

Selfishness



Facing Perilous Times (Part 4)
by Derek Prince

Now, what does it mean to deny the power of godliness? I think that the list makes it clear. The problem, the root problem is love of self. Out of that all the other problems come. And selfishness is again a number one mark of our culture. They estimate that the average number of people in a household in the United States today is 1.7 people. Less than 2 people in the average household. Why? Because people can't live together. They can't get on together. What's the root problem? Selfishness. Somebody said we just passed through the "me" generation. It would be interesting to see what follows. Maybe it'll be better.

Now, listen carefully. If the root problem is selfishness, and people who want a form of godliness but are not acknowledging its power in their lives, what will their root problem be? Tell me. Selfishness. See, anything that doesn't deal with selfishness is a form of godliness lacking power. Because self is the root of all the other problems.

Now, could it be that a lot of us churchgoers are basically very selfish people? We tow the line about certain forms of behavior, we probably draw the line at drunkenness or open immorality—although there's a lot of unconfessed immorality in the church today. But let me show you this. Just to have been delivered from gross sins like alcoholism or a problem like nicotine or drugs, doesn't necessarily deliver you from selfishness at all. You may just be a little more sensible than a lot of other selfish people, but your life is still centered in you and what will God do for me and what will I get out of this. And as I understand Scripture, those people are written off. They may be good churchgoers, they may be Charismatic, they may be evangelical, they may be Catholic. But, they're written off by the Word of God as people who have a form of godliness but are not experiencing its power to deal with the root in their own lives. Could that apply to some of us? Brothers and sisters, could that be true of you? You're a churchgoer, you're there every Sunday morning, you perhaps turn up for the weekly Bible study. But, your life centers in me and my and what's good for me and what will I get out of this.

Somebody said to me the other day, an unbeliever, he said, "You Christians. Instead of trying to get people to church you need to ask yourselves why we don't want to go to church." And he said by implication, "It's because of what we see in the church." That's the picture of the last days. It's not a lot of completely non-religious people, it's a picture of a lot of

religious people who've never been delivered from selfishness.

Let me ask you, what are you really living for at this moment, what is the center and focus of your life? Is it me, myself and I? When did you last make a real sacrifice for the good of someone else that cost you something? Does your religion cost you anything? We must move on, but I sense the Holy Spirit is here right now putting His finger on a lot of selfish areas in people's lives.

Jesus told His disciples 19 centuries ago to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. And still nearly 2,000 years later about half the world has never heard the gospel once. Is it because it's not possible to do it? No. With the means of communication we have in the world today it is possible to do it—but it demands sacrifice. Sacrifice of time, sacrifice of strength and maybe sacrifice of your life or your health. There are a lot of very unhealthy places on earth which have never heard the gospel. One of the reasons they've never heard the gospel is because they're unhealthy and people don't like to go there. I think it was Brother Andrew who said Jesus said go into all the world and go to every nation but He didn't say anything about coming back! He didn't say go on the condition you'd be certain you'd come back. He said go.

Brothers and sisters, I'll tell you, if you want a recipe for unhappiness, be selfish. If you want a recipe for frustration and unfulfillment, focus on yourself. We must go on.

The next picture, and we won't dwell on it now, is in verses 6 and 7. Unscrupulous teachers making money out of gullible women. Does that happen in the Western world? Dear Lord, does it happen! Paul says:

> "From this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women, loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."

There are some people who've got such interesting doctrines, so complicated and so highfaluting that you never understand them. But, you're always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

When I became a Pentecostal, one thing was inconceivable—that Pentecostals could ever be rich. I mean, the moment you became a Pentecostal you said good-bye to any kind of prospect of wealth. That was, as I say, nearly 50 years ago. I never could believe that preaching the gospel could be a way of making money. But I've discovered from experience and reading the Bible that there are a lot of warnings in the Bible about don't use the gospel to get money out of people. Anybody who can get one person healed out of 300 can make money out of it; people are so desperate for healing. You announce a Bible study on sacrifice, you get 50 people. You say we're going to pray for the sick, you'll get 500. That in itself is an aspect of selfishness—"I'll go to the meeting if I can get something out of it."

Well, I don't need to tell most of you that there are some people who have made a lot of money out of preaching the gospel. Is that known? And they're basically in this category, they exploit gullible women. I hope there are no gullible women here tonight.

Now we come to the next aspect of the last days which is very, very conspicuous. And I suppose almost anybody who's lived 30 or 40 years would agree. It's a proliferation of the occult in every form. And it's not that the occult is now something practiced in secret, it's flaunted openly. It's taught on major television programs at peak viewing hours. It's fashionable. Today it's not something to be ashamed of, it's just something to be rather excited about. I've found the latest guru. Now this is what Paul says. He says in verse 8, 9 and we'll go a little further:

> "As Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so did these also resist the truth—men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith. But they will progress no further for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was."

Now you may not know who Jannes and Jambres were. But Jewish tradition states that they were the names of the two Egyptian magicians who opposed Moses and Aaron. If you go back to Exodus, chapter 7 and following, you'll find that God equipped Moses with three supernatural signs to attest His message. God has never sent a prophet with a message without a supernatural sign. Never. The first one was that he was to put his hand in his bosom, pulled it out, it was leprous. He put it in again, pulled it out, it was perfectly healed. You might say what's the use of that? Well, I tell you one thing, it attracts attention! If you can do that, you'll always get an audience. I'm not quite sure. One thing I think God was showing Moses was He is the Lord of life and death because leprosy is living death.

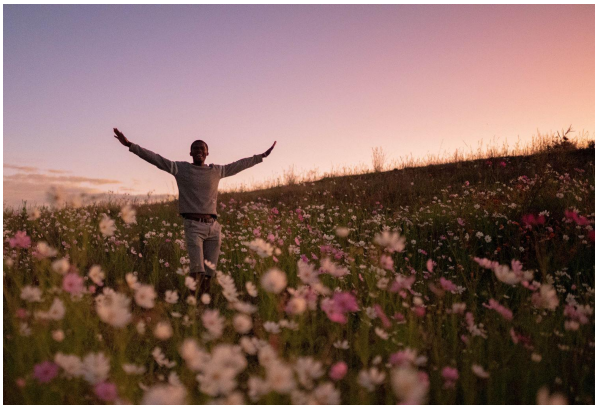


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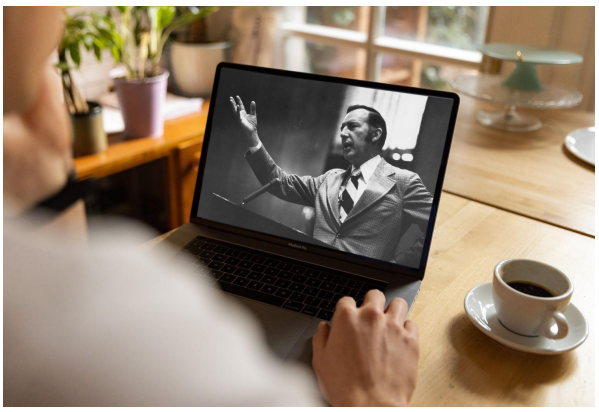
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