



SELFLESS

W h i c h O n e A m I ?

1. SELFISH: It's ALL ABOUT ME

Selfishness is simply putting myself first. In a whole lot of words above we can see how it works: **SELF** confident, **SELF** esteem, **SELF** absorbed, **SELF** centered, **SELF** interest, **SELF** seeking, **SELF** serving, etc. Notice in all those words what comes first? **SELF**. And the second word describes the specific thing self is. We can turn those words around and see even more clearly what is being said: **ESTEEM SELF**, **CENTERED SELF**, **SEEKING SELF**, **INTEREST SELF**, **ABSORBED SELF**, **SERVING SELF**. It's looking out for number one before even thinking about looking out for anyone else. It's the world revolving **AROUND ME**. That's pretty much it, it's just "all about ME." And if you think you're "safe" when it comes to selfishness, let's just look at what it means to be SELFLESS and see how we measure up...are you ready? Ok, here we go.

2. SELFLESS: It's ALL ABOUT GOD (for the sake of others)

•**Self denial/Humility** is a very large part of what Jesus did by not only in *coming* to this earth, but also in what He left *behind* in heaven. IF we believe that the Bible teaches that Jesus is GOD, (Jn 1:1, Col. 1, Phil. 2, Jn 8, etc.) and that He was **WITH** the Father before He was "born" on the earth (Jn 17:5), then we realize that Jesus had left His throne in heaven for the womb of a woman; He **CHOSE** to leave His throne in heaven for a manger (feeding trough) in Bethlehem to live as a MAN on the very earth He created. Phil. 2 tells us that he humbled HIMSELF by taking the form of a "bondservant" and being made in the likeness of men....stop. God took the form of a HUMAN BEING! God became FLESH and dwelt among us! (Jn. 1:14) Jesus "laid aside His "privileges" as God in order to reach us with His (God's) love! Jesus denied, or set aside His deity for a short time while He was on the earth to show us what it means to deny our SELVES, to humble our SELVES, to be SELF LESS. Then, to bring home the point even further, He lived a life of virtual obscurity for the first 30 years of His life as a human being; Jesus/God lived as an average man until He began His public ministry as "the exact representation of the Father." (Heb. 1) Jesus was totally devoted to the **Father's** will as a further example of "self denial" and "humility." We are told to share this attitude of self-denial and humility that Jesus modeled for us in Philippians 2. Phil. 2:3 **"DO NOTHING from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than him SELF;"** 2:5 **"have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus..."** (please read the entire passage for context Phil. 2:3-8) Jesus further denied and humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even the sacrificial death of the cross.

Jesus is our example of
SELF denial: Humility
SELF sacrifice: Love
SELF control: Obedience

•**Self Sacrifice/Love** is summed up in Jesus' death on the cross. Why did God send His Son into the world? Jn.3:16 tells us that God SO LOVED the world that He GAVE His only begotten SON...Did He do that to CONDEMN all the people in the world? Absolutely not! John 3:17 God tells us that Jesus came to die to SAVE the world! Jesus was born to DIE for us as the ultimate expression of the Father's love! Jesus sacrificed His privileges of deity to become a man, then He sacrificed

His humanity (physical body) to save mankind! Jesus said in John 15:13 "greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends." Jesus' death on the cross was the proof of His love. Jesus **CHOSE to sacrifice HIMSELF** for love, for our salvation. He was the only One who could pay the wages of sin FOR US. He was the ONLY PERFECT, SINLESS sacrifice that God could accept for the payment of the sins of the whole world. Love, apparently, is not a feeling, but an action, indeed, love is a choice. Jesus is the ultimate example of SELF SACRIFICE, the perfect example of God's (Agape) love. Remember, Jesus had a choice, His whole life He had a choice to obey the will of the Father or to disobey the will of the Father. He had to choose to continue His mission to the Cross while He was praying in the garden, even when His emotions were strong in the other direction; He had to **CHOOSE to be SILENT**, (not calling for 72,000 angels to rescue Him) when they came to the garden to arrest Him (Matt. 26:53) or when they were mocking Him and spitting on Him, and plucking out His beard and beating Him. He had to **CHOOSE to WALK** the road to the Cross where He would not only suffer (even more) in His physical body, but for the first time in His eternal existence Jesus **KNEW** He would be separated from the Father...and He had to **CHOOSE to STAY** up on that cross when the Father actually did turn away from Him as Jesus was MADE SIN on our behalf (2 Cor. 5:21). Don't you think Jesus had a choice to be selfish or selfless every step of the way? Yes, and so do we, as Christians, we have the choice to love just as our King Jesus did. Not only do we have the choice, but we also have the power to love as Jesus loved, because He lives in and through us. When we sacrifice our SELVES to Him, when we DIE to SELF and let Jesus live through us, we are following in the very footsteps of our Lord. We don't have to go to a physical cross to be self sacrificing, we have already been "*crucified with Christ, it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and delivered Him-SELF up for me.*" Gal. 2:20 And with every choice to obey we die to self. By serving God and others, we allow JESUS to LIVE through us.

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•**Self Control/Obedience:** *Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish His work." Jn. 4:34. (Jesus is speaking) "He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him." "...Not my will, but Yours be done" (Jesus in the garden before the crucifixion Matt. 26:38)*

Obedience is SELF under God's control

Not my will Lord, but Yours be done. Seeing God's will as more important than mine is the first step in obedience to God. Remember, "we have died and our lives are hidden with Christ in God..." (Col. 3) It's all about God, it's all about God's Will, His WORD, His Commandments. We know that SELFishness is all about me, but SelfLESSness is all about God and all about others:

"If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall My servant be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him." Jn. 12:26 and again in Jn. 14:15, "If you love Me, you will keep my commandments."

What are His commandments? **Here's one:** (Jesus is speaking) "*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.*" Jn. 13:34, Jn. 15:12, 15:17, The kind of UNSELFISH love that puts others interests ahead of our own, the kind of selfless love that "considers others as more important than ourselves" Phil. 2; and the kind of Self control/Love where we willingly offer our "will," our "desires," and even our "SELVES" to be swallowed up in the will and desires of God. If we really LOVE God, we will be obedient to His Commands to love others the same way He does.

In Conclusion:) *Luke 9:23 "If anyone wishes to come after ME, he must DENY HIM-SELF, take up his CROSS DAILY, and FOLLOW ME." Jesus*

Remember, being selfless is not a feeling. Selflessness is a CHOICE. The remedy for selfishness is: deny self in humility, sacrifice self in love, and bring self under the control of God in obedience to His Word.

Lord, help me focus on You, and as You lead me to focus on others; please forgive me for being self centered, make me Christ Centered...

SELFISH

OR

SELFLESS

Which one am I?