

The Problem with Self

Matthew 16:24 (NKJV) — 24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

I. Self-desire, the problem in every situation.

THERE CAN ONLY BE ONE GOD!

Ex 20:1–3 (NKJV) — 1 And God spoke all these words, saying: **2** “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. **3** “You shall have no other gods before Me.

- A. Self gets in the way of God. Even when we pray we basically pray for what we want and not what God wants. We have a lot to learn because God tells us; **Matthew 6:33 (NKJV) — 33** But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.
- B. We do not have to worry about taking care of ourselves. God does that for us. In fact, we cannot even take care of ourselves.
 - 1. There comes a time in everyone's life no matter what we think we want best for us all things are out of our control.
 - a. you cannot cause your heart to beat
 - b. you cannot make your blood pump through your body
 - c. you really have no control over your life.
 - d. You don't even know whether you will have tomorrow.
 - 2. Unless the Lord builds the house, they that labor, labor in vain.
 - 3. We must learn, to stop trying to fix things for ourselves and put God first so that he will fix the things we cannot control!

IF WE WOULD LET GOD BE GOD, HE WOULD TAKE CARE OF US BETTER THAN WE COULD TAKE CARE OF OURSELVES

- C. God is against those who only think of themselves!
Pr 15:25 (NKJV) — 25 The Lord will destroy the house of the proud, But He will establish the boundary of the widow.
 - 1. Those of us that have our focus on us and our things will find that God will be against us.
 - 2. Self, sets itself up against God.
- D. If any man wants to have the best in life he has to learn to put God first!
1 Pe 5:5 (NKJV) — 5 Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for “God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.”
 - 1. Grace, is the power of God that gives you the ability to do his will and accomplish great exploits in his name!
 - 2. Recognize, that when you put yourself first, God resist you! He actually fights against you!
 - 3. God does not help you accomplish what you are trying to accomplish. As a matter of fact he fights against you.

4. Sometimes you wonder why things don't work out for you? You wonder why you have such a hard time in life?
 - a. Perhaps it is because you spend too much time thinking about what's right for you and not what is right for the kingdom of God.
5. Remember what God said in
2 Ch 7:14 (NKJV) — 14 if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

YOUR BEST LIFE EVER IS EXPERIENCED WHEN YOU LEARN TO PUT GOD FIRST BECAUSE....THERE CAN ONLY BE ONE GOD!

- E. Satan - at the heart of every desire for self
Is 14:12–15 (NKJV) — 12 “How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations!

13 For you have said in your heart: ‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north; 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.’

15 Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, To the lowest depths of the Pit.
 1. Remember, Satan tried to get Jesus to do things for himself.
 - a. He was hungry; he wanted him to turn the stones to bread
 - b. he wanted him to test God
 - c. he offered him the kingdoms of the world
- F. Adam and Eve’s problem was putting self first.
Ge 3:6 (NKJV) — 6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.
 1. She was trying to do what she thought was right for her family.
 - a. It was good for food
 - b. it looks good
 - c. she could get wise by it
 - d. she would not die
 2. it was all about self!
- G. Cain
Ge 4:3–5 (NKJV) — 3 And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord. 4 Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the Lord

respected Abel and his offering, 5 but He did not respect Cain and his offering. **And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.**

1. Here was an emotional problem. He was angry.
2. His emotions caused him to do the wrong thing.
3. This negative emotion also affected his health.

ALLOWING WRONG EMOTIONS TO LIVE IN YOUR HEART IS A DANGEROUS THING

H. Abraham and Sarah

Ge 16:1–5 (NKJV) — 1 Now Sarai, Abram’s wife, had borne him no children. And she had an Egyptian maidservant whose name was Hagar. 2 So Sarai said to Abram, “See now, the Lord has restrained me from bearing children. Please, go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children by her.” And Abram heeded the voice of Sarai.

3 Then Sarai, Abram’s wife, took Hagar her maid, the Egyptian, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan.

4 So he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress became despised in her eyes. 5 Then Sarai said to Abram, “My wrong be upon you! I gave my maid into your embrace; and when she saw that she had conceived, I became despised in her eyes. The Lord judge between you and me.”

1. She was not willing to wait on God. She took matters in her own hands.
2. Not only was Hagar a problem to her, but Ishmael became a problem. Throughout the generations the descendants of Ishmael had created tremendous amount of problems for the children of Abraham.
 - a. Many of us have created an Ishmael by taking matters into our hands.
 - b. We need to learn to wait on the Lord

STOP TRYING TO HURRY GOD DENY YOURSELF AND DO HIS WILL!

I. David - the lesson we learned last week

1 Sa 27:1 (NKJV) — 1 And David said in his heart, “Now I shall perish someday by the hand of Saul. There is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape to the land of the Philistines; and Saul will despair of me, to seek me anymore in any part of Israel. So I shall escape out of his hand.”

1.

II. Jesus tells us itself has no place and a disciple of the Lord.

Matthew 16:24–26 (NKJV) — 24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 25 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. 26 For what profit is it to a man if he

gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?

- A. As long as self-reigns in the throne room of a man's heart, he will constantly be at war with God. He will never operate in what God created him for and as a result live an inferior life compared to walking in the will of God.
- B. Jesus tells us that we will gain far more when we learn to let go of self and stop trying to get things the way we want them to be. He will work out all things for our good.
 - 1. Remember he said for those called according to his purpose!

LET GOD BE GOD AND GET OUT OF THE WAY WITH YOUR WAY!

III. Jesus says, **"take up his cross"**.

- A. If we will focus on what he wants us to do, all of our needs will be taken care of. **"Deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me. 25 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it."**
- B. We must focus on the work he has called us to.
Matthew 6:33 (NKJV) — 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.
- C. Finally, look at the promise for those who will deny themselves and put him first:
Matthew 6:24–33 (NKJV) — 24 "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon (*Gk- wealth - material possessions*). 25 "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? 28 "So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; 29 and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, *will He* not much more *clothe* you, O you of little faith? 31 "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

- D. I pray that you now will learn to deny yourself and seek the mission that God has given you. Pursue that and God will take care of all the rest.
1. Give up trying to do what you think is best. Trust in the Lord!
(NKJV) Pr 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.