

Servanthood - A Case for Unselfishness – Lesson Four

Mark 10:42-45

42 But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them.

43 But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister:

44 And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.

45 For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

In today's world, four words seem to stand out as a monument to society's attitude: I, me, mine, and myself. This generation has been called the "ME generation." The attitude is "Look out for #1." Everything is directed toward the fulfillment of self. Many of today's familiar expressions support this attitude.

"Do yourself a favor."

"You owe it to yourself."

"You deserve a break today."

"We want you to have what you want."

We get uncomfortable when things (commitments, sacrifices, etc.) are asked of us. We even get uncomfortable when God asks of us.

"I would like to buy approximately \$3.00 worth of God, please. Not enough to explode my soul or disturb my sleep, but just enough to equal a cup of warm milk or a snooze in the sunshine. I don't want enough of Him to make me love a man of a different color or pick beets with a migrant. I want ecstasy, not transformation; I want the warmth of the womb, not the trauma of a new birth. I want a pound of the Eternal in a paper sack. I would like to buy \$3.00 worth of God, please."

Our inner "self" doesn't want to dump God entirely, just keep Him at a safe distance. Not close enough to cause conviction. Not close enough to cause any kind of radical change. Not close enough to bring a burden.

JUST ABOUT \$3.00 WORTH IS SUFFICIENT, PLEASE!

Let's first get a proper perspective on selfishness. A good self-esteem is not selfishness. Without a strong belief in ourselves, we are easily crippled and wounded in life. A poor self-image is NOT a sign of humility or the mark of a servant. A strong self-image results when we realize and accept that we are children of God and that He is in us helping us.

God is on our side, pulling for us...AT ALL TIMES!

Without this realization, we become fragile, easily bruised, counterproductive people. Being a Christian (born again) doesn't automatically erase the presence of selfishness (self). We must be careful not to become snobbish and proud because we have the "truth" and begin to think of ourselves more highly than we ought. It can become easy to look down our noses at those who are not as "spiritual" as we are.

To become arrogant with those who may not have as much in the way of revealed truth as we do...

The attitude of "we understand if you have problems, you're not from here..."
What is SELF? Let's look at the Biblical basis of our understanding of SELF.
Adam and Eve existed in shameless nakedness in the Garden of Eden.

Genesis 2:25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

They were naked physically, mentally, spiritually and emotionally.
They were unguarded, unprotected, totally non-defensive.

ABSOLUTELY UN-SELFISH

Here is found the account of the beginning of SELF.

Genesis 3:7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

With the entrance of sin, their eyes were "opened" and they became "Self-conscious;" something they had never experienced before.

We CANNOT be God-conscious AND self-conscious!

With this new awareness came two things. Their awareness of themselves and their nakedness caused them to try to hide their true selves.

Genesis 3:8 And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.

Their awareness of themselves also caused them to look out for their own well-being and stature.

Genesis 3:12-13

12 And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

13 And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

This pattern has remained throughout the ages. Unwilling to be authentic, we hide, we lie, we run, we try to escape, we scheme, we pamper and exalt SELF.

The Case for Unselfishness

That is why Jesus Christ was so different from the world.

Not only did he instruct us in the way of unselfishness; He modeled it for use.

Matthew 20:25-28

25 But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.

26 But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;

27 And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:

28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

He became a living example (pattern) for us to follow.

Philippians 2:3-7

3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

He made himself of no reputation!

That pattern is what we are going to be judged by...

Acts 17:31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

He led the way from the darkness and unhappiness of self-involvement, and self-service to the joy of serving God and others.

John 13:15-17

15 For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

16 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.

17 If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

He taught us not to be satisfied with just “\$3.00 worth of God”, but to be willing to give it all.

Matthew 13:44-46

44 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

45 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls:

46 Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.