

# Sojourners and Exiles

*Threats to North Collin, 2024*

*Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.*

**1 Peter 2:11**

# LOVE OF SELF

When we use the phrase, "**Love of Self**," we're not talking about the natural care and concern you have for yourself or the fact that you do have value.

We're talking about allowing that natural feeling to go too far.

# LOVE OF SELF

## Selfishness & Self-Centeredness

**Selfishness** and **self-centeredness** are related but distinct concepts:

1. **Selfishness:** This refers to prioritizing one's own needs, desires, and interests at the expense of others. A selfish person typically makes decisions based solely on what benefits them, often disregarding the impact on others. Selfishness is more about actions and choices that are directly aimed at fulfilling personal gain, even if it harms others.
2. **Self-Centeredness:** This involves a focus on oneself to the point where one's own thoughts, feelings, and experiences dominate their perspective. A self-centered person might not necessarily act in a harmful way, but they often lack awareness or concern for others' needs or viewpoints. They see the world primarily in relation to themselves, which can lead to a lack of empathy or understanding.

In summary:

**Selfishness** is about actions that prioritize personal gain, often at others' expense.

**Self-Centeredness** is about a mindset or perspective that is overly focused on oneself, possibly leading to a limited understanding of others.

# LOVE OF SELF

*How is it affecting members of North Collin?*

**Love of Self directly affects our relationships** - especially the relationships we have with those who are **closest to us**.

# LOVE OF SELF

## *How is it affecting members of North Collin?*

Our concept of Love of Self begins in the home with the Parent-Child relationship.

Some parents set a great example of Godliness in the home with regard to Love of Self. This is our goal!

Unfortunately, many do not. If you were raised by particularly selfish and/or self-centered parents, 1 of 3 things is likely to have occurred:

1. Their attitudes and habits rubbed off on you.
2. You reacted by going the opposite direction. If anything, you self-sacrifice to a fault and may even build resentment towards others at times as a result.
3. Some combination of 1 and 2.

**A lifetime of example is a powerful thing.**

**How does this information apply to you?**

# LOVE OF SELF

*How is it affecting members of North Collin?*

Love of Self only **originates** in the home. It **extends outward** into our relationships with friends, co-workers, spouses, church family, etc...

At North Collin, Rod and I are primarily dealing with issues regarding Love of Self in members' **marriages**. We occasionally deal with issues in close outside relationships with adult siblings, other members of the church, etc..., but Love of Self can really cause issues in a marriage.

# LOVE OF SELF

## *So what does God say about it?*

We've seen a lot about that in the past few classes, haven't we? The Bible clearly teaches that **we are to put others FIRST if we want to be like God and please God.**

**Philippians 2:3-5** Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. <sup>4</sup> Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. <sup>5</sup> Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus.

**John 15:12-13** <sup>12</sup> "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup> Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.

**1 John 3:16** <sup>16</sup> By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.

**Galatians 5:14** For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

**Luke 10:25-37** The parable of the Good Samaritan reiterates God's desire that we serve our neighbors and makes it clear that everyone we meet is our neighbor.

# LOVE OF SELF

## *What Should I do?*

If you are struggling in your marriage or another close relationship, you usually need to **stop focusing on what the other person is doing or not doing** to please you and **think more about what you need to be doing or not doing** to please them (and, ultimately, God).

**We can't control other people - we often can't even control ourselves.**

**Matthew 7:1-5** Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.



# LOVE OF SELF

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**We often need to remember our place  
and establish proper perspectives about ourselves.**

**James 4:1-12** What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. **3** You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"? But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you. Do not speak evil against one another, brothers. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?

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**Psalms 14:2-3** The Lord looks down from heaven on the children of man to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one.

**Romans 3:23** ...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...

# LOVE OF SELF

## *What Should I do?*

Many of us need to learn to let some things go and move forward in our relationships with other people.

**1 Corinthians 6:1-11** "...Why not rather suffer wrong? Why not rather be defrauded?"

**Matthew 5:38-42** "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' <sup>39</sup> But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. <sup>40</sup> And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. <sup>41</sup> And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. <sup>42</sup> Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.

**Matthew 18:21-35** <sup>32</sup> "Then his master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. <sup>33</sup> And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' <sup>34</sup> And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. <sup>35</sup> So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."

# LOVE OF SELF

## *What Should I do?*

**We're supposed to do our best to get along with the people around us - how much more so should this apply to those who are closest to us?**

**Romans 12:9-21** Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. <sup>10</sup> Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. <sup>11</sup> Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. <sup>13</sup> Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality. <sup>14</sup> Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. <sup>15</sup> Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. <sup>16</sup> Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. <sup>17</sup> Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. <sup>18</sup> If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. <sup>19</sup> Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." <sup>20</sup> To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." <sup>21</sup> Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

# LOVE OF SELF

*What Should I do?*

Do you want this relationship work? Do you want it to thrive?

Or do you want to "get what you **DESERVE?**"

Do you really want what you **DESERVE?**

Are you **SURE** about that?

**Romans 3:23** ...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...

**Romans 6:23** ...the wages of sin is **death**...

# LOVE OF SELF

*What Should I do?*

## BUT... BUT... BUT...

**1 Peter 2:18-23** <sup>18</sup> Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. <sup>19</sup> For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. <sup>20</sup> For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. <sup>21</sup> For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. <sup>22</sup> He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. <sup>23</sup> When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

**1 Peter 3:1-2** Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, <sup>2</sup> when they see your respectful and pure conduct.

**1 Peter 3:13-14** Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? <sup>14</sup> But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed...

# LOVE OF SELF

*Will we submit? Will we kneel to the King?*

**We must learn to put others first if we want to be like Christ.**

We must decrease, and He must increase.

**We must learn to be like Jesus in our relationships - not just in what we do and/or don't do, but in how we think.**

**Love of Self has NO PLACE in the life of a Christian.**

**This is a "hard teaching." It requires purposeful thought/meditation, study, prayer, and PRACTICE.**

# LOVE OF SELF

## *Raising Children & Grandchildren*

**“Unlearning” poor examples that may have been set by our own parents/caretakers is challenging, but we definitely don’t want to act selfishly or be self-centered towards our children and grandchildren. Changing bad habits is worth the effort.**

**But what about the opposite problem? Is it possible to put TOO MUCH emphasis on a child’s self-esteem and “specialness?”**

There are definitely worse things we could do than go overboard with positive reinforcements in the home...

Let’s try to strive for balance.

It is possible to have too much of a “good thing.”

**How So?**



# LOVE OF SELF

## *Love of Self vs. Love for God / Love for Others*

The modern concept of Self-Esteem is simply not Biblically-based.

I couldn't find a single passage in the entire Bible in which a person is encouraged - *directly or indirectly* - to develop their self-esteem.

However, during the course of this class, we've looked at DOZENS of passages instructing us to strive to place higher value on GOD and OTHERS.

Focusing on how great and special you are as an individual is not Godly.  
HUMILITY IS GODLY.

The message of the New Testament is clear:

**HE MUST INCREASE, BUT I MUST DECREASE.**

(John 3:30)

# LOVE OF SELF

**But I want my child to be confident in himself!**

**God wants your child to be humble and meek and find confidence in Him.**

**Luke 14:11** For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

**James 4:1-10** <sup>7</sup> Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. <sup>8</sup> Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. <sup>9</sup> Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. <sup>10</sup> Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

**2 Corinthians 11-12 (culminating in 12:9-10)** <sup>9</sup> But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. <sup>10</sup> For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

**2 Corinthians 3:4-6 (in context of his work as a minister/apostle)** ...Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. <sup>5</sup> Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, <sup>6</sup> who has made us sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant...

# LOVE OF SELF

**But my child is special!**

**No. He's not.**

Your child is 1 of approximately 8 billion people on the planet right now.  
Your child is a single grain of sand on a very large beach.

**Is your child VALUABLE to you?**

That's a very different question. Your child is **INVALUABLE** to you.

**Is your child VALUABLE to God?**

Again - yes. Your child is **INVALUABLE** to **GOD**...worth dying for.  
And this needs to be our focus.

**We are all valuable because - and only because - God values us.**

# LOVE OF SELF

*Do you see why this is important?*

As parents and grandparents, we have an opportunity to give our children and grandchildren a head-start on "the narrow road."

Let's teach our children and grandchildren to be proud of THE ONE WHO MADE US, rather than themselves.

Let's teach our children and grandchildren to be proud of GOD.

How much easier would your spiritual walk have been had you learned this earlier?

# LOVE OF SELF

*Do you see why this is important?*

**Are we training our children and grandchildren to hold their heads high, or are we teaching them to kneel to the King?**