

Get Over Your Selfie
Generosity Over Selfishness
LEADER NOTES
Sunday, November 3rd, 2019

“Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God — truly righteous and holy.” Ephesians 4:21-24 NLT

Series question: How do I get over myself and experience God’s best?

Three steps: Focus on Jesus, get rid of the old, put on the new (God’s righteousness).

Hi LifeGroup leaders! For week 4 of our series we are exploring how to help one another “get over” selfishness in our lives and embrace generosity. This is God’s plan for us. Part of our challenge in this study is to help our group members identify how selfishness shows up in their life. Let’s face it, none of us want to be known as selfish people, but we all have a natural bent toward it. We need to identify and confess our selfishness if we are going to get over it. The second part of our study is to embrace generosity. Many of us measure our generosity in comparison to other people but God wants us to gauge our generosity on His standard – extravagant generosity . To begin, read the icebreaker to your group and have them share with the group someone they know whom they would consider generous. Have fun!

ICEBREAKER: Some of the most generous people I know are our friends from our ministry partnership in Uganda. They have far less material resources than we do in Canada, yet many times they have given us gifts, a handwritten card or other expressions of love. Their generosity of time, talents and treasure is something God has used to bond us together as His people. How have you been impacted by the generosity of another person? Maybe it was someone who gave you their time when you needed it, or someone who lended you their expertise or skill on a project. How has their generosity impacted you?

VIDEO: Watch this week’s video – Generosity Over Selfishness

<https://www.lifegroupleaders.ca/studies/>

STUDY:

The attitude and act of generosity is one of the greatest ways to be blessed and to live like God. Generosity is a great way to live. It is freeing. It is a blessing to others. It is powerful in what it can do in us and through us to others. God wants us to commit to living a life of generosity, a life of joy that comes from giving to others.

SELFISHNESS (What it is and how to get over it)

Read the following quote and definition to your group and then ask, "So, what do you think? Do you agree with the quote from Robert Morris? Why or why not? Do you agree with the way we've defined selfishness? Would you add anything else to this definition?"

"No one is a natural-born giver. We are all born takers. We enter this world with a fallen sin nature, at the heart of that nature is a tendency toward selfishness." The Blessed Life Robert Morris

Selfishness Defined: To be selfish is to think about our own needs and prioritize our own needs above the needs of others.

READ Philippians 2:3-4 **Ask someone to read these verses out loud to the group.**

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others." NIV

- In this verse, Paul compares selfishness to "vain conceit", a posture of being arrogant or having an overly high opinion of oneself. To be selfish is to be narcissistic. How might we know if we are being motivated by selfish ambition? As a group, see if you can come up with 3 or 4 examples.

Examples:

- I act or speak in a way to try to impress others.
- I find myself thinking about my needs rather than serving others.
- I am generally impatient or short tempered with others.
- I am self absorbed and self important.

READ Galatians 5:19-21

- Selfishness is often expressed by building oneself up while tearing someone else down. As you read through the acts of the sinful nature that Paul lists in these verses, how do

you see selfishness reflected in the other acts? In what ways is selfishness at the root of our sin?

All of the acts listed in Galatians 5:19-21 are rooted in selfishness. When I think only of pleasing myself, the result is sin. Selfishness is at the root of our sin because when I am selfish I set myself up in place of God. I live for me, my, mine.

Traits of Selfishness

As a group, look up the following Scriptures and describe the traits of selfishness you find.

Galatians 5:20

Paul lists “selfish ambition” as one of the desires of our sinful nature. Selfishness is sin.

James 3:16

Selfish ambition results in “disorder” and “evil of every kind” according to James.

Psalms 78:18

Selfishness happens when we demand our own way.

Matthew 19:21-22

Selfishness happens when I make my possessions my god.

Proverbs 18:1

Selfishness comes from a “me first” attitude where I care only about myself.

James 4:3

Selfishness comes from wrong motives in prayer – asking God only for things to please myself.

James 3:13-15

Living selfishly is unwise. We often try to cover up or lie about our selfishness.

What have these verses shown you about the nature of selfishness?

Getting Over Selfishness

- What are some practical ways to get over selfishness? Think back to the verses you've read in group and see if you can come up with 5 practical steps to take.

Examples – 1. This week, read about the needs of others on Creekside's missions page <https://www.creeksidechurch.ca/missions/> 2. Sign up to sponsor a child with an organization like Compassion Canada.

EMBRACING GENEROSITY

God is a giver. The most widely known verse in the Bible tells us:

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son” John 3:16 NIV

Generosity defined – generosity is the quality of being kind and unselfish, especially as it pertains to sharing our time, talents and treasure with others.

Ask your group – “What do you think about this definition of generosity? Anything you would add or change?”

READ 2 Corinthians 9:14-15

“And they will pray for you with deep affection because of the overflowing grace God has given to you. Thank God for this gift too wonderful for words!” NLT

- “Thank God for this gift (Jesus) too wonderful for words!” Our God is generous. He loves us so much that He has given us His Son. God longs for us to grow to have the same kind of generous heart He does. Besides the gift of Jesus, what are other ways that God has been generous to us?

Examples:

- He's given us a beautiful world filled with things to enjoy.
- He has given us senses to experience pleasure.
- He gives us skills and abilities.

READ Proverbs 22:9

“Blessed are those who are generous, because they feed the poor.” NLT

- One of the Hebrew words for “blessed” in the Bible is *esher* which is translated as happiness. God is telling us that true happiness comes when we give ourselves to others. How might this happiness be different from the happiness we might experience on a vacation or in owning a new car?

Pleasurable experiences like vacation or a new car are temporary and can be surfacal. While thse thing can be part of the good gifts that God has for us, there are deeper and longer lasting ways to experience happiness. These involve doing God’s will, particularly in serving and giving to others. True and lasting happiness comes from living how God has designed us to.

- There are many references in the Bible to being generous to the poor. How do you define “poor”? Where do you see opportunities to “feed the poor” locally, globally?

READ Proverbs 11:24-26

“Give freely and become more wealthy; be stingy and lose everything. The generous will prosper; those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed. People curse those who hoard their grain, but they bless the one who sells in time of need.”

- “Those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed” – in this and other passages in Scripture, God promises that those who are generous to others will be rewarded by God. What are some ways that God might prosper or refresh those who are generous for Him?

We may feel reengerized physically, emotionally, mentally, spiritually.

We may experience an unexpected blessing from God – a provision, for example.

- There are many ways for us to be generous that do not involve money. We can be generous with our time with others. We can be generous with our talents. What are some ways that you have experienced this? How have you been refreshed by giving yourself to others in these ways?

READ. 2 Corinthians 9:12

“So two good things will result from this ministry of giving – the needs of believers in Jerusalem will be met, and they will joyfully express their thanks to God.” NLT

- Paul writes here that an outcome of generosity is the receivers will “joyfully express their thanks to God.” One of the blessings of generosity is joy experienced by both the giver and the receiver. This joy ultimately comes from knowing God loves us and has provided for us. What are 4 or 5 ways we experience joy as a result of generosity? (example – we might get to see the positive effect of our giving)

We can have the joy and satisfaction of knowing we are doing God’s will.

We may experience joy in knowing God’s pleasure, that He is pleased with our generosity.

We can have the joy that comes from a deep sense of purpose beyond ourselves.

We can have the joy of growing in our faith, becoming more like Jesus.

TAKEAWAY

- What is a practical step you can take this week to be generous? Write it down here and ask God to help you live it out!
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PRAY

Spend time tonight thanking God for his generosity to you. What are some specific gifts you can thank Him for? Ask God to show you how to grow a generous heart like His.