

SELFISHNESS

Int.

1. Aim: To explain the sin of selfishness and how we are to avoid it.
2. Rom. 12:3 "For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, **not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think**, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith."
3. The Bible tells us about our enemies. In Ps. 25:1-2 we read: "Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me."
 - a. An enemy is someone who will do us harm
 - b. We must recognize who they are and how they operate so we can avoid being hurt by the enemy - Selfishness is one of our biggest enemies
4. Selfishness is condemned in the Bible.
 - a. It is one of the works of the flesh (Galatians 5:20), which will cause one to be lost.
 - b. Gal. 5:20 NKJV "Selfish ambitions", KJV strife, NASV "disputes", ASV "factions", RSV, "selfishness"
5. Selfishness is one of the greatest problems in the world.
 - a. Usually think of it only with children, but it affects people of all ages.
 - b. It is a problem that we must deal with all through life.
 - c. Definition - "concerned excessively or exclusively with oneself : seeking or concentrating on one's own advantage, pleasure, or well-being without regard for others" [Websters Dict.]
6. Selfishness is natural At birth we think only of our needs - cry when anything is wrong. As we mature we learn to be patient and think of others also
7. Christians are taught to be unselfish and be concerned about others and their needs.

Discussion

I. SCRIPTURES THAT TEACH US TO BE UNSELFISH

- A. Matt. 16:24-25 "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any [man] will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it."
1. Denial of self is necessary to follow Christ
 2. We must deny ourself and subject ourselves to Christ's teachings
 3. A Christian is one who gives up himself the pleasure of sin because he is a follower of Christ.
 4. Happiness comes by denying self and taking up cross and following Him.
- B. 1 Cor. 13:5 "does not seek its own"
1. Love does not insist upon its rights.
 2. The solution to many of our problems could be found if men would think less of their rights and more of their duties.
 3. Selfishness is the opposite of love because love does not seek its own.
 4. Rm. 12:10 "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;"
 5. Rom. 15:1-2 "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification."

C. I Cor. 10:24 ASV "Let no man seek his own, but each his neighbor's good."

1. We are not to seek to get another man's wealth or possessions
2. But we are to seek his good before we seek our own good.
3. How much better this old world would be if people practiced this kind of love!!
4. The church would be so much stronger if all Christians practiced this kind of unselfish love!
5. Phil. 2:3-4 - "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others."

D. Christ left an example for us to follow

1. He did not follow his own desires, but followed the will of God perfectly - Heb. 5:8-9 "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;"
2. He was never selfish - II Cor. 8:9 "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."
3. He was concerned about the poor, sick, blind, deaf and lame.
4. He taught everyone a better way of life
5. His life brought to the world the only way man can live so as to be happy - the unselfish way
6. As a man goes down in self, he goes up in God.

II. SELFISHNESS CONTRIBUTES TO OTHER SINS

A. Murder

1. 1 Kings 21
2. Ahab wanted the vineyard of Naboth
3. This led to his murder

B. Vain worship

1. "I like music"
2. God is the One to be honored
3. Jn. 4:24

C. "Forsaking the Assembly" - Heb. 10:21-31

1. "I need to sleep"
2. "I like to fish",
3. I like to visit with my company, they have come to see Me.

D. Disobedience to Parents

1. Children must listen to their parents not self and when they will not problems arise
2. Eph. 6:1-3

E. Covetousness

1. Gen. 13 = Lot Joshua 7 = Achan
2. Matt. 19:21-22 = Rich Young Ruler Acts 5 = Ananias and Sapphira

F. Immodest Dress

1. 1 Tim. 2:9
2. "That will make them turn and look at me."
3. Selfishness is part of the cause of wearing immodest apparel

G. Failure to practice pure and undefiled religion - James 1:27

1. Luke 16 = rich man was too selfish to be bothered with Lazarus
2. Matt. 25 = Those too selfish to help will miss heaven

H. Indifference to our responsibility to teach others

1. Scriptures tell us to do it - Mark 16:15 II Tim. 2:24
2. "We need it at home."
3. "I haven't got time."
4. "I'm afraid I will be embarrassed when I can't answer a question."

I. Lying

1. Eph. 4:24 Col. 3:9 "lie not to one another..."
2. Selfishness leads often to lying about what we did or did not do, or what others have done !

III. SELFISHNESS CAUSES CRIME AND WAR

A. Wars are the result of selfishness

1. One nation has something that another nation does not have.
2. That nation builds up their army to the point that they think they can take over the other nation.
3. Some selfish ruler or country tries to take over another country or countries.
4. War is the result that brings about killing and destruction

B. Many crimes are the result of selfishness

1. Those who steal are selfish. They want what another person has but they are not willing to work and get the money to purchase it for themselves.
2. Those who commit murder are selfish
3. Sex crimes are committed because of selfishness.
4. Gambling is carried on because of selfish desire for great profit

C. Six of the ten commandments are to curb selfishness - Exodus 20

1. Honor thy father and mother - children must not go own willful way but listen to their parents
2. Thou shalt not kill - another man's life is important and no man has the right to take it
3. Thou shalt not commit adultery - respect for marriage and another person
4. Thou shalt not steal - man must not take what belongs to another
5. Thou shalt not bear false witness - no man can speak untruthfully even for his own advantage

6. Thou shalt not covet - must not want what belongs to another - coveting is an overwhelming desire for what belongs to another person - selfishness is root

IV. SELFISHNESS CAUSES MANY PROBLEMS

A. Home life

1. Husbands and wives who are selfish will have problems
 - a. When one acts like a baby and will not be responsible there will be problems
 - b. Selfishness is at the root of most divorces
2. Sometimes there is a problem between the parents and the children
 - a. Selfishness on the part of the child means he/she wants their own way
 - b. Dis-regard God's command to obey their parents

B. Church

1. When members are selfish they want their own way in matters of opinion regardless of what is best or what others want.
2. Have heard of church splits over the color of carpet or the color of paint

Conclusion

1. There is no evidence that selfishness ever made anyone genuinely happy. Instead it has lead to disappointment and misery.
2. Illustration - Monuments to Ourselves
3. Christians have learned that the better way of life is the way of unselfishness
4. Many have learned what the Bible says: "It is more blessed to give than to receive"
Acts 20:35

5. The antidote for the poison for selfishness is love
 - a. Love your enemies and pray for them
 - b. Love your neighbor as yourself
 - c. Husbands love your wives
 - d. Wives love your husbands
 - e. Children love your parents
 - f. Parents love your children
 - g. Members of the church are to love one another
6. Love is the one and only cure for selfishness
 - a. It is called the more excellent way - 1 Cor. 12:31 - then 1 Cor. 13 describes love
 - b. We seek not our advantage or our good. But we seek the good of Christ and of others.
 - c. Love is unselfish, and does not seek its own advantage or pleasure at the expense of others.
7. The man who will put himself second and others first will surely find happiness but not because of seeking it directly.
8. Sometimes we pray "Thy will be changed" rather than "Thy will be done."
9. Pride says to itself, "My will be done." Humility says to God, "Thy will be done."