

The Way to Life

By Don Walker

"He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it." [Matt. 10:39]

Selfishness is the epidemic disease of our day. Unbeknownst, to those suffering from this disease, it is destructive. We are systematically taught from our earliest days to "look out for number one," to "pamper ourselves," and to "encourage self-actualization, self-awareness, and self-esteem." We have made a supreme vice into a supreme virtue. As a result we have become self-absorbed, self-concerned, and self-consumed. We have also become supremely unhappy and unfulfilled. As psychologist Paul Kellerman has pointed out, this is precisely because "The only path to genuine happiness and fulfillment is through service to others. It is only as we give ourselves away that we can truly discover ourselves."

Whereas, in times past the motivating concept that shaped our society was "faith in God," it is now "faith in self." The modern cult of self beckons us to "find ourselves" by turning inward. It entices to "satisfy ourselves" by "being true to ourselves." Modern man wrongly assumes that all his personal ills are a result of his failure to "love himself," actually nothing could be further from the truth. He has been brainwashed to believe that the root of all bliss is "self-esteem." But one of the most basic principles of sociology is that satisfaction, purposefulness, contentment, and success are all directly connected to selfless service. In other words, authority ultimately resolves itself upon the servant not upon the tyrant. This basic concept of social development is understood all too well by the administrators of many of our contemporary social service institutions. They recognize that whatever agency serves the needs of the people will ultimately gain the allegiance of the people. So, they serve. And, as a result of the entitlements they bestow upon others, they gain more and more authority. As my dear friend Dennis Peacocke is fond of saying, "He who serves leads." Unfortunately, many believers have seemingly missed this truth.

Notice what Jesus taught His disciples, "And He said to them, 'The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called benefactors. But not so among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves. But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials. And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel'" (Luke 22:25-30).

The cult of self is contradicted by the whole of history. The great lessons of history are invariably told through the lives and work of men and women who put the interests of others before their own, who put the safety of others before their own, and who put the happiness of others before their own. Compare the life stories of men like William Wallace, George Washington, Patrick Henry, Booker T. Washington, Teddy Roosevelt, and Winston Churchill with our modern day obsession with self. The contrast is immediate and enormous. The heroes of the past were always those who resisted the temptation of selfishness. They fought for justice, they cared for the

needy, they worked for mercy, they fed the hungry, and they rescued the perishing. Their greatest accomplishments were always the result of their comprehension that servant hood was ultimately the key to significance and success.