

Self-Life Characteristics

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(John 6:63-65) *“What gives life is God's Spirit; human power is of no use at all. The words I have spoken to you bring God's life-giving Spirit. Yet some of you do not believe.”*

“(Jesus knew from the very beginning who were the ones that would not believe and which one would betray him.) And he added, ‘This is the very reason I told you that no people can come to me unless the Father makes it possible for them to do so.’”

(Vs.66-68), *“Because of this, many of Jesus' followers turned back and would not go with him anymore. So, he asked the twelve disciples, ‘And you--would you also like to leave?’ Simon Peter answered him, ‘Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words that give eternal life.’”*

A true believer should know that when every situation and circumstance is placed in God's hands to stay, and the answer to prayer is received--(whether it be for divine wisdom, a home, for work, conviction, healing, protection, or anything else), the spiritual blessing received is far more valuable than the answer. We will say as Naaman said; *“Indeed, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, except in Israel.”*

One characteristic of 'self' is, that it will always look to some human plan, help, or man's way to solve a problem--it will always try to force a change in attitude, to secure a job, or a way to obtain necessary finances.

Opposite to that attitude (of self) is the Spiritual mind, which always goes to God in prayer concerning every circumstance of life--(whether it be trusting for a house, for employment, change of attitude, healing, or finances). By going to God in prayer and opening our hearts to Him about all things, we will effectively deal a lethal blow to the 'self' that can be hidden in our heart.

One of the most serious results of "the Fall" of man--(called "the Fall" because Adam "fell" into sin by eating the forbidden fruit, Genesis 3), is that humans became afraid of God. They

don't know Him anymore, so they run from Him. By nature of this "original sin" that man fell into, they are reluctant to deal with God, but willing to deal with anything or anyone else.

Adam accepted Satan's word, which erased his knowledge of God. Thus, he lost his faith in God and wasn't able (from that time on), to depend on God's power. It was a terrible condition to be in (and a terrible attitude to have), but it was so. And, that lack of knowledge of God continues today (unfortunately) even among professed Christians.

When we settle it definitely to depend on God alone and that we are going to burn every bridge or escape route behind us, then self is eliminated. We no longer try to control things in our own way.

A true follower of Christ must even risk their life on God's Word and His faithfulness. Jesus meant that in Luke 14:26, *“If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.”*

We cannot follow the path He walked if any thing, any object, any interest, or any person is placed ahead of God. *“You shall have no other gods before Me!”* (Exodus 20:3).

To hate our own life (or the life of self and the world) is to take the attitude that God, His Word, and His ways are always placed ahead of every other person or thing on this earth. We must be willing to leave what may be very dear to us if the choice is plainly between them and God.

Abraham left his father's house, Moses left the Pharaoh's palace, and Simon Peter his occupation. If our devotion (or love for) our job, our possessions, material things, worldly interests, or even any loved one, comes into competition with our love for (or responsibility to) God and Christ Jesus, .. we must give God the preference.

When a decision must be made that is clearly between God's will and the world's way, then that decision must always be made for God's way. The test is whether we have placed God and His will first or second.

Another way to remove self from our life, is to accept God's Word without question. We are to believe the testimony God has given about His Son. We are to believe that through His death and resurrection and because of His broken body and shed blood, we are thoroughly convinced

that God will manifest His almighty power in our behalf.

That right attitude of believing is clearly shown in the Roman military commander in (Matt.8:8). That centurion who had 100 soldiers under his command, put man where he belongs, and placed Jesus where everyone should place Him. He thought so much of God's Son, and he believed that Jesus was so righteous, perfect, and good, that He should not even have to walk to his house (but that Jesus just say His Word!

John the Baptist also took his right place by receiving the Holy Spirit early in life. When speaking of Jesus Christ, he said (Luke 3:16), *"One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loosen."*

Then in (John 1:27) it is worded a little differently, *"It is He who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loosen."*

That is the humble position we must always take. It is a human taking their right place, and, giving Jesus Christ His right (and exalted and divine) place.

That army commander only needed the Word (the divine Word of God's Son), so he answered, *"Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed."*

Jesus was amazed and astonished that the commander would know enough about God's power to respond in that way. He said to those who followed Him (vs 10), *"Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!"*

That was a meaningful comment for Jesus to make (about a person being willing to deal directly and personally with God) —desiring only the Word (of God) [the same Word we have today] to even be seeing God's Son in Person by his servant's bedside.

The Master (Jesus) was amazed to hear that the Centurion gave Him His right (and divine) place and was willing to take the Words Jesus spoke as sufficient evidence for the deliverance needed. He had simply replied, *"Speak the word only, and my servant will be healed."*

That may seem like an innocent statement (at first), but actually was a most significant and very profound one, for Jesus continued

(vs. 11-12) *"I assure you that many will come from the east and the west and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob at the feast in the Kingdom of heaven. But those who should be in the Kingdom will be thrown out into the darkness, where they will cry and gnash their teeth."* Jesus meant, "here is a man who has the right attitude toward God and His Word. With such an attitude, I can give him a passageway to Heaven."

This is the 'kind of person' (Jesus meant), who will enter the 'Kingdom of Heaven'. Anyone who gives God and His Word their right place in their life, is ready to enter Heaven. It was a profound and significant statement, indeed!

Let us consider this: before the centurion approached Jesus 'for the healing of his servant', the centurion was headed toward the Lake of Fire. But, as a result of taking his right place (of humility) and giving God His right place (which means to be willing to trust God alone and accept only God's Word as sufficient evidence for healing, protection, and supplies), the man's path was rerouted, and he was directed to the path that leads to 'Eternal Life'. It was a most significant statement, for sure!

The removal of self from every believer's heart is absolutely necessary to have accomplished. The unfortunate facts are, that there are very few proclaimed Christians who have any idea of the self-life's existence within their heart.

When man rebelled against God because of the temptation Satan offered to him, he began (at that time) to depend on himself and try to control his own personal way in the world (all according to his own ability and reasoning). That is the foundation, the basis, and the support of the self-life, and it is more common today than ever.

Multitudes of people (who may be members of established churches), who do not harm anyone intentionally, who live a good, honest, moral life, and who may perform generous and charitable deeds, still have a carnal [worldly] mind. 'Self' within them is controlling every action, word, and decision, but they don't realize it.

(Rom.8:7-8), *"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God." (Vs.7) plainly*

says, "People become enemies of God when they are controlled by their human nature; for they do not obey God's law, and in fact cannot obey it."

Everyone born after Adam, inherited the 'fallen nature' (that 'control of self') from Adam. Jesus tells us that this attitude of self must be completely removed and eliminated before we can enter into God's blessings.

This control of self must not be polished up to appear all right on the surface, because it is not and cannot be justified in any way whatever. It is to be erased and eliminated! Every believer must know that.

If this self-life is not gotten rid of completely, we cannot have real faith in God (something every believer must have). Every true Christian must have total faith in what God can do.

We can never trust (and serve) the living God with our whole heart, soul, and mind. We cannot love our neighbor as ourselves, and we cannot obey every command that God gives us in the Bible, until we have a real and an active faith in God.

When self is gone, a divine nature takes its place. This new and different attitude (of the divine life) drives away doubt, fear, and uncertainty. We begin looking to God for all things. We will love Him supremely; we can forgive those who wronged us; we will bless those who ridicule us; and we will pray for those who take advantage of us.

The result of this new nature within and this right attitude towards God is, we will show divine love for God [and divine love toward everyone else]. This new nature (or attitude) gives us divine wisdom, and the ability to make necessary changes in our attitude, which results in receiving God's protection, health, and peace.

When we have been forgotten, neglected, or spitefully used by someone, and (with the Holy Spirit's help) we don't resent or hurt from the insult or the oversight, but in our heart we are happy because we have been counted worthy to suffer for the sake of Jesus, that is evidence that 'self' in our heart, is gone.

When some good we have done, is spoken of as evil; when we have been double-crossed, or our advice disregarded and our opinions ridiculed, and, by God's ability, no anger

or resentment is felt, then God has removed self from within. If there is no thought of defending ourselves against such mistreatment, but we take it in patient silence, that is 'dying to self'.

When we really are content with any wage, with the house we rent, our neighborhood, the vehicle we drive, or whatever job that God has led us to, we can be certain that the self (which was originally in our heart) has been eliminated (which must happen by God's mercy!)

If we are satisfied with the food we have, the gifts that we are given, and the plain clothes we wear; we can be sure that self is gone from within. If we can be imposed upon, taken advantage of, or interrupted at a bad time, and we can endure it patiently (as Jesus would have), .. that is 'dying to self' (as was Jesus' example for us to follow in His steps.)

When we don't speak highly of ourselves (or of our family or our children) in any conversation, nor remind others about some good deeds we may have done, then we can know that 'self' is erased. When we seek no praise for ourselves or our family, and we truly desire not to be recognized, that is dying to self (which must be gone from our hearts!)

When we see things going well for a friend, and see all of their needs being met, while our needs seem to have been neglected, and we can be truly happy for that other person, that is elimination of self.

When we can receive correction or reproof or instruction from one of less experience, education, or social standing, and we can humbly submit inwardly as well as outwardly, with absolutely no anger, revenge, or animosity within our heart, that is clear evidence that 'self' has been erased.

'Self' can take many and various forms, but the Holy Spirit is the only One who can interpret them for us and reveal their presence in our heart.

If we recognize (through God's help) a spirit of pride or exalted feeling in view of some success we have had, or because of some promotion we have been given; there is still some 'self' in control. *"Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall,"* (Prov.16:18 says.)

Some 'self' remains if we are ever conscious of anger, resentment, or, impatience for no Scriptural reason. If we are overly sensitive or have tendency to snap back in retaliation when insulted or criticized; some 'self' (still needs to be erased). (Psalm 37:8), "Refrain from anger and turn from wrath." And (James 1:19) *"Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry."*

If God reveals to us that we are self-willed, stubborn, and unteachable--if we are fond of arguing and giving sarcastic remarks, then 'self' is still influencing our ways. If we realize that we have been critical of others and have had a tendency to find flaws in everyone else, then some self still must be removed. (A true Christlike nature tries to see the good side of everyone else.) (James 3:17) *"But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."*

(Today's English translation words it): *"The wisdom from above is pure first of all; it is also peaceful, gentle, and friendly; it is full of compassion and produces a harvest of good deeds; it is free from prejudice and hypocrisy."*

As the Holy Spirit reveals these wrong attitudes within our heart, our responsibility is to place our ways (and attitudes) totally in God's hands for the elimination of that control. (and responses) of 'self' that is so prevalent in the world today.

'Self' must be completely removed from our life, because, it is the cause of all the problems in the world, the strife, disharmony in homes, anxiety, accidents, illness, and all the calamities that this world has known; they all have their source in that original, deadly sin of placing God aside, and following the world's way. These troubles have all come about, because of the sinful nature that controls the heart.

If anyone would be so unfortunate as to end up in the Lake of Fire, they can be absolutely sure of this one thing--that it was the 'self-life' that led them to that 'place of eternal torment'. 'Self' can appear very pious and outwardly good and righteous, but it is the basic cause of all the terrible things that have ever taken place in this world.

No matter what 'disguise' the self-life may be wearing, and regardless of how sensible it may seem from a human standpoint, it can destroy our lives forever, by leading us to that dreadful [and never-ending] Lake of Fire.

Every day, we must repent, confess our former ways and attitudes, and to ask God in prayer, to "take our lives, and make them wholly Thine; fill our hearts with Thy great love divine." And ask Him to take "our self-will, our desires, self and pride, and enable us to surrender them all to Him."

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