

## Further Answers to Questions from Sermon Dec 13, 2020

### By Ryan Jorgenson

- **Can you talk about what it means to love ourselves? It seems selfish.**

Jesus said in Mark 12:31 - *"The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."*

Loving oneself is not inherently wrong or selfish. There is a healthy love of oneself that means you take care of yourself to be healthy enough to then take care of others. Of course, if a situation can arise where you had to either save yourself or someone else's life, Jesus also said there is no greater love than for someone to lay down their life for someone else (John 15:13). Just yesterday I was told of a woman who, while pregnant, found out she had cancer. She had to choose either to go through treatment and kill her child with an abortion or to give birth to her child and not do treatment until after the birth, most likely writing herself a death certificate. She chose to have her child and died after birth to cancer. She loved her child more than herself.

The word "selfish" in English comes from the 1600's and originally meant "self-ended". Selfishness is only thinking of oneself as the end goal of something you do. That is different than loving yourself to the point of being healthy to serve others.

Scripturally, you will not find one verse in the 66 books of the Bible telling people to love themselves more because loving oneself is a given. God does not just assume we love ourselves but often because of sin, too much and gives commands to make sure we are then loving others as well.

So, love God, love yourself and love others. All biblical and holy. Ask the Spirit to guide you in every situation and He will show you what to do. Also ask godly friends for their perspectives.

- **I assume psalm one is quoting Jeremiah or the other way around?**

Psalm 1 was written around BC 444 whereas Jeremiah was written around the BC 500-600's, so if one referring to the other, the Psalmist would be referring back to Jeremiah's words, but, the text does not say, so we do not know. It could be God, the supreme author of both, was just repeating His words as He so often does because He knows we need it.

- **When we pray for the gift of Jesus' sacrifice do we pray to him, the Lord, or both?**

Although all three Persons of the Trinity, Father Son and Spirit, are all one as God, we see in Scripture a pattern for praying to the Father. Jesus told His disciples to pray addressing the Father in Matthew 6:9-13. Whenever He is recorded praying, He is speaking to the Father. He also informs us to ask things in prayer in His Name. Usually, we interpret that as addressing the Father and then asking for things in Jesus' Name in that same prayer.

We do not see anyone in the Bible praying directly to the Spirit. Of course, if someone prayed to the Spirit, God knows they are addressing the Triune God and can answer. But we just do not have any examples in Scripture of doing that, and instead we have instruction by Jesus to address the Father in His Name, so we should probably follow those instructions in prayer. The key is to know there is no magic formulaic prayers one must say and that God is looking for the heart to be sincere, humble and dependent on Him.

- **Can you define what you mean by character?... And can you give examples of the fruit that is the character of God revealed in me.**

According to Webster's Dictionary, one meaning of character can be "*conduct that conforms to an accepted standard of right and wrong*". This seems to be the meaning found in most verses in the Bible referring to character.

First, the definition says it is "conduct", which means it is not just saying you conform to an accepted standard, but actually doing those standards with your words, body, mind, etc. Second, the "accepted standard of right and wrong" are God's standards for morality found in the pages of the Bible. A person of godly character then, is someone who lives according to the standards of holiness or right and wrong found in the Bible.

There were around 613 commands of character in the Old Testament and more in the New Testament. A Christian is called to learn these and live them out, thus having the character of Godliness.

Here is a great document compiling at least 1,050 of the New Testament commands if you want to study more in depth. [New Testament commands](#)