

WORD

WHAT

What does the Bible say?

³⁶Turn my heart toward your statutes and not toward selfish gain. ³⁷Turn my eyes away from worthless things; preserve my life according to your word.

Psalm 119:36,37

People's problems have one primary cause: individualism. The Bible refers to this as "selfish gain" or "self ambition," which often lead to pride. Why is this mindset a tendency for people? What does the Bible say about it? This lesson seeks to answer these questions.

- **Selfishness**

An unfriendly man pursues selfish ends; he defies all sound judgment.

Proverbs 18:1

For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

James 3:16

Selfishness is not just a problem of Filipinos but mankind as a whole because of our sinful nature. This results in relational discord (at work, in school, at home) and disorder in society (politics, business, traffic). "Dog-eat-dog" and "every man for himself" aptly describe this condition, ironically even for a people known for hospitality. How have you seen selfishness acted out today?

- **Selflessness**

²⁷Do not withhold good from those who deserve it, when it is in your power to act. ²⁸Do not say to your neighbor, "Come back later; I'll give it tomorrow"—when you now have it with you.

Proverbs 3:27,28

Many a man claims to have unfailing love, but a faithful man who can find?

Proverbs 20:6

Filipinos would agree that the way to counter selfishness is by having compassion, generosity, and self-sacrifice—traits that we are also known for as a people. However, even if this effort is noble and may bring good results, doing this on our own strength will only hide our sinfulness and will only last as long (Proverbs 30:12).

- **Christ-centeredness**

³Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. ⁴Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus . . .

Philippians 2:3-5

We should not strive to be selfless in self-righteousness (Romans 10:3). Rather, the Holy Spirit's work should be seen in us; that we now enjoy what Jesus has purchased for us on the cross (Philippians 2:1) which made us righteous before God (2 Corinthians 5:21). It is by God's transforming work that we are given the ability to live in Christ's character.

SO WHAT

What is the relevance of the Word to my life?

- What areas in your life show self-centeredness?
- In what way can you say that you are selfless? Give examples.
- Having learned that selflessness is an outworking (of the Holy Spirit, rather than it is something to be worked for), how does this change the way that you think and live?

NOW WHAT

How do I apply the Word to my life?

- What selfish acts can you resolve to no longer do starting this week?
- What opportunities can you think of in your day-to-day activities can you be more "others-oriented" as Jesus is?
- Romans 2:4 says that God's kindness leads us to repentance. Would you want to receive this gift of salvation and acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus today? Have your leader help you with this.