

## Overcoming Selfishness

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**ABSTRACT:** Selfishness is often regarded as caring only for oneself and being concerned primarily with one's own interests, benefits, and welfare, regardless of others. It is engraved deep in the heart of every human being. It is a real issue we need to face in relationships, especially in marriage, because selfishness begets selfishness. Overcoming selfish tendencies is leaving selfishness behind so we can build or rebuild our relationships with God and other people. It will get us more focused on being less self- preoccupied and outward focused for the benefit of others. We must take wise, deliberate action in order to end selfishness. This paper focuses on how we can overcome selfishness in ourselves and others.

**KEYWORD:** selfishness, selflessness, overcoming selfishness

### INTRODUCTION

Selfishness has become a socially acceptable attribute in the modern world. Selfishness is part of human nature. The world is selfish and we live in a narcissistic culture. Selflessness exists anywhere and everywhere: in love life, in marriage, in friendship, in career, in business, in the church, and in the society at large. Everybody acts selfishly from time to time, especially during hard times. You see selfishness all around you – selfish wife, selfish husband, selfish siblings, selfish parents, selfish friends, selfish workers, selfish boss, selfish neighbors, selfish lovers, etc. For selfish people, there is no “we”, only “me”. Selfishness is very hard to see in the mirror. But when we realize how much I plan for myself, play for myself, think about myself, worry about myself, we begin to see selfishness in our life. Someone has said that “selfishness is the mother of all sins.” Our love of self is what drives us to sin. As illustrated in Figure 1, selfishness comes in many ways, forms, and emotions, from self-indulgence to self-pity to self-righteousness [1]. Selfishness is a many-headed monster, the most destructive disease of the human soul. Selfishness in a relationship has to do with “I” and “me” always coming first. It does deliver its promise of protection or satisfaction. It is actually a major hindrance to our faith, our relationship with God, and our relationship with other people.

When we are born, we are conscious only of ourselves. We are the center of the universe and everything revolves around us. As we grow, our consciousness expands and we become aware of a world outside ourselves. We discover that there are people, places, and things around us, and that they fulfill our needs.

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Most children, through experiences over a period of time, come to realize that the outside world cannot provide all their wants and needs. For most people, we never seem to outgrow the self-centeredness of the child. People, places, and things cannot possibly fill the emptiness inside of us, and we react to them with resentment, anger, and fear which make up the triangle of self-obsession [2].

Society and the media seem to encourage selfishness. They focus entirely on how you can get ahead, be successful, focus on yourself and have everything. According to Priolo, you can describe selfishness in the following ways [3]:

1. Selfishness is the lack (or opposite) of biblical love.
2. Selfishness is, for all intents and purposes, the practical equivalent of sin.
3. Selfishness is directly related to sinful fear.
4. Selfishness is superimposing my will on God's will – that is, being self-willed.
5. Selfishness is being more concerned with (interested in or motivated by) what I can get from others than what I can give to them.
6. Selfishness is the one sin out of which all others flow.

The good news is there is a pathway from selfishness towards selflessness. Figure 2 shows the comparison between selfishness and selflessness [4].

### OVERCOMING SELFISHNESS

Selfishness is often regarded as caring only for oneself and being concerned primarily with one's own interests, benefits, and welfare, regardless of others. Selfish people think first and foremost of themselves and rarely of others. There are many damaging effects of selfishness in relationships, especially in marriage. We are creatures of habit. Since selfishness is a learned behavior, we can unlearn it. We can overcome selfishness in the following ways [5-7]:

1. *Reject Selfishness:* Selfishness is a monster. Hate it. Declare war on it. Kill it. If you do not kill it, it will kill you. The Bible calls us to reject selfishness in all its forms. Psalm 101:4 says, "I will reject all selfishness and stay away from every evil" (TLB). Rejection is not passive. It only happens if we deliberately decide to do it. This implies that we need to recognize selfishness in our lives and start saying "no" to it. If you admit and tolerate selfishness in your life, your relationship with God and man will suffer; your impact on the people around you will not be what you want. We must cease tolerating self-sins. To be specific, the self-sins we must reject include self-righteousness, self-confidence, self-indulgence, self-pity, self-sufficiency, self-admiration, self-love, self-consumption, self-promotion, etc. Self-righteousness is a way of denying the truth about our guilt and mistakes. Self-confidence is a way of denying the truth about our limitations. Self-indulgence is a way of rejecting the truth of God's Word and living by our emotions. People see what we do, not necessarily what we say. We are called to be salt and light (Matthew 5:13-16). Selfishness will stand in our way of influencing others for good. As the poet Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, "Your actions speak so loud, I can't hear what you say." If our lives are full of self-sins, people around us will not feel loved even if we try to be nice or religious [1].
2. *Not Seeking Your Own Interest:* Ensuring that they have pleasure in their day is a high priority for selfish people. "Love does not seek its own" (1 Corinthians 13:5). Love does not seek its own comfort, pleasure, and desire above that of those it claims to love.

Caring about the interests of others and sharing their concerns creates unity and bonds of friendship. Selfishness in marriage gives the enemy a foothold to let in the spirit of division in the marriage. We must fight against it! A typical example of selfishness in marriage is when one spouse puts their preferences above the needs of the other. To show love to our partner in a selfless way, we need to set our preferences aside (for a season) to meet their needs. Start making decisions based on how they will benefit others and glorify God. Giving preference and honor to the people around us is both good for our own soul and for our relationships. Caring about the interests of others and sharing their concerns creates unity and bonds of friendship. When we practice putting others first, we will build deeper and lasting relationships.

3. *Show Interest in Others:* A common characteristic of self-centered people is that they tend to live in their own heads. They show little or no interest in others. Many times relationships fall apart because partners do not pay attention to each other. Showing genuine interest in others can help fight against selfishness. In marriage, selfishness will hinder you from becoming ONE with your spouse. You should learn to make your partner a priority. You can become the selfless spouse your relationship needs to thrive and succeed. Showing genuine interest and kindness will destroy your selfishness. Meet your loved ones on a regular basis! There is nothing better than to have a close group of people you care deeply about, as typically shown in Figure 3 [8]. You simply cannot be selfish when you are part of small sticky group of friends who love each other dearly and see your problem as their problem. Make a weekly schedule and make sure you meet at least two people you care about during each and every week. During this time make sure you only focus on the person you meet, preferably no smart phones and no distractions. Doing the things that your partner likes can make them feel important and bring the two of you together. This is a great habit to have and you will be rewarded for it [9].
4. *Focus on Self-care:* This is the way to escape the grip of the emotionally selfish, who expect you to understand and accept their needs but show little interest in yours. Those who are emotionally selfish make unrealistic demands on your time, energy, and support but are nowhere to be found when you need them. An emotionally selfish person lacks empathy and concern for others. Dealing with such a person can be frustrating and hurtful. Make self-care a top priority. You must stand up for yourself, set clear boundaries. You deserve relationships where your needs and feelings also matter. Developing self-awareness and the ability to see beyond oneself is key to overcoming emotional selfishness. Focus on exercise, nutrition, sleep, socializing, relaxation, meditation, and managing stress. You deserve to feel heard, respected, and cared for [10].
5. *Choose Self-control:* This trait allows us to act in ways that will lead to more of what you want, less of what you do not want, and avoid major unrecoverable errors. Self-control requires resisting temptation, and inhibiting unproductive impulses. This is also called temperance, the capacity to self-restrain emotions and desires. Self-control protects us in times of trouble. When we lack self-control, it is like the “walls” of our city are broken down and open to invaders. Proverbs 25:28 says, “A man without self-control is as defenseless as a city with broken-down walls” (TLB). Self-control enables us to say “no” to self-sins and “yes” to godliness.
6. *Imitate Christ:* The Bible encourages us to imitate God or Christ in all that we do as His dear children (Ephesians 5:1). Selfishness is the polar opposite of Christ and what He stands for. The cure for selfishness is a real knowledge and experience of Christ's love. We learn about what the Bible says about selfishness by the contrast of the example the selflessness of Jesus [11]. “Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a

bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Philippians 2:1-8). Jesus lived his life selflessly. He emptied Himself of divine glory and did not insist on His own right. He demonstrated love for us: while we were sinners, he died for us (Romans 5:8). Sacrificing Himself for our benefit is the extreme act of looking out for the interests of others. We are called to follow His steps (1 Peter 2:21). Those who follow Jesus’ selfless example show the world how God want us to live. Imitating Christ is reproducing His attributes in us. Take time to study how Christ loves the church and consider how you can apply His example in your life. God is pleased when we imitate Him or His Son. He is happy when we love as He loves and forgive as He forgives.

7. *Live for Christ:* Riches can easily harden the soul and lead us to forget God. The Bible warns us against selfishness and the love of money. No wonder Jesus says: “How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!” (Mark 10:23). Many rich people will not lose their salvation because of what they did, but because of what they did NOT do- not helping the poor with what they had. Are you living for yourself or for Christ? What is your purpose and motivation in life? Do you no longer live for yourself but for him who died for you? (2 Corinthians 5:15). Knowing how much you owe the Lord, you will feel that NOTHING is too great to give to Him, and help the poor [12].
8. *Be Guided by the Spirit:* Our life is controlled by two major forces: our flesh or our spirit. As Christians, we are either operating in the spirit or in the flesh. Obeying the Spirit or the flesh causes a common conflict for all believers. Without doubt, it is challenging to overcome selfishness on our own. The disease of selfishness cannot be cured just by a human decision to try and do better. But when ask for the help of the Holy Spirit, He empowers us to live a selfless life. Christ promised to send the Holy Spirit to those who believe in Him to assist us in godly living. Buddha does not offer this cure. Mohammad does not offer this solution. Only Jesus Christ offers this provision for mankind. The Bible encourages us to walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16). Walking by the Spirit is living your life in the continual presence of the Spirit of God. Walking in the flesh only leads to frustration and destruction. Walking by the Spirit is the new way of life for the Christians or those who have been born again. It will help you overcome the flesh and selfishness [13]. We will reap the blessing of personal, relational, and spiritual growth.
9. *Love Unconditionally:* With superficial love, you love the other in order to have your own needs met. With true love, you love the other unconditionally, whether they meet your needs or not. When you practice unconditional love in your personal relationships, you are exercising your “selflessness muscle” and making selflessness your default mode of operation. Paul said that, “Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails” (1 Corinthians 3:4-8). Selfless love is not easy, but it helps everyone grow. Loving encouragement, compassion, and Spirit-led affection are the result of looking out for one another. Make a habit of giving thoughtful gifts and notes of encouragement.
10. *Pursue Knowledge:* Expanding your knowledge base — in a humble way — will allow you to shift your focus from yourself to others. This is the essence of healthy knowledge: being able to see things from a perspective that is not driven by self-interest, and the exploitation of others. What does the world look like beyond the sphere of your prejudices? How have other people transcended their own setbacks? Spend time reading God’s word, specifically verses that describe love and selflessness. (See the next section.) Paul said, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom” (Colossians 3:16). As you spend time studying God’s word,



consider how you can demonstrate what you study to benefit others. Being the doer of the Word is what counts. As James 1:22 says, “But don’t just listen to God’s word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves” (NLT).

11. *Be a Giver:* It is hard for selfish people to give. You must learn to be a giver and not a taker. Look for opportunities to give of yourself - your time, your affection, anything you have been selfishly withholding from others. When you give money to charity, you are giving of your efforts, your abilities, and your time. You fulfill the fundamental human need to share what has been given to you. Fulfilling that need brings you closer to selflessness. The prophet Isaiah said, “Feed the hungry! Help those in trouble! Then your light will shine out from the darkness, and the darkness around you shall be as bright as day. And the Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy you with all good things, and keep you healthy too; and you will be like a well-watered garden, like an ever-flowing spring” (Isaiah 58:10,11, TLB). As the chief sower, God gives money to us in proportion to our ability to handle His gifts. It is the duty of every Christian to be a sower. Giving is laying your treasure in heaven. This is what the Master strongly recommends (Matthew 6:19-21) [14].
12. *Take in Criticism:* Selfish people believe that they know everything and their opinion is the only one that matters. They are always thinking that their way of living life is best and that anyone who tries to give them feedback is just trying to do them harm. Selfish people are notoriously bad when it comes to receiving criticism or feedback. They struggle with admitting that they are wrong. They are also not good listeners. To stop being selfish, take the time to listen to your partner or friends and embrace their godly, constructive criticism. Listening to people is a great way to show interest in them.
13. *Increase Your Empathy:* Empathy is the ability to identify with and understand the wants, needs, and viewpoints of those around you. It is being able to understand how others are feeling. People with empathy have the ability to put themselves in someone else’s situation or look at situations from other people’s perspective. They are considerate and apply the Golden Rule to all areas of their lives [15]. Developing your empathetic abilities is a great way to overcome selfishness. Empathy is what allows you to consider things from other people’s points of view and focus on things beyond your own needs. Learn to put yourself in someone else’s shoes. Walking a mile in another man’s shoes can change your life for eternity. Giving compliments, celebrating achievements, or asking friends, family, or coworkers questions about their lives helps develop trust, mutual admiration, genuine interest, and empathy.
14. *Learn to Compromise:* In order to stop being selfish, you need learn to compromise. Compromise might include taking advice, seeing things from another perspective, and learning to think critically while setting aside your emotions. Do not always insist on having your way. This may seem immature and unreasonable. It is better not to always get what you want and let other people have needs too. You do not want to develop a reputation for being stubborn and uncompromising. Learn to listen to people and weigh the pros and cons of any request. You will discover that some compromise is inevitable for making people happy.
15. *Volunteer to Help Others:* Selfish people are preoccupied with themselves and not with God or others. Selfless people always give something to society. Volunteering is a great way to turn your focus outward and find out so many people out there who are so much less fortunate than you are. It helps to make meaningful connections with other people and to see the world outside yourself. You will soon stop thinking about all the things you do not have when you see other people who have far less. Join a team that participates in helping the less fortunate, like the Red Cross. See Figure 4 as an example of people helping with Red Cross [16]. Being part of a good cause is certainly a great way

to help make the world a better place. You may even aspire to be a leader of this team. This is a great way to give up some of your selfishness and become less selfish. It is greatly rewarding. We derive joy and happiness when help others and not focus on ourself. As Dalai Lama right said, “If you think only of yourself, if you forget the rights and well-being of others, or, worse still, if you exploit others, ultimately you will lose. You will have no friends who will show concern for your well-being. Moreover, if a tragedy befalls you, instead of feeling concerned, others might even secretly rejoice. By contrast, if an individual is compassionate and altruistic, and has the interests of others in mind, then irrespective of whether that person knows a lot of people, wherever that person moves, he or she will immediately make friends. And when that person faces a tragedy, there will be plenty of people who will come to help.” There are many ways you can volunteer: helping your church, tutoring students, mentoring a child, donating books or unwanted items, visiting the elderly, etc. Figure 5 shows a group of volunteers [17].

16. *Humble Yourself*: Combating the sin of selfishness requires humility. Selfishness is elevating myself above others. We live in a society that demands fundamental human rights and promotes selfish tendencies. As followers of Jesus Christ, we must approach things differently. We do not demand our rights before God. Rather we surrender them to Him in humility. In God’s kingdom, humility and service are keys to greatness. Humility is a quality of being courteously respectful of others. It is the opposite of arrogance, boastfulness, vanity, and selfishness. God requires that we are humble before Him. “He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8). God esteems the humble (Isaiah 66:2). He is against the arrogant (Jeremiah 50:31,32). He resists or opposes the proud (1 Peter 5:5,6). Before God, you cannot claim that you are self-made. We should never assume that we have made it in our strength (Deuteronomy 8:18). We should have a humble attitude toward ourselves. Every gift we have, every success we achieve, and every battle we win are His and His alone. We should consider others better than ourselves [12]. “Don’t be selfish; don’t live to make a good impression on others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourself” (Philippians 2:3,4, TLB). Relationships flourish as we relate to others in humility.
17. *Be Thankful*: Selfish people think that they deserve the best treatment and that they deserve to be spoiled. If someone does something nice for you, thank them for their actions instead of just taking it for granted. Be thankful and grateful when kindness comes your way. Show gratitude for whatever people do for you. Gratitude involves being appreciative of the good things in your life. Practicing gratitude can reduce egomania and self-centeredness by helping you focus your attention on the things you love and respect in others. Spend a few minutes each day writing down a few things you are grateful and thankful for. Be thankful and appreciate your partner, friends, and others who bring happiness to your life.
18. *Change Your Thinking*: Your marriage will not be healthy and happy if you remain selfish. In order for you and your spouse to become one (Mark 10:8), you must let go of some individuality. To become selfless and not selfish in your marriage, start by denying that little voice inside you that says, “I should have everything I want, when I want it, and how I want it.” Start thinking as “we,” not “I.” When making decisions, always ask yourself, “Is this what is best for both of us, rather than just me?” How can I help my spouse to make their spouse’s life easier today? Do I want to spend more money on my wants instead of the needs of our home? Share your answers and thoughts about the questions with your spouse. Try to do something thoughtful for your partner. Complimenting them can make them more special. Your mindset will change from always thinking about “me” to “us”

[18]. As shown in Figure 6, do not be selfish to your partner in bed [19]. Showing affection will increase your happiness and that of your spouse.

19. *Be Willing to Forgive*: Forgiveness is important in relationships. Forgiving your partner and let go of past hurts is a critical tool in any relationship. It is part of the process of restoring hope in a troubled family. Holding onto old hurts, disappointments, petty annoyances, betrayals, insensitivity, and anger wastes both your time and your energy. The ability to forgive and seek forgiveness is often rated as one of the most important factors that make a relationship last. God cannot forgive us if we refuse to forgive others. The Bible says that, “If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins” (Matthew 6:14,15). It is pride and selfishness that debar us from forgiving others. There are some things in our relationship that hurt us deeply and we may choose to hold onto them instead of forgiving them. As we learn to forgive, we find freedom to be selfless. Every great marriage requires forgiveness because imperfect couple are bound to offend each other. Unforgiveness is a common marital problem, and forgiveness is the solution. Lack of forgiveness imprisons you, the offender, and hinders intimacy. Unforgiving people are their own worst enemy. Forgiveness is simply letting go and building the confidence necessary to experience a healthy life. It is an active process in which you make a conscious decision to let go of negative feelings whether the person deserves it or not [20]. Figure 7 shows the keys to forgiveness in a marriage [21].
20. *Practice Active Listening*: When someone is talking, we are tempted to be thinking about what we are going to say next, instead of listening. To be less selfish, you need to learn how to listen actively. This is essential in relationships to build trust, foster open communication, and help resolve conflicts. Practice active listening and communication skills. Active listening means giving thoughtful responses that show you are really interested in hearing more about what your partner has to say. It requires taking into account the feelings behind the words spoken. It is taking a partner’s feelings into consideration. Listen to what your spouse is saying. Focus your attention on your spouse and look at them directly. Avoid interrupting the speaker and allow them to finish before presenting your arguments. This is a form of giving by itself, and an unselfish act. This will encourage mutual understanding and empathy.
21. *Give Sincere Compliments*: To recognize and overcome selfishness in a relationship, one must take responsibility for their actions and behaviors. Take the time to let people know how much you appreciate them, whether you are talking about their fashion sense, their personalities, or great decisions they have made. Give compliments because they really deserve them. Learn to compliment your spouse and let the complement be sincere. Although it may feel uncomfortable at first, giving sincere complement and developing empathy towards others is essential in being less selfish. Overcoming selfishness allows couples to reap the rewards of giving rather than always taking.
22. *Be Prayerful*: You cannot conquer selfishness alone. You need to call on God to help you. Prayer is one way to overcome selfishness because prayer has the power to change things. We must learn to be prayerful and constant in prayer. Ask God to help you notice selfish thoughts and tendencies. Pray for the gift of discernment (1 Corinthians 12:1-14.). This gift will make a difference in your life, especially your spiritual walk with the Lord. It will help you recognize a spiritual attack and be sensitive when the enemy is behind your thoughts. When you are able to recognize or discern what the enemy is trying to do in your life, you can tell the enemy to flee in the name of Jesus and he will. Jesus said, “If you ask anything in My name, I will do it” (John 14:14). Pray that God will help you to stop being selfish and change. Let Lord break and loosen your grasp on things. Make sure that your prayer is not selfish, because God will not hear a selfish prayer. Whatever that is done through

selfish ambition is not acceptable to the Lord. Satan, your archenemy, Satan rules the world through selfishness. He knows the power of harmonious relationships and does everything he can to divide and rule. Pride, selfishness, and unforgiveness are just some of the subtle relationship killers that Satan uses. We should not give him an inch in our relationships. By being prayerful, we enjoy the blessings of healthy, happy relationships.

### **BIBLE VERSES FOR OVERCOMING SELFISHNESS**

There are several verses in the Bible that discourage selfishness and encourage selflessness. Bible verses to battle selfishness include the following [22,23].

“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others” (Philippians 2:3,4).

“Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful” (1 Corinthians 13:4,5).

“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me” (Luke 9:23).

“Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God” (Hebrews 13:16).

“For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice” (James 3:16).

“He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf” (2 Corinthians 5:15).

“People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy” (2 Timothy 3:2).

“In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’ ”(Acts 20:35).

“The generous soul will be made rich, and he who waters will also be watered himself” (Proverbs 11:25).

“He who gives to the poor will lack nothing, but he who closes his eyes to them receives many curses” (Proverbs 28:27).

“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich” (2 Corinthians 8:9).

“For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Galatians 5:14).

“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do” (Galatians 5:16-17).

“I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20).



“Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God” (Galatians 5:19-21).

“Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ” (Galatians 6:2).

“Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others” (1 Corinthians 10:24).

“If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?” (1 John 3:17).

“We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. For even Christ did not please himself but, as it is written: ‘The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me’” (Romans 15:1-3).

## CONCLUSION

Selfishness is characterized by an exclusive concern for one’s own interests, often neglecting the interconnectedness and interdependence that define the human experience. It corrodes the foundations of trust, undermines the fabric of relationships, and impedes the communal spirit necessary for shared prosperity. Some of us have been able to cut down selfishness to a certain extent, while some have it to a very large degree. One should overcome the evil of selfishness with love and sharing, caring and giving.

Do not feel obligated to remain in a toxic relationship with someone who refuses to change. Although you cannot force selfish people to change their behavior, you can choose to limit contact with them and surround yourself with people who value you, celebrate you, and treat you well. Fighting selfishness in marriage is not an overnight fix. Healing from selfishness takes time. Your effort on stopping being self-centered is a hard one, but is definitely something that you will not regret. Today, make it a point of duty that you are going to fight and defeat selfishness operating in your life.

Acknowledge your sin of selfishness and repent. Do not defend or rationalize it. Understand that God loves you and is taking care of you. Accept Jesus into your life. This is the only way to be cured from the fatal disease of selfishness. When you receive Him, Jesus imparts His life to you and give you a new nature. More information about overcoming selfishness can be obtained from the books in [24-27].

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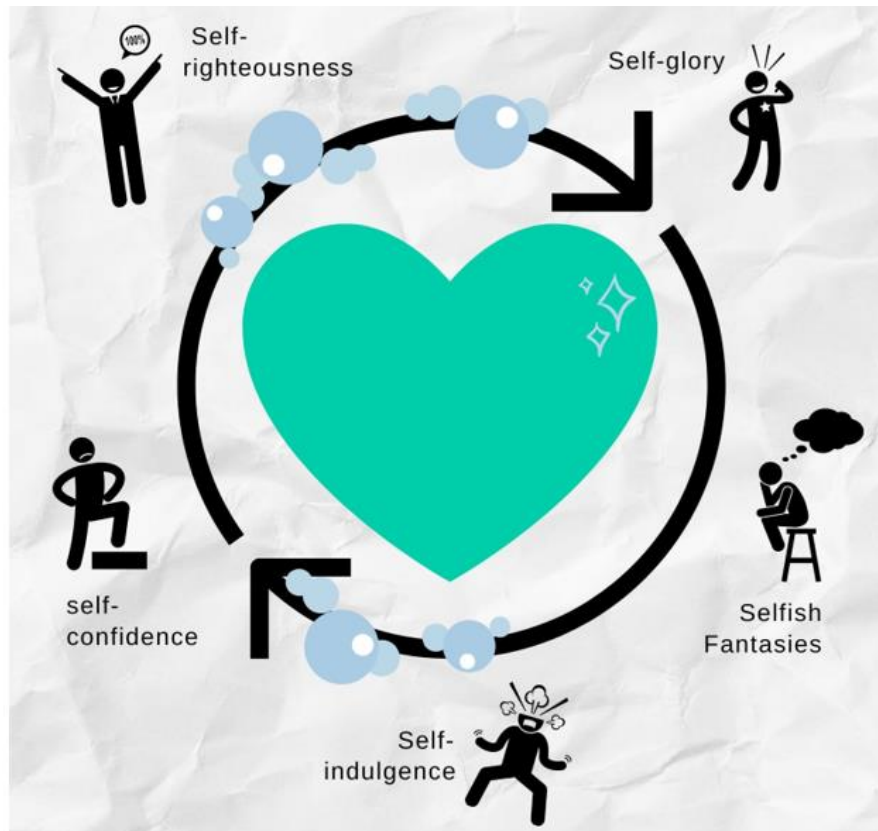


Figure 1 Selfishness comes in many forms [1].

Selfish	Selfless
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Materialistic</li> <li>Self-promoting</li> <li>Grandiose sense of self</li> <li>Lack empathy</li> <li>Disregard for consequences</li> <li>Unkind</li> <li>Entitled</li> <li>Self-absorbed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generous</li> <li>Altruistic</li> <li>Humble</li> <li>Empathetic</li> <li>Conscientious</li> <li>Kind</li> <li>Grateful</li> <li>Charitable</li> </ul>

Figure 2 Comparing selfishness and selflessness [4].



**Figure 3 A close group of people who deeply care [8].**



**Figure 4 Helping with Red Cross [16].**





Figure 5 A group of volunteers [17].



Figure 6 Do not be selfish to your partner in bed [19].





**Figure 7 Forgiveness in marriage [21].**