

Why Believers Must Eradicate This Ungodly Character Trait

Growing up, the sound of 88 keys on a piano and voices in three-part harmony often filled our home. Not surprisingly, a love for music compelled me to pursue it as a career.

I can't imagine my life without the joy of leading worship, or writing a song or simply listening to a beautiful melody. My heart halted for a moment as I read Ezekiel 26:13, "I will cause the noise of your songs to cease. And the sound of your harps shall be heard no more." Tyre, a highly cultured city, famed for its exquisite music as it reverberated off the Mediterranean Sea, sat silent.

Ezekiel's prophecy in Chapter 26 depicts utter destruction of the notorious city whose name meant "rock." Once renowned for strength and wealth, the shock of battering rams beat down her walls. Horses and chariots trampled through her streets as dust billowed into the air. Riches became plunder and men, women and children became casualties of war. Fishermen dried their nets on her scraped soil once covered by the merchant princes.

Splendor laid bare. Significance stripped. Purpose obliterated. Why? What was their crime?

The secret lies in Ezekiel 26:2: "Aha, the gateway of the peoples is broken. It has opened to me. I shall be filled now that she is laid waste." As Tyre watched God's people suffer judgement, they rejoiced at the opportunity to take advantage of Jerusalem's demise. Their proximity as prominent cities made them financial rivals. Seeing Jerusalem as a commercial competitor, Tyre welcomed her collapse as their gain. Yet although Jerusalem was under divine judgement, that was not an excuse for other countries to celebrate her punishment. God is

a just judge; He cannot look aside. Eventually, Tyre was completely decimated, a sobering illustration of the danger of selfishness.

Selfishness distorts our perspective, causing us to view someone else's trial through a lens of "how this might benefit me." *Their bankrupt business could increase my bottom line. Their failed marriage might make mine look better. They got what they deserved; now maybe there is more room for me at the table.*

We grieve the heart of God when we celebrate someone's struggle. Selfishness shoves its way to the front. Selflessness makes space for others. Selfishness looks for the opportunity at someone else's expense. Selflessness looks for the opportunity to expend itself for others.

Selfishness silences our purpose. Selflessness responds with grace.

I'm ashamed of times in my life where I let selfishness guide my choices. When feelings of inadequacy rear their ugly head, I resort to measuring my worth against someone else's success or struggle. We fall into a dangerous trap when we try and push open opportunities instead of letting God move His way. I feel most vulnerable when I think there might not be enough room for me at the table. In those moments, I lean into the reminder that He is my Provider. This helps me take my eyes off myself and on to the needs of others.

Selfishness is rooted in a scarcity mindset, driven by the false belief that one person's pain is another's gain. We can silence selfishness. As we selflessly yield ourselves to God, we trust that God *is* and *has* enough for me. We don't need someone else to fail in order to succeed. Instead, we can choose to let God use us as instruments of peace as we help others recover their purpose. {eoa}

Some days, real life is more outrageous than fiction. But

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