

THE PROBLEM OF “SELF”

John 3:30

INTRODUCTION

- A. Selfie.
 - 1. The word “selfie” first recorded in 2002 (Australia).
 - 2. In 2013, the Oxford English Dictionary honored it as “Word of the Year.”
 - 3. The word suggests “self-centeredness” or “self-involvement.”
 - 4. Social media is flooded with “selfies.”
- B. John’s relationship to Christ, John 3:25-30.
 - 1. Discussing John and the relationship with Jesus’ ministry.
 - 2. *“He must increase, but I must decrease.”*
 - 3. John had stated that he wasn’t worthy to undo his sandals, Jn. 1:27.

I. THE GREATEST SINGLE PROBLEM IN LIFE – SELF!

- A. The Big “I.”
 - 1. The world of sin always ranks “self” as “Number 1!”
 - 2. The world preaches “If you don’t look out for #1, then who will?”
 - 3. Commercials focus on the individual (self) – “You owe it to yourself.”
- B. Satan, the Source of “Self-focused” attitudes.
 - 1. Man’s sin in the Garden of Eden, “self-focus,” Gen. 3:4-6.
 - 2. “S “I” N” revolves around the middle letter “I.”
 - a. This produces the “works of the flesh” (Gal. 5:19-21).
 - b. As the self-centered “I” grows bigger in our thinking, Jesus becomes smaller and smaller until He is no longer in our minds.
 - c. Paul warned Timothy, 2 Tim. 3:2, 5: *“For men will be lovers of self,...Avoid such men as these.”*
- C. The Rich Fool, Luke 12:16-21.
 - 1. Verse 16, *“The land of a rich man was very productive.”*
 - a. God, the source of all his blessings.
 - b. God had blessed him with good soil, sun and rain, yielding a great crop.
 - 2. Vss. 17-19.
 - a. No praise for God and His goodness.
 - b. He was totally self-centered, looking after his own worldly pleasures and earthly comforts.
 - c. *“Eat, drink and be merry.”*
 - 4. Vss. 20-21, *“But God said to him...”*
- D. Paul’s Shortcomings, Rom. 7.
 - 1. Vss. 14-24.
 - a. Paul struggled with his old man of sin.
 - b. He describes his personal struggle with flesh and spirit.
 - c. Personal pronouns “I” and “me” – 33 times!
 - 2. Saul was probably the best Jew who had ever lived – but struggles with his “religious self.”
 - 3. Good news – when he became a Christian he learned the key to a Christ-centered life, vs. 25.

- a. Not a miraculous end to his “self.”
- b. Through the power of Jesus Christ.

II. CHOOSING BETWEEN “I” OR “CHRIST.”

A. Lk. 9:23-26.

1. “*Deny Yourself.*”
 - a. Make a ***daily choice*** to put Jesus in His rightful place.
 - b. Take the eyes of our hearts off of self and focus on Jesus.
 - c. Matthew 6:22-23
2. “*Take up your cross and follow Christ.*”
 - a. When Jesus took His cross, He gave Himself completely.
 - b. We must seek to give 100% of ourselves to follow Christ.
 - c. 1 Cor. 15:31, “*I die daily.*”
 - d. Gal. 2:20
 - i. Paul had nailed “I” to the cross of Jesus.
 - ii. No longer lived the “self-focused” life.
 - iii. This begins with baptism, Rom. 6:3-4.
3. “*Whoever loses his life...*”
 - a. To “save our lives” is to try to “grab all the gusto” the world has to offer.
 - b. This is the worldly attitude of the rich man, “...*soul take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.*”
 - c. “Losing our life” is devoting ourselves completely to Christ.

B. Our Choice Carries Eternal Consequences! vss. 25-26

1. It is the difference between heaven and hell.
2. The more I “d-i-e” to self, the more Jesus can live in me. (Dwight L. Moody)
3. For the Christian, eternal life comes from dying with Christ.

CLOSING

A. None of Self and All of Thee.

1. O, the bitter pain and sorrow that a time could ever be,
When I proudly said to Jesus, “All of self, and none of Thee.”
Due to our human nature, we all start out “self-focused.”
2. Yet He found me; I beheld Him bleeding on the accursed tree,
And my wistful heart said faintly, “Some of self, and some of Thee.”
The only thing that will turn our lives around is the cross of Christ.
3. Day by day His tender mercy healing, helping full and free,
Bro’t me lower while I whispered, “Less of self, and more of Thee.”
Spiritual growth begins as we learn to focus more on Jesus and less on me.
4. Higher than the highest heavens, deeper than the deepest sea,
Lord, Thy love at last has conquered, “None of self, and all of Thee.”
When we get our priorities in the correct order – a life of true joy.