

Words of Truth

Am I Considerate Of Others Or Am I A Selfish Pig?

By: Brian A. Yeager

The world around us is filled with selfishness. Most people are concerned only about themselves and what is best for them. As Christians, we ought not resemble what we see around us (Romans 12:1-2). We should not take the attitude of one who thinks we should repay inconsiderate people by being inconsiderate either (Romans 12:17 and I Thessalonians 5:15).

The influences we have around us often change us for the worse (Proverbs 13:20 and I Corinthians 15:33). We live in a country that promotes the attitude of selfishness. We often hear slogans such as, "your way, right away, now". People like that "my way or the highway" mentality. Looking out for others cannot occur if we are self-serving. For us to overcome the mindset of inconsideration, we first have to become selfless. It is with this point that we will begin our study.

Becoming Selfless

The Apostle Paul used Jesus as an example of selflessness: *"If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross"* (Philippians 2:1-8).

When we look to the Scriptures we can learn a lot about how we're to care more about others than we care about ourselves. Notice the following Scriptures: *"Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just... I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive... We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me... Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth"* (Luke 14:12-14, Acts 20:35, Romans 15:1-3, and I Corinthians 10:24).

Once we are able to stop thinking only of ourselves, we are able to see others more clearly. We are able to see the things people are facing in their lives. You cannot do so if you are always focused on yourself. Thus, as you've read in the Scriptures presented thus far in this article, you have to think about others more than yourself. This is what it means to be considerate. Being considerate is simply being godly.

Being Considerate Is Being Godly

The word “considerate” is defined as follows: “Careful not to cause inconvenience or hurt to others” (New Oxford American Dictionary). How can a Christian become a considerate person? Well, if you practice godliness, you will be a considerate individual. Notice these Scriptures: *“Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour... Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing”* (Ephesians 4:31-5:2 and I Peter 3:8-9).

Let's consider some scenarios as we think about being considerate. Let's say you are practicing the Scriptural work of hospitality by opening your home up to another (Romans 12:13 and I Peter 4:9). What are you going to serve for dinner? A considerate individual will want to know the dietary needs, likes, and dislikes of their guests. An inconsiderate person will be unkind and take the attitude of, “they'll eat whatever we eat and like it”. How does that mindset fit being kind to one another, walking in love, having compassion, etc.? Rather than a “take it or leave it” mentality, a Christian must have the mindset of a servant to others (Galatians 5:13).

Let's say a brother or sister in Christ is facing difficult financial times. (He or she has not been wasteful and he or she is willing to work, so II Thessalonians 3:10 is not under question here). You have the means to help this person. Do you give them a loan (cf. Exodus 22:25-27)? Do you take the stand that they should learn “the hard way” about being content? An inconsiderate person may not even think that far, they just don't care. On the other hand, a considerate person will do anything they can to help a brother or sister in need (Acts 11:27-30). Notice these two Scriptures: *“But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him... If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen”* (I John 3:17 and I John 4:20)?

Conclusion

Part of the process of being converted to Christ is self-denial (Matthew 16:24). If we can't get past ourselves to see others, we are never going to be considerate people. In fact, a person who cannot stop looking after his or her own desires and start looking at our Lord, cannot be His disciple (Luke 14:26-27). We have clearly seen that a true child of God is a considerate individual. A true Christian is selfless. That is, we no longer count our lives dear to ourselves (Acts 20:24). Thus, we all have to examine ourselves (II Corinthians 13:5). We must ask ourselves this: “am I considerate of others or am I a selfish pig?”