

**General Topics :: Self****Self - posted by MaryJane, on: 2009/10/11 12:01**

Greetings

This was shared with me through email and as I read through it, I realized that there have been times in the past in my own walk when I have tried to look at outside sources as an excuse for my sin instead of looking in the mirror and seeing self at work.

God Bless  
mj

In every sin we can see "self" at work. Although people today classify sins into an untold number of categories, yet if you think about it for a moment there is but one basic sin: all the thoughts and deeds which are sins are related to "self." In other words, though the number of sins in the world is indeed astronomical, the principle behind every sin is simply one--whatever is for self. All sins are committed for the sake of the self. If the element of self is missing, there will be no sin. Let us examine this point a little more closely.

What is pride? Is it not an exalting of self? What is jealousy? Is not jealousy a fear of someone having more or receiving more recognition than "self" even sometimes to the point that you think evil of them or their motives. What is ambition or competitive drive? It is nothing less than a striving to excel over others to make our "self" look good or better than another person. What is anger? Anger is reacting against the loss the self suffers. What is adultery? It is following self's passions and lusts. What is cowardice? Is it not a caring for self's weakness and preoccupation to protect "self" against a loss? Now it is impossible to mention every sin, but if we were to examine all of them one by one, we would discover that the principle within each one is always the same: it is something that is some way related to self. Wherever sin is, there is the activity of the self. And wherever self is active, there will be sin before God.

On the other hand, in examining the fruit of the Holy Spirit—which expresses the true work of Jesus in our hearts—we shall readily see the opposite: that they are none other than selfless acts. What is love? Love is loving others without thinking of self and what we get out of a relationship. What is joy? It is looking at God and trusting Him in spite of what we think "self" needs. Patience is to regard as negligible, worthless, or distasteful one's own hardship. Peace is disregarding one's loss. Gentleness is overlooking one's rights. Humility is forgetting one's merits and achievements. What does it take to not indulge the appetites or passions? Is it not the same as the self under control? And faithfulness is self-restraint. As we examine every Christian virtue, we will discern that other than being delivered from self or being forgetful of self, a believer has no other virtue. The fruit of the Holy Spirit is determined by one principle alone: the losing of self totally.

Granted, I have only mentioned a few virtues and a few sins; but I trust they are sufficient to prove that sin is the following of self whereas virtue is the forgetting of self. If we understand these two principles, we can daily observe all the various sins and judge whether each one is related to self or not. But let me tell you plainly that apart from man being "selfless" there is no virtue and apart from his being "selfish" there is no sin.

God wants us to turn from this sinful preoccupation with self and learn to lean on him for everything. Our God desires us to have a permanent relationship with Him as His children so that we may continuously trust in Him. He wants us to be conscious of our utter helplessness and to admit that if it were not because of his keeping power, we could not stand a single moment, that if it were not because of His strengthening we could not do a thing.

You might ask how to I turn from this sinful preoccupation with my "self" and learn to trust God for every breath? Good question! Why not start by crying out to God to show you the way and also by talking with those that really love Him. : )

**Re: Self - posted by IWantAnguish (), on: 2009/10/11 12:15**

Great read.

As Leonard Ravenhill said, 'The greatest sin in the world is not adultery, the greatest sin in the world is saying, "I can manage my life without God."'

**Re: Self - posted by Leo\_Grace, on: 2009/10/11 12:24**

Thank you for this post, mj. It captures with elegant simplicity the difference between the old life (self) and the one that has been reborn (dead to self).

I might add that when we are commanded by God to "Love your neighbor as yourself", it doesn't mean that we should equally value another person as we do ourselves. What it really means is that we should give to that other person ALL the love that we once held for ourselves, so that there is nothing left for self.

When one lives his/her life with this divine, Spirit-filled, selfless attitude of the heart, all the law and all the prophets are fulfilled.