

Selfishness

Joe Slater

Webster's Dictionary defines "selfish" this way: "Concerned excessively or exclusively with oneself; seeking or concentrating on one's own advantage, pleasure, or well-being without regard for others."

I doubt that many who read this article would want to jump up and tell the world how selfish we are. Yet selfishness has lost much of its social stigma. You might be surprised how many would unabashedly say, "I'm looking out for number one; if somebody else gets hurt in the process, too bad!"

Galatians 6:7 says we reap what we sow. Our society has become more selfish because we have sown the seeds of selfishness. Do you remember when "me" books were all the rage? They were simple story books to give to children, but each one was customized to make the recipient the main character. This is but one example of making self the most important consideration in life.

Many older brethren (including myself) feel alarmed at the lack of concern for sound doctrine characterizing some of the "Millennial" generation. But to their credit, many Millennials understand better than older generations the importance of putting Christianity into action by helping the less fortunate in substantial ways. They see that many congregations have become inwardly-focused, with most resources (monetary and otherwise) directed toward serving "us." Something tells me we'll have better results convincing them about doctrine if we show them we're serious about putting our faith to work serving "the least of these"!

More next week!

Welcoming Visitors

Recently George Barna, who conducts religious surveys, did a study of some people visiting a local congregation and looking for a place to worship. Note the following results.

- ☞ 72% didn't want to be recognized by standing or raising their hand during services.
- ☞ 64% didn't want the preacher coming to their house.
- ☞ 65% didn't want a name tag.
- ☞ 70% like receiving information about the church.
- ☞ 78% loved being greeted at the end of the service by the individuals who sat around them.

Interesting and eye opening statistics wouldn't you say? The difference in whether a visitor will come back and visit again lies primarily with the members in the pew. According to those surveyed, they appreciated someone speaking to them when they visit the service, especially the one they sat next to.

One lesson we can learn from this information is that it takes all of us working together to accomplish the Lord's work. Every member has a personal responsibility to help the church grow. Simply speak and be friendly to someone you don't know. You can be the difference!

--Russ Crosswhite (via Sayre, OK)

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*Morality may keep you out of jail,
but it takes the blood of Jesus Christ
to keep you out of Hell!*

Are You a Part of the 5G Network?

With a title like that, it sounds like I'm asking if you are a part of the latest cell phone technology, doesn't it? The latest 5G cell phone network promises many things. In the church, we have a network that is designed by God Himself for the betterment of the kingdom and for each member of it. It consists of several elements that we could easily break down into five categories. So, take a look at God's 5G network and see how strong of a signal you have in each:

* **Gather.** God wants us to gather together as His people so that we can strengthen our bond and relationship through the love and encouragement we express (1 Thess. 5:11; Heb. 10:24-25). We weaken the network when we don't gather with the saints – we strengthen it every time we come.

* **Grow.** God wants us to teach and learn from each other to develop and mature our knowledge and faith in Him (2 Tim. 2:2; 2 Pet. 3:18). We hinder the network when we do not grow as a Christian – we help it when we develop properly and consistently.

* **Give.** God wants us to give of our lives, talents, and resources in offerings and service so that the church can function and bless many (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 8:1-7). We limit the church's network influence when we do not give as we should – we assist in expanding it when we contribute as much as we are able.

* **Go.** God wants us to be messengers of the good news about His Son so that many others can come to salvation and share in this incredible network of believers (Mark 16:15-16; 1 Thess. 1:8). We cripple the church's expansion of the network when we do not do our part to tell others about Jesus – we fortify it when we live in and mention Him at every opportunity.

* **Glow.** God wants us to express joyful, optimistic, and hopeful lives (Phil. 4:4; 2 John 12). We limit the church's encouraging atmosphere when we possess a bad, worldly attitude – we expand it when we manifest joy and the love of Jesus.

Maybe the best way to look at it is that the purpose of the church as God's network is to "to know God better and make God better known." This is best carried out utilizing every part of God's 5G network. How is your connection and usage in it?

--Edd Sterchi (Campbellsville, KY)