

Overcoming Some Of Life's Problems # 3

The Problem Of Self

Introduction:

1. Of all of man's problems, the hardest to handle is self
 - a. Shakespeare wrote, "Brave Conqueror! for so you are, that war against your own affections and the huge army of the world's desires."
 - b. The hardest person to say "no" to, and to control, is *self*.
2. Jesus said that self-denial is a basic principle of Christianity (Mark 8:34).
 - a. It deals with the heart of the problem of sin.
 - b. Must deny self to even be a Christian.
 - c. Must grow and develop in self-control to be faithful.
 - d. Touches every facet of our lives.
 - i. Needed every hour of every day, everywhere we go.
 - ii. John Sterling said, "The worst education which teaches self-denial is better than the best which teaches everything else, and not that."
3. Once we deal with this problem - we can either handle or endure the rest.
4. Let's look at self - The problem, the answer and the result.

I. Self-Service Is the Problem

- A. *Self is the obstacle to serving the Lord*
 1. Judges 21:25 - A summary of the wickedness of God's people in the day of the Judges: Every man did what was right in his own eyes.
 2. Matt. 23:25 - The hypocrite is "self-indulgent".
 3. Acts 24:25 - Must learn temperance (self-control) to become a Christian.
 4. Rom. 2:8 - Those who do not obey are self-seeking.
 5. Gal. 2:20 - No longer I (self), but Christ. Means before he served Christ, it was service to self.
 6. Jas. 3:13-14 - Those who do not follow the wisdom from above are self-seeking.

- B. *Temptation pulls at our own desires.*
1. Jas. 1:14 - drawn away by own desires.
 2. 1 Jno. 2:15-17 - Three avenues:
 - a. Lust of the flesh - appeals to what I like & want.
 - b. Lust of the eyes - appeals to what I want to see.
 - c. Pride of life - appeals to my view of myself.
 3. 1 Cor. 7:5 - Satan tempts us in our lack of self-control.
- C. *Every sin involves a lack of self-control.*
- D. *Constant battle over self*
1. Self-denial deals with the reality of life. The Bible doesn't picture the Christian void of all passions, drained of all desires, or detached from all temptation. Rather, it envisions that all of his appetites and desires remain, but he keeps them under control and mastery.
 2. Aristotle proposed that there are four states of man with reference to the battle between reason and passion (Taken from Barclay's comments on 1 Pet. 1:5-10):
 - a. Perfect temperance - reason rules over passion. The fight is won.
 - b. Unbridled lust - passion rules over reason. The fight is lost.
 - c. Incontinence - reason fights, but passion prevails. The battle is on, but at the moment reason is losing.
 - d. Self-control - passion fights, but reason prevails. The battle is on, but at the moment reason is winning.

II. Self-Denial Is The Answer

- A. *God demands it*
1. Passages that specifically mention it.
 - a. Mark 8:34 (Mark. 16:24; Luke 9:23).
 - b. Acts 24:25
 - c. 1 Cor. 9:25
 - d. 2 Pet. 1:6
 2. Passages that deal with it in principle.
 - a. Rom. 6:12ff
 - b. Gal. 2:20

- c. Eph. 5:24
 - 3. Passages that forbid anything require self-denial.
 - a. Lust (2 Tim. 2:22; Matt. 5:28).
 - b. Lying (Eph. 4:25).
 - c. Immorality (1 Cor. 6:18).
 - d. Laziness (Rom. 12:11; 2 Thess. 3:10).
 - e. Retaliation (Rom. 12:17-21).
 - 4. Passages that command anything require self-denial.
 - a. Gentleness (2 Tim. 2:24).
 - b. Contentment (Heb. 13:5).
 - c. Love (Rom. 12:9-10).
 - d. Patience (2 Tim. 2:24).
- B. *What is self-denial?*
- 1. Saying “No” to self.
 - a. “To forget oneself, lose sight of oneself and one’s own interest” (Thayer, p. 54).
 - b. It is hard to say “No” to others. It is even harder to say “No” to self.
 - 2. Temperance (self-control):
 - a. “Self government” (Thayer).
 - b. To have power, dominion or strength over self.
 - c. “Ability to take a grip of oneself” (William Barclay).
- C. *It is the answer because it stops self-seeking and self-serving.*

III. Self-Control Is The Result

** How we will **do** and **be** when we have self-control.*

- A. *Listen to and receive the word* (Jas. 1:21).
 - 1. Will be teachable (Acts 17:11).
 - 2. Doesn’t resent being taught the truth, but accepts it with humility and submission.
 - 3. Not question and doubt, but believe and do.
- B. *Put the Lord’s will first* (Acts 24:25).
 - 1. Suppress our own will and yield to the will of God.
 - 2. Change of will (Gal. 2:20).

- C. *Make yourself do what you know you need to do*
- D. *Control our temper.*
1. Prov. 14:17 - "A quick tempered man acts foolishly."
 2. Prov. 14:29 - "He who is slow to wrath has great understanding, But he who is impulsive exalts folly."
 3. Prov. 25:28 - "Whoever has no rule over his own spirit Is like a city broken down, without walls."
- E. *Control our tongue.*
1. Jas. 1:19, 26 - slow to speak and bridle the tongue.
 2. Prov. 17:27 - "He who has knowledge spares his words."
- F. *Control our buying and spending.*
1. Self-control stops impulsive buying.
 2. We must not live beyond our means (Rom. 13:8).
 3. Many live in debt and struggle financially simply because they do not control their buying and spending.
- G. *Treat others right.*
1. Don't retaliate (Rom. 12:17-21).
 2. Don't do things that generate division (Jas. 3:14 - 4:2).
 3. Self-denial is essential to peace and harmony with others (Eph. 4:1-2).
- H. *Good marriage.*
1. Self-denial is essential to harmony and happiness in the marriage (cf. 1 Cor. 7:1-5).
 2. The role of each mate requires self-denial (1 Pet. 3:1-7).

Conclusion:

1. When man can handle the problem of himself, he can deal with other problems.
2. What a contrast between the life that is self-serving and the life of self-control.

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