

The Untaught Among Us

- Among us are those – Parents not Christians
- Many Parents don't know how or don't see it as an issue unless it affects them.
- The selfishness remained. Went Through life:
 - **Other people exist to meet my needs.**
 - **Use other people for our own ends.**
 - **Very little concern about them.**
 - **Not really aware others have needs.**
- To some degree we have all strayed here.
- But some are immersed in it.

A Profound Change of Perspective

- When we obey the gospel, we learn how wrong we are and we seek to change. Now:
 - **I exist to meet the needs of others.**
- This is such a great change in how we view others that it is very very difficult to change.
- *Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Then may you also do good who are accustomed to do evil. Jer. 13:23*
- Hear the lesson – Make the commitment
- But when we hear it again nothing changed

Foundational Fundamental Comprehensive

- *"Teacher, **what shall I do to inherit eternal life?**"*
26 He said to him, "What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?" 27 So he answered and said, *"**You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,**' and 'your neighbor as yourself.'*" 28 And He said to him, *"**You have answered rightly; do this and you will live.**"* 29 But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, *"And **who is my neighbor?**"* 30 Then Jesus answered and said: "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, Lk. 10:25-30
- This is the beginning of the Good Samaritan

The Foundation of all Law Hangs here

- *"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" 37 Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 On these two commandments hang **ALL** the Law and the Prophets." Mt. 22:36-40*

- There is nothing more fundamental and comprehensive than putting the needs of others above our own!

Self-Examination – Two Obstacles

- Selfishness learned youth.
- **Impossible to serve others if**
 - **1.** we only see our own needs and not theirs, or when their needs compete with ours.
 - **2.** When self-esteem comes from feeling superior
- If in serving we feel demeaned, stepped or made to feel small. It is visceral – **WE WILL NOT DO IT!**
- We Cannot Do it until we change this premise/attitude

The Solution to this Dilemma

- “Let **nothing be done** through **selfish ambition** or **conceit**, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Phil. 2:3
- “**Selfish ambition**” is: “selfish striving for advantage in a group.” (Exegetical Dictionary NT:2052).
- “**Conceit**” is “groundless self-esteem.” (Greek Lexicon NT:2754).
- These two attitudes, emotions and core convictions must be removed or we can never move forward into greatness.

Selfish Ambition Groundless Esteem

- Reason apostles disputed on the road about who would become the greatest,
- Reason why James and John sought to be on Jesus' right and left hand,
- Why the others were so indignant when they learned of it. (Mk. 9:33-35; 10:35-45).
- They were under the influence of this “*selfish striving for advantage in a group.*” Each wanting to come out on top based on their own “*groundless self-esteem.*”
- In washing their feet Jesus showed how empty and useless such attitudes make us.

What is Groundless Self-Esteem

- *“what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?” 1Cor. 4:7*
- All natural gifts received at birth
- All special qualities gained our own efforts.
- Body & soul were gifts from God.
- Creation ability to take dominion also a gift from God. Think about it! *“What do we have that we did not receive as a gift?”*
- **NOTHING!** A humbling truth

Israel's "Groundless Self-Esteem"

"Beware that you do not forget the Lord your God ... lest — when you have eaten and are full, built beautiful houses, ... your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold are multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied; 14 when your heart is lifted up, and you forget the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; ... 17 then **you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth.'** Deut. 8:11-15

Apostasy and Idolatry always followed!

Antidote to “*Groundless Self-Esteem*”

- *You shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, Dt. 8:18*
- No room for “*groundless self-esteem*” when looking at God in gratitude for all we possess
- *Thus says the Lord: “**Let not** the wise man **glory in his wisdom**, Let not the mighty man **glory in his might**, Nor let the rich man **glory in his riches**; 24 But let him who glories **glory in this**, **That he understands and knows Me**, That I am the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For **in these I delight**,” says the Lord. Jer. 9:23-24*

“selfish striving for advantage”

- *“Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.” Mt. 6:1*
- *If we use our natural abilities to excel at God’s commands in order to be noticed by men, it is not true service, but only “selfish ambition.”*
- *“preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely,” Phil. 1:16*

Evil Motives Leading to Abuse

- *“who suppose that godliness is a means of gain”* 1Tim. 6:5 Financial or Personal Gain
- *All their works they do to be seen by men,”* because *“they love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, ‘Rabbi, Rabbi.’* Mt. 23:5-7
- A common problem among men. We see such greed and misuse throughout the history of the apostasy.

An Additional Element to Beware of

- if you have **bitter envy** and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth.”
- (1) “self-seeking” is same Word Paul used:
- “selfish striving for advantage in a group,”
- (2) “**bitter envy**,” “an envious and contentious rivalry.” (Greek Lexicon, NT:2205).
- An important distinction emotional response:
- (1) we’re superior to others = Selfish advantage
- (2) They have something better making them superior to us. = “an envious and contentious rivalry” When others get recognition.

Human Body Shows the Path Back

- Each part of body does something better
- Eye sees, Ear hears, Nose smells, Tongue tastes, fingers touch. Each rises & recedes
- No “*seeking selfish advantage*” raging in body
- No “*envious and contentious rivalry*”
- Each works for the good of the whole.
- Abilities of each member never take anything from others.
- There is no “*groundless self-esteem,*” “*seeking selfish advantage*” “*envious and contentious rivalry*” in the body, should not be in the church

Both the Church and The Body

- *“the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.”*
(1Cor. 12:25).
- We must be fully invested in it.

Moving to the Next Level

- “Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but **in lowliness of mind** let each **esteem others better than himself**. 4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.” Phil. 2:3-4
- “Lowliness of mind” is all that is left after selfish ambition and conceit are removed.
- we see ourself – our role and position clearly.

How we change our Attitude

- *not to think of himself **more highly** than he ought to think, but to **think soberly**, as **God has dealt** to each one a measure of faith.*
- *No basis for “selfish rivalry” “groundless self-esteem,” “Bitter envy”*
- *4 For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Rom 12:3-6*

A New Perspective

- *As each one has **received a gift, minister it to one another**, as **good stewards** of the manifold grace of God. **11** If anyone speaks, let him **speak as the oracles of God**. If anyone **ministers**, let him do it as with the **ability which God supplies**, that in all things **God may be glorified** through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. 1 Peter 4:10-11*
- All our abilities, possessions and opportunities are gifts, given by the grace of God to be used as a stewardship to minister to other.

The Pinnacle

- “*esteem others better than himself.*”
- How do we see all others as having *surpassing in value and better*” than ourselves?
- The divine nature replaces selfishness with this.
- Not putting the needs of others on equal footing, but moving them even higher.
- It then becomes easier, natural and logical to:
- *submit to one another in the fear of Christ* Eph. 5:12;
- Be “*last of all and servant of all.*” (Mk. 9:35).
- No longer demeaning, it feels right.

A Long Journey is the Upward Call

- *nothing* done through *selfish ambition* or *conceit*
- *but in lowliness of mind* let each esteem others *better than himself.*
- Let each of you *look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.*
- “But *he who is greatest among you shall be your servant.* 12 And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who *humbles himself will be exalted.*” Mt. 23:11-12
- “whoever *desires to become great* among you shall *be your servant.* 44 And whoever of you *desires to be first shall be slave of all.*” (Mk. 10:43-44)