

The Secret to Your Best Life

One of the greatest lessons I've learned is that you can't be both selfish and happy. I know this is true through my own personal experience, but more importantly, the Bible has some things to say about the attitude we should have about "self."

For example, love is not selfish. In the Amplified Bible, 1 Corinthians 13:5 says love "is not self-seeking." In 1 Corinthians 15:31, the apostle Paul said, "I die daily [I face death and die to self]," which basically means he was not self-seeking but instead focused on doing what God called him to do with his life.

There are also Scriptures that teach us the importance of having self-control. Galatians 5:23 lists self-control as a fruit of the Spirit, and 2 Timothy 1:7 says that in Christ, we have a spirit "of power and of love and ... personal discipline [abilities that result in a calm, well-balanced mind and self-control]."

If you've lived very long, you realize that not being selfish requires self-control, because we're all born with a human nature that is selfish. Think about how babies act: They are only concerned with what they need and usually cry when they don't get their way.

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Thankfully, when we experience new life in Christ, we die to sin (Rom. 6:11). But even though we die to sin, sin does not die. That's why we have to continually make the decision over and over again to choose to do the right thing on purpose. And we have what it takes, in Christ, to do what's right—whether we feel like it or not.

As Christians, we're destined to be molded into the image of

Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:29). Jesus is the greatest example of what it means to love others and not live a selfish life. First John 3:16 (NIV) says, "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters."

This Scripture shows us that Jesus gave everything when He demonstrated His love for us. And we are to follow His example.

The truth is, loving others is not always easy, and it always costs us something: time, money, convenience and so on. But through our relationship with Christ, we can find the strength and ability to love others, even when it seems to cost more than we think we can give.

God is faithful to give us His love, grace and wisdom to reach out and be a blessing to others. And when we do, we end up receiving more joy and peace than we had before.

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It's important to understand that God doesn't expect you to take this to such an extreme that you don't take care of yourself. We need to use wisdom so we can be healthy emotionally, mentally and physically while we're helping others. In following Jesus' example, remember to make your relationship with God your No. 1 priority and do what He puts in your heart to do.

The world is full of lonely, hurting people who are hungry for the love of God and the hope only found in Jesus. I want to encourage you to get rid of a "What about me?" mindset and instead pray, "God, show me someone who needs a blessing. Show me someone I can help."

We all have room to grow in our relationship with God, and

learning how to reach out to others is a big part of that process. I used to be self-centered and focused on getting my way all the time. And I was miserable! But now I am happier than I've ever been because I don't spend all my time thinking about what I want, what I think and how I feel. The truth is, you can't be happy if the center of your life is you!

Imagine how different the world would be if everyone would just do one nice thing to help someone else every day. It can be so simple to put a smile on someone's face. Give a compliment, give something away, take the time to listen, open a door for someone, let someone go before you in line at the store—the list could go on and on.

Make it your business to regularly reach out to people around you, encouraging them and meeting their needs as you are able to do it. Be determined each day to do at least one thing for someone else that makes their life better. Trust me: You'll discover that serving God by loving others is the most wonderful, exciting thing you can do!

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Joyce Meyer is a New York Times best-selling author and founder of Joyce Meyer Ministries Inc. She has authored more than 140 books, including "Battlefield of the Mind" and "Overcoming Every Problem" (FaithWords). She hosts the "Enjoying Everyday Life" radio and TV programs, which air on hundreds of stations worldwide. For more information, visit .

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