

## Born Selfish

We are born selfish. Even with the best raising, the most complete training in social skills, humans grow up selfish. It's human nature. The Bible calls it "the flesh." It's what we want, what we think, and what we feel. According to many verses, we are supposed to kill it ~ that nature in ourselves. That issue is covered in my brochure, *What's My Cross?*

So how is this possible? It is NOT possible in your own abilities. You could, if you were a very determined person, make yourself totally unselfish ~ for a while. People do this on dates, or when trying to make a good impression on someone. But sooner or later, something will happen that lights your fuse. Someone will be impatient with you or do you wrong, and you will react with displeasure. Or you will put up with a situation as long as you can, and then you will explode. You will blow your cool, and lose it. Will-power cannot make a permanent change.

## The Remedy

God is in the business of changing people. He wants to make you a beautiful person! To allow this to happen, though, you must spend some time every day reading in the Bible and in private prayer. And talk to Him often throughout your

days. You are building a relationship with your heavenly Father. And He will begin changing you immediately. I became easier to live with day by day as I did this! I didn't get upset as easily as I did before, and I became more confident. If you talk too much, He will help you be quiet. If you don't talk much, He will give you the confidence to talk more! If you get impatient and angry often, God will begin making you more peaceful. It's a process.

This time with God will give you the power to stay sweet and speak softly even if someone is angry with you. If your spouse is impatient with you, you will be able to respond nicely instead of reacting.

## Our Testimony

When T.A. and I began developing the habit of daily private times with God in prayer and in the Word, we could tell if the other one had missed that time with God. Any impatience or raised voice would be the cue. For the first few times, we'd ask nicely, "Have you been having your times with God?" Then later, we didn't have to say anything. We'd just give a knowing smile, and the other would get the message.

Twenty-five years later, our oldest son and T.A. were discussing a computer problem. They disagreed and didn't understand each other. T.A. lost his cool. He raised his

voice and accused the son of calling him a liar. The son and I were shocked and made no reply. T.A. told us later that God spoke to him in his thoughts and said, "That's what happens when you don't pray." This incident shook him up enough to get back into the habit that he'd let slip.

## It's just me!

What if you're the only one seeking God? Be encouraged knowing that it takes two to fight. If you start responding in kindness when your spouse gets ugly, there will be no fight. Prov. 15:1 says, "A soft answer turns away anger." But remember, you have the power to do this only when you are having that daily time with God!

Marriage books, marriage seminars, and all similar resources have their good points. All are beneficial to a degree, and for a while. But without the habit of daily times with God, you will revert to being selfish. Human love is fragile. Marriage is very difficult without daily times with God.

## How to start Praying

Matt. 6:33 says to seek first God's kingdom. The word *first* is significant. Your time with God must be the most important thing you do in your day. Find some time in your day when you can be alone with God and uninterrupted. Begin with praise. If you don't know how, read

the Psalms that are praise. After a little while in praise, you can pray for your spouse and family, your pastor and friends. I have several other brochures about prayer that may help you too.

## What does the Bible say?

I hope you choose to start your daily Bible reading in the letters ~ Romans through Jude. These will help you grow the fastest because they are to the Church. Now I want to give you some Bible verses that can apply to marriage. These are areas where God will be helping you.

Eph. 5:33, TLB "...each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband." (When I began treating T.A. with respect ~ even when I thought he was stupid, our relationship started getting better!)

Eph. 4:26, "Don't let the sun go down with you still angry. For anger gives a mighty foothold to the Devil."

Eph. 4:29, "Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them."

Eph. 4:32, "Be kind to each other, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you."

Eph. 5:21, "Submit yourselves to one another out of reverence for Christ." (Respect and honor for each other will insure peace.)

I Cor. 7:1-5, "Do not deprive each other of sexual relations."

Mark 10:1-9, (about divorce) "Let no one separate them, for God has joined them together." (Mal. 2:16, "I hate divorce.") Why? He wants Godly children! Mal. 2:15.

I Cor. 13:4-7, "Love is patient and kind, Love is not jealous, or boastful, or proud or rude. Love does not demand its own way. Love is not irritable, and keeps no record of when it has been wronged. It is never glad about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance."

Matt. 6:33 is not usually used in reference to human relationships, but it does apply! If you keep your relationship with God healthy, like I said earlier, then He will take care of your spouse! This verse says, (NLT) "He will give you all you need from day to day if you live for Him and make the Kingdom of God your primary concern." (YOU seek God as first priority in your life.)

# Making your Marriage Work



A Mini Bible Study  
By Cheryl Boone