

Respectable Sins 4 – Selfishness

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[0 : 00] Alright, we'll go ahead and get started. I was trying to give people a few minutes to trickle in a little bit late.

Good morning. Thank you guys for being here. So I'm going to start. I'm going to read a few passages from a book that was in our kids' bookshelf.

Not sure where we got the book. Don't know if it was Imagination Library from Dolly Parton or what. But, you know, it starts out kind of sweet. It's called I'm So Glad You Were Born. It's from a parent. They're writing it, you know, talking to their kid.

And somewhere in the middle of the book, it goes like this. God gave you a future that's brighter than bright. So follow your dreams. Let your passions take flight.

The sky is the limit, and soon you will see that you can be anything you want to be. God's purpose for you is to follow your heart. Create a big life. That's your own work of art.

[1 : 05] Be honest and true as you show the world you. And success will come knocking as if right on cue. Keep dreaming your dreams, because dreams do come true. And remember, God has great big plans for you.

Nearly everything in culture, even supposedly Christian kid books today, say that it's all about you. Every ad or commercial about vehicles, food, weight loss drugs, clothes, or the newest form of entertainment, and countless other things, all say the same thing.

This is for your good. You deserve this. When people buy something for themselves, or they go on a nice vacation, they talk about practicing a little self-love, as if that's the only time they're actually loving themselves.

Piper, in one of his podcasts, he talks about selfishness, and he says, It is the most destructive disease of the human soul.

Absolutely nobody on this planet, except for Jesus, escapes the disease of selfishness. All throughout Scripture, we see, time and time again, acts of selfishness leading directly to sin.

[2 : 27] Eve selfishly took of the forbidden fruit. Jacob selfishly stole Esau's birthright. Abraham selfishly was thinking about himself when he said Sarah was his sister.

And David selfishly took Bathsheba. And countless, hundreds of other examples that I'll spare you. Now, it's easy to point out selfishness.

And while it can be one of the clearest things that we can see in others, it is often easily missed when it is deeply rooted in our own lives. We are born with a selfish nature.

We know that. Now, Luke Bryan may believe that most people are good, and most mamas qualify for sainthood. But, in reality, most people are selfish, and mamas are the first one to see it.

There's a book out, a popular book right now, called Good Inside, The Guide to Becoming a Parent You Want to Be. Now, disclaimer, I have not read the book.

[3 : 27] And I know you're not supposed to judge a book by its cover. But that one is kind of hard to get past. I don't know about your kids, but my kids are not, in fact, good inside.

They are actually the most obviously selfish creatures on the planet. It doesn't take long until their angelic little self starts to want it their way.

I remember, you know, when our kids got to the age, we started having people over, and, you know, kids coming over, playing with our kids. And the moment when they see their cherished toy in the hands of another kid, you know, it's game on.

How often have we heard from the room that screech, it's mine! To which I want to remind them, actually, nothing you have is yours. It was all because it was given to you.

I wonder how often God must do that to us. But in reality, we're still the little sinner thinking about all the things that are ours when, in actuality, all things were given to us by the Father.

[4 : 32] So, we teach our kids that being blatantly selfish is socially unacceptable. And while they may learn to share their toys, their selfishness becomes more subtle, just like ours.

There are those who, yeah, they're brash and obvious about their selfishness. You know, I'm going to do me. I don't care what anybody else thinks. But most of us, we've learned to make it look a little bit more delicate, a little bit more refined.

But, why do we care about this? You know, is it really a big deal? Isn't God for us? Thankfully, yes. Yes, He is. In John 12, 25-26, Jesus said, Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me, and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.

So, what does He mean, whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life? I believe what He's talking about here is His kingdom versus our kingdom.

[5 : 47] If our thoughts and goals are only about building our own kingdom here on earth, we leave little to nothing left for the kingdom of God. Being consumed with our own kingdom is like drinking salt water.

The more we drink, the thirstier we become, until eventually we die of dehydration. So, let us seek daily to kill the sin of selfishness, being reminded that we were bought with a price, so that we would glorify Christ in every aspect of our life.

So, we're going to cover four different areas of selfishness that Jerry Bridges reveals may be commonly observed in Christians. areas that we would call respectable. Then, hopefully, we aren't just going to stop at revealing the sin.

We're also going to talk about how to put it to death. The first is selfishness with our interests. We all have interests.

In this sense of the word, I would mean subjects or topics that we're interested in, whether that be hobbies or work or anything in between. In Philippians 2.4, Paul writes, Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

[7 : 08] So, when we are talking with our friends, our family, our co-workers, how one-sided are the conversations? Are we just cordially listening just long enough while we think about how we're going to respond and turn the conversation back to us?

Now, I grew up in a family of nine, and my parents both came from families of ten. If you wanted to be heard, you just had to talk louder than the next person.

If someone was talking and you had something to say, it was simple. You just interrupted them and, you know, said what you wanted to say. That was no big deal for us. You know, that was normal.

We didn't think too much about it. You know, last night we had a big get-together. All of my extended family was there, and that's kind of how it was. You know, everybody, if you want to tell something about yourself, you just tell them. You don't really ask that many intentional questions. Not a big deal, right? That was until I started dating Lexi. I remember the first time I was over at her parents' house, and, you know, we're in the living room.

[8 : 09] Everyone's sitting around. One person's talking. Everybody else is listening. That person gets done talking. They start asking, you know, intentional, thoughtful questions. I mean, it was like, I've never experienced this before.

I was like, this is great. But I would often leave there, and I would realize, man, that whole time I just talked about myself, and they just asked me questions. Over the years, I've had to learn to grow in this area.

You know, if I wanted my wife to open up and know how she feels about something, I actually needed to ask. Imagine that. On this topic, Jerry Bridges says, a good test of the degree of selfishness in our interests would be to reflect on the conversation after you have been with someone or another couple and ask yourself, how much time you've spent talking about your interests compared to the other person?

A way that we can fail in this area is being a two-gooder. Who knows what a two-gooder is? Basically, if you've got one goat, I've got two goats. You know, you can be telling a story about anything.

You know, like a couple weeks ago, me and the guys I work with were playing the golf tournament, and we had a great time. We shot 12 under, made a couple of putts. Well, the two-gooder goes, oh, yeah, I played in that tournament last year.

[9 : 29] Yeah, we actually won that tournament. We shot 18 under. Yeah, I chipped in. We won, but we donated our money back. And it goes on and on. And by the time they're done, you're like, why did I even tell my story? Your story was way better than mine.

I remember there was a guy I used to go to college with, and you knew any time you were telling a story or talking about an experience, he was just waiting. And as soon as you got done, he would immediately tell you his own stories and his own experiences, a lot more focused on telling you about himself.

It's easy. We all do it. I've done it many times. But before we know it, everyone will see our self-centeredness. Everyone except us.

Now, it is easy to prioritize our own interests over others, but how much easier is it to prioritize our own interests over God's? I like how Taylor compares the church to a little kingdom outpost.

You know, just a small outpost carrying out the mission of God from our eternal home, the kingdom of heaven. But how much more do we think about our own kingdom? I just can't wait until we can afford that bass boat or pave our driveway or get the underground pool.

[10 : 43] Not that it's wrong to have a bass boat, but if our thoughts and goals are mainly about building our own kingdom, we leave nothing left for the kingdom of God. The second area where we can easily become selfish is with our time.

Usually when I ask someone, you know, how they've been, what they've been up to, pretty much every time the response is, oh, we've been so busy. We've been so busy. I say that too. We get caught up in busyness.

Everyone has to deal with managing their time. But if we aren't careful, we can easily be controlled by a list of demands and a schedule that is packed full, leaving us little time for others.

I remember Walt saying one time, it's easier to add a commitment than it is to take one away. And that's just, that's stuck with me. You know, especially when it comes to stuff with kids, whether it comes to sports, dance, music lessons, or the many other things that can dominate our schedules. Now, of course, busyness in and of itself is not necessarily wrong. But before we know it, our lives can be consumed by things that, if we're honest, have a lot more to do with us than they have to do with anyone else.

[12 : 02] Galatians 6, 2 says, to bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ.

When we reflect on our own lives, how often are we bearing someone else's burdens? Or are we too focused on managing our own? I'm going to specifically address men who are fathers and husbands in this area.

I think it's an area that we can easily struggle in. After dealing with the demands of a full-time job, how often do we come home thinking, you know, we deserve to relax?

Our wives want to talk to us. Our kids want to play. There's chores to be done. Yet too often, we show we are more interested in what the screen on our phone has to offer than the woman that God gave us to cherish.

How often do we send the message, my time is more important than your time? I've worked hard all day and now I just need blank.

[13 : 05] Or how about, I've dealt with the kids all day. Now I just need you to blank. It can become a battle of, are they meeting my needs? I bet if you've asked anyone who has been married for many years, they would say, this is a great strategy for a happy marriage.

Joking. Terrible joke. This same principle, it goes beyond marriage.

What message are we sending to our friends, our co-workers, or just random people that we interact with each day? Are we considerate of their time or do we reveal that we mostly just think about our own?

What about the habit of being late? Now this one kind of hits close to home for me. You know, throughout my life, basically the only thing I showed up on time for was work.

And I went by the slogan or the motto, never show up on time for a party. Don't even know where I heard it? Didn't go to parties, but it sounded pretty good to me. Well, I had one of my closest friends growing up.

[14 : 13] He was very considerate of people's time. He was on time for everything. It didn't matter what it was. He was there early. He was there helping you set things up, put the chips in the bowl. Didn't matter.

And I used to think he was a psychopath. But when he would, you know, set up a get-together, I mean, if I was three minutes late, five minutes late, he'd be calling me or texting me. You know, where you at? Hey, are you on your way? It used to bother me so much. I get so irritated about it. But, you know, if you're on the other side of the coin, you can kind of understand it a little bit.

If you're having somebody over for dinner, you clean the house, you get everything prepped up, you, you know, you make the dinner, the bread rolls are hot, they're fresh out of the oven, everything's just the right temperature at just the right time.

But, you know, then, out of, in consideration, they show up an hour late. And then the food's cold, and then, you know, you just kind of feel like the other person doesn't value your time or effort one bit.

[15:14] Let me give you another totally hypothetical example. You're at the grocery store, and you got a cart full of groceries, you're ready to go. You are already kind of irritated that the grocery store relies heavily on self-checkout.

I mean, don't they know that you don't work there? You scan the room, you look at the three open checkout aisles, and you look at the first one, there's an older lady, she's sure to have some coupons, talk about her grandkids.

So, move to the next one. There's a mom, she's got one kid running around the cart, the other screaming for some chocolate, no chance. So, the third one, you cut in there, you cut off an older guy, got a few things, but, what has he got to do the rest of the day?

He's probably retired. That's a good one. So, you get there, and then, the guy in front of you, he tells the clerk, he's like, I'm sorry, my wife had to grab one more thing, so it's going to be a second. So, then you're frustrated, you're looking at the self-checkout, thinking, I could have been through there already. You look over, the older lady, she actually didn't have coupons, and she's helping bag groceries. She's almost done. Which is why you should shop at Aldi, by the way.

[16:25] I don't even think they bag, they don't, they just take it from the conveyor belt, throw it straight to the cart, send you on your way. But, throughout this whole situation, are we considering anyone else's time?

Are we only thinking about ourselves? Are we only considering how to get back on track, with our busy schedule? Two weeks ago, in his sermon, Walt touched on the subject of time.

He says, said, start with one day at a time. Realizing that time is not your time. It begins with your relationship with God.

We redeem our time, as we gather before our Bibles. One of the greatest ways, to redeem time, is a prayerful meditation, upon scripture, and communion with God.

You don't want to get to heaven, and not know, the king of the universe. So, as you write out your calendars, and your planners, if you're that kind of person, are you setting aside time, for things with eternal value?

[17:31] Not just worldly value. The third area, of Christian selfishness, is with our money. Now, money was something, that Jesus talked about often.

More than a lot of other topics. And I think it's because, he knew, or knows, how easily, it can corrupt our hearts. In Matthew 6, 19-21, he says, Do not lay up for yourselves, treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in, and steal.

But lay up for yourselves, treasures in heaven, where neither moth, nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in, and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Then a couple verses later, he states, No one, can serve two masters, for either he will hate one, and love the other, or he will be devoted to one, and despise the other.

You cannot serve God, and money. So, where is your treasure? In Luke 12, Jesus tells another parable, starting in verse 16.

[18:50] He says, The land of a rich man, produced plentifully, and when he thought to himself, what shall I do? For I have nowhere to store my crops. And he said, I will do this.

I will tear down my barns, and I will build larger ones, and there I will store my grain, and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods, laid up for many years.

Relax. Eat. Drink. Be married. But God said to him, Fool, this night, your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?

And so is the one, who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God. So, what does it mean to be rich toward God?

In one of his articles from *Desiring God*, which is a great resource, by the way, Piper says, if you are looking about for where to be rich, focus on God.

[19 : 56] He is your great reward. He is your riches. Therefore, laying up for yourselves treasures in heaven would be living in such a way as to maximize God as your treasure.

Handle your money in such a way as to show that God, and not money, is your treasure. So you may tune out of this section thinking, well, I give my 10%, you know, that's a sacrifice.

I'm proving I don't love money. Well, I hate to tell, I hate to break it to you, Jesus never focused on giving 10%. Now, he didn't say that the law no longer applied, but instead, he set the bar even higher.

Most of us know the story of the widow that gave two coins compared to the rich men that were giving, you know, massive amounts of wealth. In the eyes of the Lord, those two coins were worth more.

And that is because the Lord never wanted our money in the first place. He wants our hearts. Acts 17, 25, it touches on this, says, Nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.

[21 : 21] You know, the Lord isn't sitting up there just hoping that we give our money so he can do this or he can do that. I mean, he had Peter pull money out of a fish's mouth to go pay taxes for crying out loud.

No, he wants our hearts. I've heard that many times people talk about, you know, if I make more money, if I just become successful, then I can give God more money.

But, that is the wrong perspective to have. when the rich man came to Jesus in Matthew 19, he's asking him what he needs to do to inherit eternal life.

And Jesus tells him, Well, you should not murder, you should not commit adultery, you should not steal, you should not bear false witness, honor your father and mother, and you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

The young man said to him, Oh, all these I have kept. What else do I still lack? Classic, right? Right off the bat, Jesus could have called out this guy as an arrogant liar.

[22 : 25] But, instead, he gently reveals this young man's selfish pride by saying, If you would be perfect, go. Sell what you possess and give to the poor.

And you will have treasure in heaven. And come, follow me. When the young man heard this, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. Now, obviously, Jesus knew that, you know, if these guys followed all those laws, he wouldn't be perfect.

Instead, he was simply revealing that his love for himself and his money was so great that he had no room left for the king of kings.

Did you know that servers that work at restaurants Sunday at lunch, they hate it. And, it may not always be true, but the church crowd often has the worst reputation for tipping.

My sister is a waitress at Cracker Barrel, and she says every Sunday people leave Bible verses and no tip. They are looking for the smallest reasons to complain so they can justify a terrible tip.

[23 : 37] Let us be instead known as a generous people. Let us be the kind of people who, when someone asks us for two coats, we give, or asks us for one coat, we give two.

Or they ask us to walk one mile, we walk with them too. A couple weeks ago, Walt talked about this. He said this in one of his sermons. He says, in 10,000 years, will you care what car you drove? How much money you made? Will you care whether you saw the Grand Canyon? It's a sobering reminder of what actually matters in this life. So let our treasure be Jesus Christ, that even with nothing else to our name, that he would be enough.

The fourth area, and the last, of, not the last, but the last that I'm going to talk about, of Christian selfishness is being inconsiderate. Bridges defines this as a person who never thinks about the impact of his or her actions on others.

The inconsiderate Christian drinks alcohol in front of other believers who are recovering alcoholics. The inconsiderate Christian interrupts someone who is timid and rarely speaks up.

[24 : 53] They are lighthearted in cracking jokes when someone is suffering or hurting. They brag about their latest vacation or their most recent Amazon purchase in front of someone who is living paycheck to paycheck, barely scraping by.

Or, they never really seem to genuinely care about your life or your troubles. Paul talks a little bit about this in 1 Corinthians 9, 19 through 23.

He says, For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them.

To be a Jew, I became as a Jew in order to win Jews. To those under the law, I became as one under the law, though not being myself under the law, that I might win those under the law.

To those outside the law, I became as one outside the law, not being outside the law of God, but under the law of Christ, that I might win those outside the law.

[25 : 56] To the weak, I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some.

I do it for the sake of the gospel, that I might share with them in its blessing. So, what's he talking about here? Under the law, outside the law, like a Jew, like a Gentile.

I believe what he's not saying is that he will violate his morals as a Christian in order to fit in. He's not even suggesting that, you know, we change like a chameleon in order to appease people.

He's simply saying that he is careful to be considerate of who he is with in order to not offend him. You know, this would look like leaving your Trump 2024 hat at the house when you go to someone who's on more of a liberal side for dinner.

Or, you know, you're having a bunch of people over and, you know, probably not a good idea to make BLTs if you've got a family that's opposed to pork. You're basically just being thoughtful of other people's feelings.

[27 : 03] Now, this doesn't just play out in action, but also in our words. And men can especially be brash in this area. Now, have you ever heard someone say, you know, people just don't like me because I say what I think?

I've heard it many times. Now, there are plenty of things that go through a Christian's mind that they shouldn't speak. But, most of the time, it's not the content of what someone says, it's the time and the place.

Proverbs 18.2 says, a fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion. There's a difference in speaking a hard truth that someone needs to hear and speaking harshly only to tear someone down and humiliate them.

It is inconsiderate to say something to get others to nod along or to laugh when the end result is tearing someone down. going to act So, what do we do with this?

I just laid out areas to watch for and a few ways to combat that. But, is that where we start with putting to death our sin?

[28 : 19] You know, the human response is to say, okay, I get it. I can be self-centered, and I know that's wrong. So in the future, I'm just going to try really hard not to be selfish.

That is often how we approach our sin. And time and time again, we fail. In this article, John Piper says, The best way to fight selfishness is not to think about selfishness, but to think about Christ. If our lives, our minds, our hearts are overflowing with wonder at the greatness and beauty and the worth of Christ, and the immeasurable value of what He has done for us, it is not likely that we will be perceived as selfish.

Selfish people are preoccupied with themselves and not with Christ. Honestly, I had never heard the term gospel-centered until coming to this church.

But I think this quote from Piper, it lays that out so well. When our hearts are centered on the truth, that while we were still selfish sinners, Jesus died the death that we deserved in order to redeem us, it is difficult to continue to be focused on ourselves.

[29 : 44] Because His mercy is new every morning, we can wake up joyfully worshipping Him. Then, in every aspect of our lives, we desire to glorify Him. Whether it be our interests, or our time, or our money, or as we consider others, we seek to glorify God, not ourselves.

We don't give so that other people will be impressed with us. We give because God gave everything to us. As Christians, we reciprocate what God has done for us.

All throughout the gospels, Jesus lays this out. He says, We love because He first loved us. We forgive because He forgave us.

We serve because He served us. And so we are selfless because He was selfless for us. This is what it looks like to preach the gospel to ourselves daily.

We don't operate by the world's code of, I scratch your back, you scratch mine. Or even out of obligation, because that was the example that Jesus said.

[30 : 54] We say, I'm going to serve others when they don't deserve it. Because guess what? We didn't deserve it either. In the gospel of Mark 10, chapter 10, 43 through 45, Jesus, His disciples were arguing about who was going to be the greatest in heaven.

I'm sure they were not selfish at all. Jesus, He tells His disciples, Now I hope you leave here today more aware of your selfishness.

But more than that, I hope you leave here more aware of the Father's complete grace over your life. And because of that, that you would seek to glorify Him in being selfless.

Let's pray. Oh, Father, I pray that You would. That you would humble us in realizing that in even the smallest areas of our life, we tend to think of ourselves and not of you.

I pray that you would realign our hearts, that we would be focused on you and what you've done in our lives. That through your grace, you would enable us to glorify you more.

[32 : 41] We worship you. We praise your name. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Thank you guys for being here. Thank you.