusion:

Self is not our best friend but our worst enemy until controlled. The saints saw the “self” as a spirited horse to be curbed, a stubborn mule to be forced. St. James makes a clear point that God’s grace can overcome everything. Thus, the Holy Spirit can transform us from being selfish to selfless.

Reflection:

Think about a time when you have been involved in some kind of argument. What was the root of that quarrel? Was it your selfish self?

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