



## Brown Community Group Discussion Guide

### 7 Deadly Characteristics to Your Godly Peace, Joy and Contentment

August 22, 2021 Lesson 6

As we continue our series today with the **"7 Deadly Characteristics to Your Godly Peace, Joy and Contentment"** we will be focusing primarily on Selfishness. You will remember from last week, we covered the characteristic of Pride.

Each of these characteristics can and will totally destroy your Christian Spirit and God's ability to work through you for a Victorious, Peaceful and Content Christian Life:

1. Perfectionism
2. Comparisons
3. Pride
4. **Selfishness (Your relationship with God and what serves as its basis)**
5. Competiveness With Wrongly Placed Motives
6. Not Recognizing and Using Your God Given Spiritual Gifts
7. Control

As we step through each of these deadly characteristics to our Spiritual conditions, we need to remind ourselves that this whole series is about each of us **Freeing our Heart, Mind, Body and Soul!**

#### **A. Starter Questions and Definitions Concerning Selfishness**

Why do we so many times seem to have to have it our way? Do we find that our desires seem to get in the way of the good or desires of our loved ones, friends or acquaintances? Do we at times seem uncaring or neglectful to others who want something different or believe differently? Have we even manipulated people and things to get our way? Don't people know that my priority and goals should be the most important above all others?

If we are honest with ourselves, how many times do we seem to get caught in any of the above? One of the last things we want our witness to demonstrate as a Christian is an outwardly appearance of being conceited, uncaring, neglectful of others, manipulative, obsessive or jealous ambition. Yet these things are exactly what we risk if we show selfishness in our actions and decisions.

#### *Definition of Selfishness:*

- concerned excessively or exclusively with oneself : seeking or concentrating on one's own advantage, pleasure, or well-being without regard for others
- arising from concern with one's own welfare or advantage in disregard of others

While this definition is probably the closest from the world as compared to a Biblical understanding, this only concentrates on the end result. The true root cause though is a totally different thing.

**Selfishness is the opposite of humility. Selfishness is worshipping self rather than God. While it is a sign of someone who can be unregenerate, throughout Scripture, selfishness is indicative of someone who is living apart from God's law.**

## **B. Scriptures for Lesson:**

**Philippians 2:3-4** *“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4 not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.”*

**1 Corinthians 10:24** *“We should stop looking out for our own interests and instead focus on the people living and breathing around us.”*

**Philippians 2:20-21** *“I have no one else like Timothy, who genuinely cares about your welfare. 21 All the others care only for themselves and not for what matters to Jesus Christ.”*

**Proverbs 18:1** *“Whoever pulls away from others to focus solely on his own desires disregards any sense of sound judgment.”*

**2 Timothy 3:1-2** *“But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy.”*

**Romans 2:8-9** *“But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. 9 There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.”*

**James 3:14-16** *“But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing”*

**Jeremiah 45:5** *“Are you seeking great things for yourself? Don’t do it! I will bring great disaster upon all these people; but I will give you your life as a reward wherever you go. I, the LORD, have spoken!”*

## **C. Selfishness Discussion**

The core of selfishness is self-idolatry. When someone behaves in a selfish manner, they are typically unaware of the pain they cause others. It is extremely easy to behave in a selfish manner. Since being selfish is focusing on you, we are not glorifying God with all our heart, soul and mind.

With us all born sinners, our natural state of being is one of complete selfishness. We cannot act completely selfless unless we are made into a new creation by the blood of Christ. Even then, for Christians being selfless is something we have to grow into on our journey of sanctification.

Observations of a person being Selfish for review and general discussion:

- 1) For a selfish person, it is always only about them. They don’t usually ask themselves if the problem is them, but always blame someone else. Many times we see the selfish persons relationship with themselves mirrored in their relationship with others.
- 2) Can be uncaring and neglectful other people’s needs.
- 3) Can be manipulative and they’re looking to get something out of you for their own benefit.
- 4) Conceited and self-centered, however, they are not satisfied with being the priority.
- 5) Selfishness finds sharing and giving very difficult

- 6) Put their own goals and desires always above others
- 7) Selfish people do not like to show weakness or vulnerability. They fail to recognize that weaknesses are what make us human and this adversely affects their Perfectionism of self
- 8) Does not accept constructive criticism very well and may not accept that they can be wrong
- 9) Believe they deserve anything they want
- 10) Do not listen well to those who disagree with them
- 11) Unable to tolerate failure of any kind
- 12) Selfish people in many cases attempt to dominate others

The Bible provides a remedy for selfishness! We first must acknowledge that selfishness is sin, and that all sin is enmity against God. In 2 Corinthians we learn that Christ died for us, so that we might no longer be bound by a life of complete selfishness. Through sanctification, we are made more like Christ. We learn to be more loving, kind, brotherly, sympathetic and humble. We need to pray for humility and the love for others. We must remain in the heart and mind of God and not focusing on our own selfish desires.

**D. Questions for Small Group Discussion:**

1. Do Selfishness and Pride have the same "Core Issue" causing them? If so what is it?
2. Discuss the differences between Pride and Selfishness? What are the similarities?
3. What does a "humbleness of spirit" do within the heart to control Pride or Selfishness? Is this a "cure" for both?
4. After contemplating James 3:14-16 and contrasting the core of this series being Peace, Joy and Contentment for Christians, can we arrive at the desired relationship with God if this characteristics is dominant and drives our lives? Why?
5. What does selfishness do to our desire to serve, or give to others? Why?
6. How can selfishness impact our prayers?
7. How can selfishness impact our relationship with God? Reference Jeremiah 45 above?