

# From Me-Centric to Others-Focused

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## Opening Questions

- Have you been living a me-centric or others-focused life?
- How does selfishness manifest itself in your daily life?

## Bible Study

### Galatians 6:7 - The Message

Don't be misled: No one makes a fool of God. What a person plants, he will harvest. The person who plants **selfishness**, ignoring the needs of others-ignoring God!-harvests a crop of weeds. All he'll have to show for his life is weeds! But the one who plants in response to God, letting God's Spirit do the growth work in him, harvests a crop of real life, eternal life.

- Selfishness is a very deceiving sin. It 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.
- If we are going to change from being me-centric to others-focused, we have to learn to feel the way God does about selfishness and get inspired about living an others-focused life.
- How do you see self-focus in your life? Do you tend to believe the lie that living a selfish life will make you happier than following God?

### Symptoms of a Me-Centric Life

#### 1. Dark thinking

#### Luke 11:34 - Easy-to-Read Version

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.

- Selfishness darkens how we see people and things.

- When you are consumed with yourself and what people think of you, your mind will become full of darkness - mistrust, fear, negativity, and doubt.
- What are the fears, negative thoughts, and doubts that darken your mind?

## 2. Jealousy, envy and quarrels

### James 4:2 - The Passion Translation

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!

### 1 Corinthians 3:3 - Easy-to-Read Version

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.

- Selfishness is at the root of jealousy, envy, and quarrels.
- Do your relationships tend to be marked by quarreling, jealousy and strife?

## 3. Hidden Attitudes

### Haggai 2:14 - Living Bible

Haggai then made his meaning clear. "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.

- Do you do the right thing with the wrong attitude? God notices our attitudes, and they can contaminate even our "serving" actions.
- Do you get an attitude when you are expected to serve or deny yourself?

## 4. Always Worrying

### Proverbs 23:7 - New Century Version

**Selfish people are always worrying** about how much the food costs. They tell you, "Eat and drink," but they don't really mean it.

- Selfish people tend to worry about themselves. Worries might be around money - like the scripture above - or how they look, or how much they'll have.
- Selfish worries prevent us from actually caring about others or thinking about other people's needs.
- What worries have been consuming you?

## How God can change a selfish heart

### **Hosea 3:1 - The Voice**

The Eternal spoke with me again. Eternal One: Go and love a woman who is loved by someone else and is adulterous. Care for her and protect her, just as **I love the people of Israel even though** they're unfaithfully turning to other gods and selfishly eating sacred raisin cakes in their honor.

- God gives us the ultimate example of love to follow - he loves us even when we are being incredibly selfish.
- How do you feel about God's kindness? When you really understand God's mercy and kindness, your heart will begin to change. You will want to give others the same love God has given you.

### **1 Peter 1:22 - Living Bible**

Now you can have real love for everyone because your souls have been cleansed from **selfishness** and hatred when you trusted Christ to save you; so see to it that you really do love each other warmly, with all your hearts.

- God can cleanse you from selfishness if you ask him to and trust him to change your heart.
- Pray for God to give you a bigger heart!

## **What an others-focused life looks like**

### **Philippians 2:4 - The Passion Translation**

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

- God calls us to abandon every display of selfishness and instead possess a greater concern for what matters to others.
- On a practical level, what could you do to care about what matters to others around you?
- Pick a few people in your life (spouse, siblings, parents, coworkers, or friends) and pray for them every day, asking God how you can serve them. Sometimes simple things like writing a card for someone or asking them how they are doing go a long way.

### **Matthew 16:24 - Amplified Bible**

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].

- 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. But he wasn't burned out, dissatisfied, or lonely.
- Jesus promises that if we follow him, he will give us a rich and satisfying life ([John 10:10](#)).
- How do you think your life could make more of an impact if you set aside your own self-interests? What friends or coworkers could you help and impact?

### **1 Corinthians 13:3 CEV**

[4] Love is kind and patient, never jealous, boastful, proud, or [5] rude. Love isn't selfish or quick tempered. It doesn't keep a record of wrongs that others do. [6] Love rejoices in the truth, but not in evil. [7] Love is always supportive, loyal, hopeful, and trusting. [8] Love never fails!

- Which of these qualities of love could you put into practice today?



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