

Someone recently told me the following about himself, "I am a selfish person." Admitting we have a problem is the first step in the road to recovery.

So what about us? Here's the fundamental question. Are we all about serving God first, other people second, and ourselves third? Or, are we all about serving ourselves first and using God and other people as means to our own selfish ends?

The scriptures describe the latter as:

1. Self-will. Genesis 49:6; Titus 1:7; 2 Peter 2:10.
2. Selfishness. Proverbs 23:6; Philippians 2:3 (selfish ambition, NKJV).
3. Self-exaltation. Jeremiah 48:29.
4. Self-indulgence. Matthew 23:25.
5. Self-seeking or selfish ambition. Romans 2:8 (self-seeking, NKJV); 2 Corinthians 12:20 (NKJV); Galatians 5:20 (NKJV); Philippians 1:17 (1:16 NKJV); James 3:14, 16 (both verses are "self-seeking" in the NKJV).
6. We also call it self-absorption; self-centeredness; self-involvement; self-serving; etc.

The scriptures call such people lovers of self. 2 Timothy 3:2.

Jesus calls us from selfishness to another path, the path of self-denial.

In tonight's lesson I want to talk about why we should choose the path of selflessness over the path of selfishness.

We should choose the path of selflessness because it is the path to:

1. Salvation. Matthew 16:24-27 (see also Mark 8:34-38; Luke 9:23-26); Romans 2:6-8.
2. Really being like Jesus. Romans 15:1-3A; Philippians 2:3-8.
3. *Agape* love. 1 Corinthians 13:4-5; 1 John 3:16.
4. True satisfaction. Acts 20:33-35; Matthew 10:37-39.
5. Greater happiness. Luke 23:33-34A.
6. Greater attractiveness. James 3:13-18.

The path of selflessness is:

1. Difficult, but doable. 1 Corinthians 15:31. It's about repenting and progressing, not arriving at any particular destination. Philippians 3:12-14.
2. Subtle.
 - A. It's all or nothing. The father, the son, and the garden illustration.
 - B. We can do the selfless things for selfish reasons. Philippians 1:12-14.
 - C. There are times we must put our needs first to put God and other people first.
3. Paradoxical. The best thing we can do for ourselves is to put God first, other people second, and ourselves third.

Conclusion:

1. 1 Timothy 3:1-2A, 5.
2. Luke 14:25-33.
3. Galatians 2:20.
4. Philippians 2:19-21.