



Dgroup Discussion Guide for July 1, 2018 **HAVE THE MIND OF CHRIST**

Scripture: Philippians 2: 3-8

Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves. Do not merely look out for your own personal interest, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves that was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God did not regard equality with God, a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself taking the form of a bond servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death. Even death on a cross.

Self centeredness, Self absorption, narcissism and egotism are different names describing our obsession to self which we can collectively call as "Selfietitis". It is a spiritual disease characterized by an excessive preoccupation with ourselves and our own needs without thinking of others. People afflicted with selfietitis believe the key to happiness is putting their self first before God and others; however, they usually turn out unhappy and miserable.

Self centeredness is the root problem of sin (Isaiah 53:6). By nature, we are selfish. Our tendency is to take care of ourselves first, think a lot about ourselves and how we want things done our way. The Bible, however, teaches us some divine principles: **to think of others more than ourselves; to receive, we must give; the last shall be first; and to lead we must serve.**

Thinking of others first does not mean that we are lesser than they are but that we humbly consider them more important us. The Bible also does not tell us to disregard self-care in doing what is good for others. The antidote to selfishness is to learn to genuinely love people the right way.

ABRAHAM and LOT (Genesis 13)

Being selfish usually breeds in the family and in other committed relationships. The Bible shows a contrast of attitude in the light of self-interest between Abraham and his nephew Lot.

When there was strife between the herdsmen of Abraham and Lot, Abraham initiated to settle the conflict by dividing the land with Lot. He surrendered his personal interest on the land they were dividing by setting aside his patriarchal right to make the first choice and gave them over to Lot. Culturally, Lot could have refused the favor with due respect to his uncle, but he did not. He surveyed the land and chose the best portion for himself eastward and then settled his tent near Sodom, a progressive city but known for wickedness.

Our selfishness tends to compromise our moral values for the sake of gains. Sometimes we think we are just pursuing abundance for our family but in reality, we are just thinking of ourselves.

In the case of Lot, he became successful but he did not have moral integrity and ascendancy to his family, even to his sons-in-law (Genesis 19:14). When he alerted them that they need to leave Sodom and Gomorrah because God will destroy the city, they did not believe him. He could not convince them about God perhaps because he himself was hesitant to go.

Selfish people are shortsighted and they only think of temporal gains. By committed incest with his daughters, Lot lost everything he had in his lifetime including his descendants the Moabites and Ammonites who were completely eradicated in history. In his desire to gain more, he lost all. Selfishness eventually destroys a person and at the end it will lead to misery.

On the other hand, Abraham who was selfless was blessed by God (Genesis 13:14-15). For him, intimacy with God is far more important than real estate. He can afford to be generous because he knew that the blessing does not come from the land but from God.

Knowing who God is and what He has promised to do will keep us from selfietitis. The more we know the Lord, the more we become generous because we know God is taking care of our future.

JESUS' SELFLESS MODEL (Philippians 2)

The antidote for selfishness is following the model of Jesus. The attitude and mind of Jesus is servanthood, obedience, humility and love. He came to serve and not be served. To save us from sin, He emptied Himself of His glory and divine privileges. He became man, and not just a mere man but a lowly servant. He was willing to die for us, and not just to die but to be crucified. Exchanging His life for our life, He was thinking of us because He loved us.

If we are proud and we think we cannot humble ourselves, the Bible is telling us to look to Jesus. If he can do what He has done for us, then who are we not to learn to humble ourselves and think of others. In serving others, we should look to Jesus and follow Him as our model. But we cannot have the attitude and mind of Christ until we have totally surrendered our life to Him. We need to first surrender our life to Jesus.

One day, all beings in heaven, on earth and underneath will bow down to Jesus (v 9-11). You do not need to wait for that day because you can make that choice now to believe in Jesus as your Savior and bow down to Him as your Lord.

The antidote for selfishness is looking at Jesus. For practical application, think of J.O.Y. which stands for Jesus, Others and You. To experience true joy, prioritize Jesus first, others next and you last.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Selfish or selfless. What are the things/situations that you find are easy to practice selflessness with? What are things/situations that you find yourself thinking of yourself first?
2. How are you practicing Philippians 2: 3-8 at home? At work? At church?
3. Is there an area of your life that you are still struggling with being humble and selfless?
4. How can you intentionally practice J.O.Y. this week?