



Identifying **Selfish** Pursuits

When learning to drive, a teen will soon encounter the danger of “the blind spot.” This describes the space beside your car that is not immediately seen by glancing in your side or rearview mirrors. Semi-trucks have especially long blind spots. Ignoring that invisible space can lead to accidents and even death. But did you know that every person possesses blind spots in the way that we live? These blind spots can cause a lot of damage.

A life devoted to self will be seen in your relationship with God, your relationships with others, the way you work, the way you spend the time God has given you, your entertainment choices, etc. It isn't pleasant or comfortable to take a close look at our lives and invite God's inspection of our fruit. But it is good. When God exposes our selfishness, it is for our good and His glory. So, while it may make us feel vulnerable, the exposure of our sin isn't to shame us, but to cleanse us of what will ultimately destroy us if it is left alone in our lives. If you are united to Christ, then you don't have to fear the exposure of your sin—you already have a covering through the atoning death of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 4:12-16).

Ask God to show you the blind spot of selfishness in your life. Consider carefully: *What areas of your life are you pleasing yourself instead of God?* List at least 40 *specific* ways you are selfish, self-seeking, and pleasing yourself. Solo pursuits are often selfish pursuits. Consider different circumstances and relationships: at home, school, church, friendships, your room, etc. Why 40 ways? Because it means you have to get really specific. Instead of general comments like: *I am selfish at home*, you will have to list out the specific ways you demonstrate selfishness at home: *I take a long time in the bathroom when others in my family need access to the same space*. You might want to work on this inventory of selfishness over the course of a few days. As you do, please remember the grace provided for your selfishness through the selflessness of Jesus Christ. As you get honest and humble yourself before the Lord, you are making a start toward biblical change. After you've finished your inventory, there are other positive steps to take toward becoming more like Christ.

40 Ways I'm Selfish:

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Moving Forward

Honest admission of sin is a great first step toward biblical change. But it isn't enough. God shows us how to get out of the mud, take off our filthy clothes, get clean, and put on clean clothes (this illustration comes from Ephesians 4:22-24 and Colossians 3:5-17). Do you see how your selfishness is against God? Humbly **confess** your selfishness and **seek forgiveness** from God. He is the One you have primarily sinned against (Psalm 51:4). Commit to **forsake** your selfishness—to turn away from it in both your heart and mind. This commitment means that you are going to join God's side and begin fighting against your sin. These steps are what the Bible calls *repentance* (see Proverbs 28:13).

Turning *away from* selfishness means you must also turn *to* something else: becoming a Christ-like servant. Just as you have developed your expertise in being selfish over many years, it will take time to learn and practice a different way of living. One of the best ways to develop Christlike character is to behold the best example of servanthood in the Bible: *Jesus Christ*.

Consider taking the next month to slowly and prayerfully read through one of the gospel accounts. Record in a journal everything you learn about how Christ was a servant to God and others. Note His attitudes, desires, words, and actions. (Luke's gospel is a great place to observe Jesus' love and care for others in action). Each day, after you write down what impacted you, write out a personal prayer asking the Lord to help you apply what you are learning about Jesus to your everyday life. Memorize passages like Philippians 2:3-11 and Mark 10:42-45; asking God to give you the mind of Christ—the mind of a *servant*. Go back through your list of 40 ways you have practiced selfishness and consider how you can display love for God and others in practical, observable ways. You can't just decide to *be* a servant by *doing* servant things. But as God changes you through His Word, you will become more like your Lord and display Christlike selflessness that glorifies Him!