

Selfishness (#3)

Joe Slater

Selfish people often despise authority (2 Peter 2:10). Do you remember being irked as a child when your parents, teachers, or other adults told you what to do? Wise parents discipline their children, teaching them to respect authority. As adults, we recognize civil authorities' right to tell us to drive on the right side of the road and keep our speed within the posted limit, even when we want to go faster.

Unfortunately, while everyone grows **older**, not everyone grows **up**! Some adults kept the self-willed attitude of their youth, and it shows as they resist not only civil authority, but the authority of God Himself! The selfish person childishly exclaims, "I'll do what I want!" But the mature Christian humbly says, "I'll do as I ought."

Just suppose that Jesus had been selfish – where would we be? When He left the glorious splendor of heaven to take on human flesh, was He thinking of His own personal benefit? Hear the Savior's words: *"For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me"* (John 6:38). Jesus submitted to the authority of His Heavenly Father and acted unselfishly to save us. Pleasing the Father and saving us were more important to Jesus than His own personal comfort. Hebrews 12:2 exhorts us to look *"unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame . . ."*

A single word tells how to overcome selfishness: LOVE. If we love God, we will seek to please Him through obedience to His commands (John 15:14). If we love each other, we will act in one another's best interests. *"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God"* (1 John 4:7).

AMEN . . . AND AWOMAN?

Missouri Congressman Emanuel Cleaver made the news January 3 with the controversial prayer he led in the House of Representatives to open their new session. To the traditional and Biblical ending of "Amen," Cleaver added the words, "and Awoman." This politically correct perversion of prayer naturally offended many people, and not just conservatives. Even *USA Today* (not exactly a Christian think-tank) protested.

Cleaver, being a Methodist preacher, should have known better. "Amen" is from a Hebrew word meaning "let it be so." It is used in the Bible as a conclusion to prayer for two reasons: (1) to ask God to grant the blessings asked for; (2) so that the audience may express agreement with the things prayed for (1 Corinthians 14:16). It has nothing to do with the male of the human species, so Cleaver's feminist inclusion of "Awoman" was wholly off the mark, not to mention completely disrespectful of God Almighty!

Cleaver has since backpedaled in the face of overwhelming criticism, explaining that he meant the ending of his prayer as a pun on the word Amen to give thanks for the fact that the 117th Congress has the most women serving in American history. His so-called explanation reminded me of the words of King Solomon: *"Like a madman who throws firebrands, arrows, and death, is the man who deceives his neighbor and says, 'I was only joking!'"* (Proverbs 26:18-19).

But even worse was the rest of Cleaver's conclusion to his prayer: "And dare I ask, oh Lord, peace even in this chamber now and evermore. We ask in the name of the monotheistic god, Brahma, a god known by many names by many different faiths. Amen and Awoman." He actually addressed his prayer to Brahma, a Hindu idol, certainly not "the monotheistic God"! And He is hardly the God known by many different names in many different faiths. His name is not Brahma, Allah, Odin,

Zeus, Gaia, or any other false god from man's false religions!

What a disgraceful and blasphemous opening for the new Congress! It is our prayer that the one true God of the Bible will bless them with wisdom in spite of Cleaver's so-called petition. In Jesus' name, Amen!

--Travis L. Quertermous (Thayer, MO)

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An Acceptable Time

"In an acceptable time I have heard You, and in a day of salvation have I helped You; and I will preserve You, and give You as a covenant to the people, to restore the earth, to cause them to inherit the desolate heritages" (Isaiah 49:8).

God gave Christ as a covenant to the people of earth. It is through Christ that we can have the hope of salvation. It is through Christ that we have hope of living in heaven for eternity. It is by accepting the terms given by Christ that we enter into the New Covenant and gain its promises.

We read in 2 Corinthians 6:2, *"For He says, 'In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you.' Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."* We should live each day as the day of salvation. This means we must live according to the terms of the covenant every day. We should not put off accepting the terms of the covenant, nor put off obeying them.

Today is an acceptable time. Are you obeying God? Have you been studying your Bible? If not, then you should begin doing so right now!

--Mark McWhorter (via *Voice of Truth International*)