

FOOD **4** THOUGHT

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION

What is selfishness?



Ask anyone what he thinks of selfishness and he will answer that it is not good when we think only of ourselves and not others that's bad.

We see evidence of selfishness even in children when they do not want to share toys, possibly for fear of losing them.

The search for personal benefit or our own comfort is evident in our behavior. In some cases it is an unconscious response, due to our survival instinct. Other times it is the desire to have more than others, to excel.

We may rationalize our selfishness by claiming that we "need enough, plus some extra" in order to help others. But we are actually greedy and thinking only of ourselves.

Another side of selfishness is "envy", that is, the desire to have what others have, no matter how unethical the means of getting it.

We all have resources, some more than others, but even when we are generous with

what we have, time is something we want to keep as "ours". Giving of our time to others is not common in the materialistic society in which we live.

If we wish to put aside our selfishness, we should follow the example of Jesus Christ. The Bible says that though He was God, He did not cling to this right, but humbled himself to die for us on the cross (Philippians 2: 6-8).

When we recognize this and go to God to forgive us for our selfishness and many other sins, we see that Jesus' death was a maximum example of generosity, that we should imitate.

Then we have His help to share with others when He said: "*I have come so they may have an abundant life*" (John 10: 10b). To motivate someone to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ is to give the best gift that we can share, yet still keep for ourselves. □

“Even though I want to, I cannot believe”



Such doubt is due to the desire to come to God through reason. It is true that we use reason or intellect to understand the message, but our response to that message takes place in the inner person. It is not merely a mental conclusion, but a decision of faith.

If you hesitate by wondering if all the miracles are true, if you really can believe or if you can fulfill your promise to God, you will not achieve true faith, because these are merely questions of reason, and are not part of faith.

If you think that there are several alternatives and that in the face of doubt you prefer to stay as you are, you will never receive what God offers you in the person of Jesus. But when you realize that life without Christ is unbearable and in the end will lead to destruction, you will act decisively without doubts. And that is the act of faith which goes beyond reason. When you want Christ more than anything else, you will find Him.

There should be no distractions, no conflicting motives or prior commitments, because these things thwart faith.

You say you want to believe, but cannot. Apparently your desire to believe is not in earnest. Using your reasoning alone will cause you to have doubts about the final result; the opposite of faith.

Jesus said, *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."* Surely you can reason that this means if *"whosoever believes shall **not** perish"*, then whosoever who does **not** believe *"**shall** perish"*.

Now, whether or not you believe this statement must go beyond reason, to faith, because this talks of eternal life or eternal death. If you want eternal life, this verse clearly offers it to you, if you simply believe. The choice is yours - eternal life or eternal death. □

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved”

was the response given by the Apostle Paul to the question of what is needed to be saved.

The God of the peanuts



George Washington Carver, scientific researcher, became famous for his discoveries about the usefulness of the peanut. He invented more than 300 economical and health benefits from this common agricultural product.

When he was over 60 years old he appeared before a committee of the US Congress, in 1921, to discuss his findings.

Lawmakers were amazed by the wisdom of Carver, and asked,

–“Where did you learn all this?”

–“From an old book,” he said.

–“What book?” they asked.

–“The Bible.”

–“But, does the Bible teach about peanuts?”

–“No,” answered Carver, “but it talks about the God who made peanuts. I asked Him to show me what to do with peanuts, and He taught me.”

How many problems we would avoid if we ask God for His counseling, follow the advice of the Bible, and live according to its consistent wisdom!

The Bible says: *“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, and He will give it, for God gives generously to all without reproach”* (James 1: 5).

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HABITS... obstacle to progress

Researchers wanted to know more about human behavior so they conducted a series of experiments with animals.

Of particular interest was the case of the lambs. From birth, they lived for a time with their mothers. The researchers then separated them, placing each lamb in a cage, with a dog, a strange sheep and a TV. At the end of the term, the researchers released the lambs, and gave them the opportunity to choose between their provisional partner or their mothers. Without hesitation, most chose their mothers.

As men and women we cling to things, people and customs that are familiar, while distrusting what is new and strange.

People do make good choices based on trust & security, not unlike the lambs choosing their own mothers. However, we often choose things that are not good for us and can bring problems, while overlooking better things simply because they are new.

This suggests one reason for failures. Fearing to go beyond what has been done before, one misses out on the chances for success.

One may continue in a job that is not beneficial,



with peers whose influence is negative, rejecting opportunities to change the environment or learn a new and more productive skill.

The apostle Paul, in his letter to the Christians in Rome, wrote: *"Do not live according to the customs of the society in which we live. Better let God transform your life with a new way of thinking. Then you will understand and accept what God wants for you and what is good, perfect and pleasing to Him"* (Romans chapter 12, verse 2).

This is a good lesson with a promise. It does not suggest a change of religion, but a change of perspectives, values and priorities. God can help us to make that change, when we come to Him, repent of our sins, and ask His forgiveness by the merit of Jesus' blood. Dear friend, you can talk to God right now; He will hear and help you to change.