

The Selfless Life

Romans 12:10, 11-21

The life of the believer is a life of selflessness. To follow Christ is to deny yourself. There is absolutely no going around this directive. Selflessness is the foundation of a genuine Christian experience and it is the source of effective growth and development in Christ. It must become a value as well as a priority in our lives as we journey towards Christlikeness. Selflessness cannot be demonstrated outside of relationship to others but needs this context as a means of expression.

Western culture encourages self-gratification, self-exaltation, individualism and independence. The church must function with an opposing spirit to the prevailing conditions of the culture. We must adhere to the principles of the kingdom that encourage unity, togetherness, and a deep sense of community in sacrificing our lives for the sake of others. This is a true reflection of the nature of Christ who dwells in us, who laid down His life for others, and has required that we do the same.

Since the enemy has already been defeated, he does not pose as formidable a threat as we sometimes believe. Un-surrendered areas of our inner man, inaccurate spiritual positions and misguided thought processes do more to hinder us in living correctly for God. These are the enemies of spiritual progress that need to be dealt a severe blow by the disciplines of the kingdom – prayer, worship, repentance, fasting etc.

An active self-life gives the enemy opportunity for expression. The enemy's power revolves around his ability to use temptation which feeds on an active self-life' by attempting to activate old passions and desires. Col. 3:3 His greatest asset is a believer who has not allowed God to fully conquer him. He uses them to hinder unbelievers from salvation, wreak havoc in the church, dilute the strength of the church, corrupt vision, in addition to a host of other activities detrimental to the growth of the kingdom as a whole. We are the ones who determine whether we will become an asset or a liability to the purposes of God in the earth.

Phill. 3: 7-8

In this passage of the Word, Paul says: What things were gain to me, those I have counted loss for Christ.

It is evident that Paul experienced a major transition. We see an example of value change - GAIN BECOMES LOSS. This represents a total shift of perspectives or stated another way, the kingdom of God operates in total contradiction to the values of the world system. In the kingdom of God, the way up is down, receiving is attained by giving and true love is defined by loving those who hate you. Selflessness is achieved at a very high price, unfortunately, a price that most people are either unable to or unwilling to pay. To successfully arrive at this place a reformation process is needed to shape new ideals, values, perspectives and desires. We discover that the enthronement of self requires strategic and willful dethroning since it is not given to abdication.

Matthew 16:24

The Greek word for the phrase, ‘deny yourself’ is *aparneomai*, which means denying utterly to the point of disowning, abstaining from, or renouncing.

Sacrifice involves paying the high cost of surrendering, destroying or suffering the loss of something precious in order to obtain something of greater importance.

The nature of self-denial: ***the denying or refusing to follow our own self-will from a conviction that the will of God is the only action to us.*** {Wesley} This profound statement holds the key to fully understanding and executing the vital requirement of death to self, i.e. conviction must be at the center of it all. We must remember the verse that states: ‘It is He that has made us not we ourselves.’

When we examine the Cross, we realize that it represents anything that is unpleasant to us. It is unequivocally an instrument of death. It symbolizes societal contempt, isolation, and execution. The accused carried the object upon which he was crucified. It also represents life's experiences and all of its opportunities for death to our own desires and passions. These are presented every day. This is the reason Paul said: I die daily. 1Cor. 15:31.

Finally, Timothy speaking prophetically of the last days said, ‘Men will be lovers of themselves’. (2 Tim.3:2) Clearly this has become the order of the day and we see evidence of this all around us. We can only contradict this by breaking from self-centeredness ourselves and allowing selflessness to become a value. This ideal must exist in the core of our being and become deeply engraved within our churches.

Phill. 2:3-4 provides a powerful prescription for a successful church community.

Let these words be written in your heart by the finger of God, never to be erased.

Recognition of truth is not always acceptance of truth. Many hear the word but are not affected.

Starvation does not always occur from an inadequate intake of nutrients but also from an inability to metabolize or absorb nutrients.

I encourage you to wage a new war, the war on self-centeredness.

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