

TODAY'S LESSON



Me First Mentality

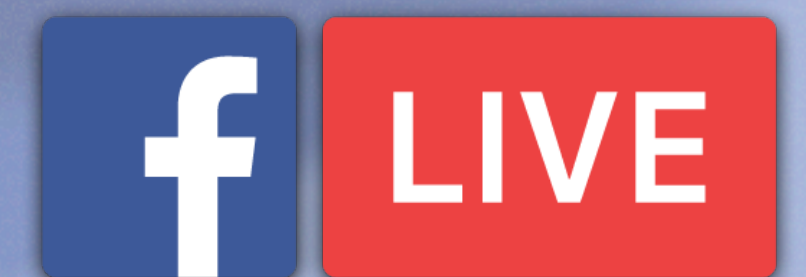
(Luke 9:57-62)

By Ashton Wilson



Sunday Morning Live Stream

9:00 AM CT July 7, 2024





Me First Mentality

Luke 9:57-62



The Reality

We live in a world, particularly a country that is dominated by the mindset that I will prioritize what I deem to be important to my needs... sadly what we find is that the Bible doesn't quite fit into those "important needs" for the majority

Biblical illiteracy:

Fewer than half of all adults can name the four gospels

Many Christians cannot identify more than two or three of the disciples

According to data from the **Barna Research Group**, 60 percent of Americans can't name even five of the Ten Commandments "No wonder people break the Ten Commandments all the time. They don't know what they are," - Quote taken from the firm conducting the research

The Reality

12 percent of adults believe that Joan of Arc was Noah's wife

Another survey of graduating high school seniors revealed that over 50 percent thought that Sodom and Gomorrah were husband and wife

A considerable number of respondents to one poll indicated that the Sermon on the Mount was preached by Billy Graham

9 out of 10 households have a Bible, but roughly half of Americans have read little to none of the words within scripture

A record-low 20% of Americans now say the Bible is the literal word of God, down from 24% the last time the question was asked in 2017 – The scary part, many of these folks identified as Christians who attend a church of some sort weekly

How Did We Get To This Point?

First major point → This did not happen overnight

The family dynamics started breaking down more rapidly beginning in the 1960s... the ability to commit to one woman or one man for life has dwindled, in fact the majority of people just cohabit now among the majority, unstable living conditions, 2 out of 5 children don't live with both their mother and their father

- People can't commit to a person standing right in front of them, much less a God that they don't physically see
- So, how did we get here? – In some regards, we've ALWAYS been here

History of Selfishness

First and foremost I believe this type of mentality reveals just exactly where our hearts are, which in turn reveals our attitudes

“God knows my heart” - He sure does

Jeremiah said in **Jeremiah 12:3** - “But You know me, O LORD; You see me; And You examine my heart’s attitude toward You.” Jeremiah indicates that God sees everything about us including our “heart’s attitude” (And I believe in the days of Jeremiah the hearts of the people are revealed in no better example than what is said in **Jeremiah 4:19-22 & 6:16**). That means that our attitude is not hidden from God. Apparently an airplane’s “attitude” explains its position in relation to an object, and what happens if a plane’s attitude is just slightly off when trying to land?

More Examples of God Examining Hearts

- God demonstrated knowledge of the Babel builders self-centered attitude in **Genesis 11:1-9**
- Jonah's prejudiced attitude in **Jonah 4:1-11**
- Nebuchadnezzar's arrogant attitude in **Daniel 4:28-37**
- the Pharisees judgmental attitude in **Matthew 9:1-8**
- Ananias and Sapphira's greedy attitude in **Acts 5:1-11**

There is nothing that escapes the sight of God because He is the "Father who sees in secret" (**Matthew 6:4,6,18**)

“A husband and father spends every available dollar on his fishing boat. Every chance he gets he goes on a fishing trip with his buddies. During the summer months it is practically every weekend and several week nights. Once, his wife asks him if he could take the family to a circus that was coming to town next weekend. The husband begins to rant and rave about how he can’t afford it. Besides, he has a fishing trip next weekend. That is selfishness!”

The Root of “Me Firstology”

Defined: — **Selfishness** n. 1. Meanly close and covetous; one who spends grudgingly; .
. .2. The quality or state of being selfish; meanness in giving or spending; parsimony;
stinginess. 3. The quality or state of being selfish; exclusive regard to one's own interest
or happiness; that supreme self-love or self-preference which leads a person to direct
his purposes to the advancement of his own interest, power, or happiness, without
regarding those of others

At the root of every SIN is selfishness! - **James 3:16** (NKJV) — 16 For where envy and
self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there

Mark 7:21-22 (NKJV) — 21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil
thoughts...

2 Timothy 3:1-5 (NKJV) — 1 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall
come. 2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves...

Dead Giveaways to the “Me First Mentality”

This is a syndrome, although the world doesn't identify it as such... it is, which means it is a “pattern of symptoms” that identifies an “abnormality” – In our world looking out for #1 is “standard”, but it is abnormal when it comes to the standards of the teachings of Christ

1. Breakdown of the family relationships

- The Jews attempted to get around the teachings of God in **Mark 7:8** by saying, “oh we can't take care of our needy parents, because this money is for religious purposes” → And the modern form of this isn't much different, in that individual family members will put their needs before that of others and hide behind, “well I gave money to the Lord, my job is done”
- Bringing a paycheck home, cooking supper, just bringing your children or spouse to worship does not mean you are selfless (**Colossians 3:18-21**) Teach your children; discipline your children; husbands and wives - demonstrate what a loving, Christian marriage looks like → Don't be like the Gentile rulers who lorded their power (**Matthew 20:25-28**)

2. Self-Preservation — I depend upon me or my small little circle of people for survival and nobody else

The issue → If we don't feel someone is directly contributing to me, or I can't physically see them contributing then they don't mean anything to me... which means, God didn't provide this for me... I provided this for me

“And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord” ([Deuteronomy 8:3](#))

[Matthew 6:33](#) is all about depending upon God for our daily provisions

The rich man felt this way ([Luke 12:16-21](#)), but Jesus reminds us in [Matt. 16:25](#) that we are not the ones who sustain life

We soon confuse this fact and think that self provides for self & this produces worry, anxiety, **defensiveness**, and stress; Pride begins with selfish preservation

3. Haphazard Attendance

- No, there is not a single scripture that says, “If you don’t attend Bible study on Wednesday evening or services on Sunday evening you are in sin”
- However, scriptures like **Acts 2:42** & **Hebrews 10:25**, the focus is not on the feeling that we HAVE to be here, but rather the focus is placed upon the value of being with one another... do you value time with your brethren? → “...let us consider one another...”

4. Negligence of Service and/or Giving

- **Romans 12:3-8** & **1 Peter 4:10-11** → I can’t stress this enough, LEARN THE NAMES OF YOUR BRETHREN; Lack of involvement, both men and women... The Lord isn’t going to accept the answer one day when He asks why you weren’t involved: “Well, I didn’t serve because I didn’t like the way things were done... or I really didn’t have a ‘gift’ Lord”
- **2 Corinthians 9:7-9** → Do you properly budget and give cheerfully? You think the Lord knows that you’d rather have that super nice vehicle and give sparingly? → The Macedonians in **2 Corinthians 8** gave out of their poverty

Cost of Discipleship - Luke 9:57-62

We put Jesus before our comforts. You are following a broke, homeless person who was betrayed and murdered. Do we understand who we are following? The path of discipleship is not an easy path. It is the best path for your life but it is not comfortable or convenient. He sleeps in the grass, sidewalk, who knows... Jesus asks can you really follow me?

When Jesus says to let the dead bury the dead, he is teaching a powerful principle about how we perceive our discipleship.

- Let school take care of your school obligations. Let the coach take care of your sports obligations. Let your boss deal with your work requirements. Let the house clean itself.
- The point is that these other obligations and duties we have in life are not more important than serving, worshiping, and following Jesus. We think we have these golden excuses for our Lord. I had to work. I had school. I had sports. I had family in town. I was tired. I got up early. I didn't sleep well. I have to get up early. I have to stay out late. Jesus told this man to let the dead bury the dead

The old way of doing things is over and we have new priorities

- I cannot understand how we think we can keep the same schedule and same priorities after coming to Jesus

The image Jesus uses is very appropriate for the warning

- What will happen if you are looking behind you while plowing? You will not plow a straight line and your work will be ruined
- For a modern example, what will happen if you are looking behind you while driving? You are not going to drive straight and you will get into an accident

Just as the Israelites looked back to Egypt and Lot's wife looked back, these groups forgot what life was like in the past... it wasn't worth looking back as they assumed

Self-LESS

Paul expounded on this attitude in **Philippians 2:5** where he instructed the church in Philippi to “have this **ATTITUDE** in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus.” In other words, Paul indicated that our attitude is to be oriented around Jesus, and Paul described Jesus’ attitude in the verses that immediately followed, focusing on such traits as humility, servant mindedness, and obedience. However, if you continue journeying through the Philippian letter you’ll also see him describe an attitude absent complaining (**Philippians 4:14**), self-righteousness (**Philippians 3:2-10**), and worry (**Philippians 4:6**) as well as an attitude possessing joy (**Philippians 4:4**), peace (**Philippians 4:7**), and contentment (**Philippians 4:10-13**)

In fact, it is in **Philippians 3:15** that Paul reiterated the expectation of possessing a Christ-like attitude when he wrote, “Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this **ATTITUDE**; and if in anything you have a different **ATTITUDE**, God will reveal that also to you.”

Paul makes it very clear in the Philippian letter that God expects us to have a particular attitude and part of the reason He sent Jesus was to demonstrate that attitude – Less of Self

Make Prioritizing God's Word, A Priority!

“Recovery starts at home. Parents are to be the first and most important educators of their own children, diligently teaching them the Word of God. [Deuteronomy 6:4-9.] Parents cannot franchise their responsibility to the congregation, no matter how faithful and biblical its may be. God assigned parents this non-negotiable responsibility, and children must see their Christian parents as teachers and fellow students of God's Word.

Churches must recover the centrality and urgency of biblical teaching and preaching, and refuse to sideline the teaching ministry of the preacher. Preachers and churches (parents included) are too busy--or too distracted--to make biblical knowledge a central aim of ministry will produce believers who simply do not know enough to be faithful disciples.

We will not believe more than we know, and we will not live higher than our beliefs. The many fronts of Christian compromise in this generation can be directly traced to biblical illiteracy in the pews and the absence of biblical preaching and teaching in our homes and churches.”

Conclusion - Let's Remember Our Roles

Psychology of the Human Heart: Without going into a deep study of how the human mind functions... one of the things necessary for a person to be healthy in this world is purpose

As older Christians we get down at times because in our minds we think: "What can I even do for the Lord?"

As younger Christians we think: "Okay, I'm baptized... now what?"

Older folks – Nowhere in scripture does it say that just because you have reached a certain age that you get to retire from your service to God and say I've done my part it's the young folks turn... Nope, Caleb was in his 80s and still had a heart for serving God (**Joshua 14:6-15**), he had influence and his willingness to do what was right served as a tool for leadership

Conclusion - Overcome The “Me First Mentality”

Older Folks – Grandparents understand that your grandkids and young children or young adults need you to remind us of Godly stories whether in the Bible or of men and women who lived faithfully just as **Joshua 4** explains... naturally children will ask, and young adults tend to remember what they’ve heard over and over

- Mentor us (**Titus 2:1-8**); Encourage us; Pray for us; Lead by example

Younger Folks – Doing nothing is not an option, or focusing on ME ME ME is not an option → We are to serve others as an expression of our faith (**James 2:14-18**); Look out for others (**Php 2:4-8**); Love God and Love Others (**Matt. 22:37-40**)

The “Me First Mentality” never has and never will align with God’s view for Christians... let us remember our role → **Acts 3:6**; **Matthew 9:38**; **Matthew 5:16**

Jesus has called us all to repentance, a change of attitude (**Luke 5:32**) & to have a servant-minded attitude for all (**Philippians 2, 3, & 4**)

Invitation

Establish an identity – Identify who and what it is you truly need

Paul wrote, “Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” (**Romans 7:24**) Only Jesus can remove our false identity that our pride created

1) We must put to death our pride-created identity – “We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin” (**Romans 6:6**)

2) We must identify with Him (**Galatians 3:27**)

3) He will create a new person within us – “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come” (**2 Cor 5:17**)

4) He replaces our false identity with Himself (**Galatians 2:20**)

5) Jesus cannot create more pride within us because He emptied himself of self – **Php 2:5ff**

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⁵⁷ Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, that someone said to Him, “Lord, I will follow You wherever You go.” ⁵⁸ And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.” ⁵⁹ Then He said to another, “Follow Me.” But he said, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.” ⁶⁰ Jesus said to him, “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God.” ⁶¹ And another also said, “Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house.” ⁶² But Jesus said to him, “No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”