

Salvation From Self-Centredness

by Zac Poonen

Jesus came to save us from self-centredness, and a God-centred life is the key to experiencing true joy, peace, and spiritual virtues.

Scripture: Psalm 37:4, Psalm 84:11, Matthew 6:9-10, Romans 6:14, James 5:16

Topics: "God-Centered Living", "Self-Centredness"

Description

Zac Poonen emphasizes that Jesus came to save us from self-centredness, which often infiltrates even our most sacred desires. He explains that true spirituality requires a heart centered on God rather than on personal gain or blessings. Poonen highlights the importance of prioritizing God's glory in our prayers and lives, illustrating that joy and peace stem from being God-centered. He encourages believers to love God and others, as this is the antidote to self-centredness. Ultimately, a genuine spiritual life is marked by a desire for God's presence over His gifts.

Transcript

Jesus came to save us from sin. In other words, He came to save us from self-centredness. Put the word "self-centredness" instead of the word 'sin' in the New Testament and you'll see what meaning comes up in many passages. "Sin shall not be master over you" becomes "Self-centredness will not be master over you" (Rom. 6:14). That's God's desire for His people. And yet if we examine our lives, we'll find that even in our most sacred desires, there is self-centredness. To ask God to fill us with the Holy Spirit can be a self-centred desire, if we want this power in order to be a great preacher, or a great healer etc., That's as self-centred a desire as wanting to be great in this world. Do you see how sin enters even into the most holy place? That's why Jesus taught us to pray, first of all, not even that we might be filled with the Spirit, but that God's name might be hallowed.

Only a truly spiritual man can pray this prayer in sincerity. Anyone can repeat this prayer, of course. Even a parrot can do that. But to really mean it, from the depths of our hearts, will require a total devotion to God, where He is first in our lives, where we are centred in Him, and where we are not seeking His blessing as much as Himself. If He gives us His gifts, well and good; and if He does not give us any gifts that's all right with us too, because we long for God Himself, and not His gifts.

Why did God teach the Israelites to love Him with all their hearts and to love their neighbour as themselves? Only to deliver them from their self-centredness.

There is an acrostic on the word joy that says, "Put J - Jesus first, O - others next, and Y - yourself last. Then you can have joy." God is perpetually full of joy. There is no sorrow or anxiety in heaven, because everything is centred in God. The angels are always rejoicing, because they are centred in God.

The reason we lack joy, peace, and so many other spiritual virtues is because we haven't found our proper centre. We tend to use God for our own ends. Our prayers reveal how self-centred we are.

"Delight yourself in the Lord" the Bible says, "and He will give you the desires of your heart." (Psa. 37:4). To delight ourselves in the Lord is to put God at the centre of our lives. And so it is only a God-centred person who can have all the desires of his heart. "No good thing, will God withhold from those who walk uprightly (that is, from those who are walking with their head on top - who have God controlling their lives)" (Psalm 84:11).

"The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man accomplishes much" - and the righteous man is the God-centred man (James 5:16). On the contrary, the fervent prayer of the self-centred man, even if he prays all night is going to avail nothing. It is the type of life we live that gives value to the prayer we pray. That's why the first three longings of our life should be : "Father, Your Name should be hallowed. Your kingdom should come. Your will should be done."

We may have many other requests such as, "Heal me of my backache, help me to find a better house to live in, help my son to get a job," etc. These are all good requests. But if you can say, "Father, even if you don't grant these requests, my primary desire is that Your Name will be glorified" - then you're a spiritual man.

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