

## **Selfless – Being Grateful in the Grind**

For many of us, our lives are lived under the illusion that there is always something around the corner, or just ahead, or just beyond my reach, or something out there that really matters more than what I am doing right now.

- Something around the corner that is going to make the difference –
- Something I desire.
- The event that I'm looking for that will bring meaning and fulfillment to give that significant moment that I've been looking for all my life.
- It's not **HERE** – it's somewhere **OUT THERE**.

### **We all have our “When Then” moments:**

Maybe for you it was **when** you were in school, college or beyond – you thought if I could only get through this time, **then** I will experience more meaning and purpose.

Then you were out of school and began to work you thought, **when** only I get promoted or find the right job – **then** I'll experience satisfaction and fulfillment.

Then you begin to think of **when** you could start your own business and do things your way, **then** life would be great.

Then you began to think **when** I get married, get a house, have a family, **then** life will begin to start for me.

When you were married and had your first child, then you thought **when** they grow out of diaper age, **then** it will be better for us.

They were older and went off to college and graduated, **then** you thought you would be able to eat and enjoy your money again.

Then you thought **when** you were able to retire from work, **then** you would be able to do whatever you wanted to do, when you wanted to do it and on your own time schedule.

**We find ourselves whatever season we are in wishing the current season away waiting for the next one to come.**

One day – just around the corner, there will be that achievement, that advancement, that accomplishment, that deal, that friendship, that possession – that something that fills the emptiness on the inside.

But in real life: we find around every corner; there is just another challenge, vision, goal, dream or another perceived prize.

When you live long enough, if you're paying attention: you will see a real weakness in our lives is that for so much of our lives we have been pursuing what we want –

- MY DREAMS
- MY PASSIONS
- MY WANTS
- MY GOALS

And whatever there is **OUT THERE**, there has to be something better than what I have right now.

Culture today, completely feeds into this mindset of:

- Gratify yourself
- Indulge yourself
- Get whatever you want, you deserve it
- Treat yourself

The problem is, Jesus said “IF you want to be MY disciple and follow ME – you must deny yourself and take up your cross and follow Me.

For whoever will save his life shall lose it; and whoever will lose his life for MY sake shall find it” Matt. 16:24-25

- As a believer and follower of Jesus, you don't treat yourself, you deny yourself.
- You don't indulge yourself – you deny yourself.
- You take up your cross – a picture of dying to your own desires to live by His Spirit.
- Then you follow Him.

Paul:

1Cor. 10:31 “Whatever you do, **do it for the glory of God.**”

- Whether it's doing laundry, picking up the kids from school, helping around the house, doing yard work, bathing the dog, errands for the family or the boss, things that aren't that big of a deal - **WHATEVER YOU DO, DO IT FOR THE GLORY OF GOD.**

When we are honest at looking at our lives, whatever we do is usually mostly for ourselves.

- We all are prone to do what makes us happy, feel good, fulfills our dreams, gratifies ourselves – but Jesus says: “We deny ourselves to really have meaning in life, and do what we do for the glory of God.

We need to learn to recognize that the **PRIZE** isn't OUT THERE somewhere.

The **PRIZE** isn't what you accomplish occasionally.

The **PRIZE** is in what you do daily – when you do it for the glory of God.

Three Questions:            **WHAT IF?**

### 1. What if the work is the reward?

1Cor15:9

“For I am the least of the Apostles and do not even deserve to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace to me was not without effect.”

- Before he followed Christ, Paul was a murderer of Christians.
- But, by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace to me was not without effect.
- Your and my story: By the grace of God, we are what we are because His grace to us was not without effect.
- We weren't good, we weren't righteous, we were sinful, we weren't faithful, **BUT by the grace of God** – you are now what you are – not because you're good but because He is good and now we are becoming who He wants us to be because grace for us was not without effect.

But the said thing is that for some of you here today, that His grace has been without effect because you have not allowed it to touch your heart.

- You haven't been changed by His grace yet and you are still in unrighteousness
- But the good news is that today, you are in the right place to become available to the work of God and you can become who HE wants you to be by His grace.

v. 10            “No, **I worked harder than all of them** – yet not I, **but the grace of God that was with me.**”

- Paul is saying that he wasn't any good, but by the grace of God who transformed him, and because of who Jesus is and what He did, I worked harder than the rest of

them. But it wasn't me, but the grace of God doing through me what He called me to do.

- He just got to work and whatever he did, he did it for the glory of God.
- It is hard for us to comprehend the depths of what Paul experienced as he did his life for the glory of God:
  - The suffering.
  - The beatings
  - Being shipwrecked
  - Snake bitten
  - Persecuted, beaten, run out of towns, rejected.
  - While others went to bed, I stayed up praying, writing, strategizing, while others took a short cut, I tried to do the right thing, when I was in prison – I kept working, we went to cities with no resources, but we got the job done anyway and raised up churches where there were none.

Paul was not wishing his current season away:

- Wherever he was; he was ALL THERE
- WHATEVER he did, he was doing for the glory of God

He didn't think: "Someday, when I get out of prison, I'll get back to what I am supposed to do."

NO, he just did what he did for the glory of God.

- There's a guard chained up to me, I'm going to witness to him.
- Get me some paper, I'm going to write the Philippians a letter; they need to hear from me.
- When shipwrecked he didn't say: "Well God let me down, what a lot of thanks for me being faithful to Him. I prayed for protection and here we are shipwrecked." Well, here we are anyway, so it must be the Lord who protected us.
- When Barnabus left Paul, he didn't bemoan: "O, I can't take any more of these faithless Christians, I'm leaving the Sunday School class because Barnabus hurt my feelings. NO.
- He didn't have time to waste on this petty stuff because he had work to do for the glory of God.

### **How does this apply to you today:**

- You may be doing some kind of work or ministry, or have a job that doesn't seem to attract a lot of attention or praise, but you should be doing it with integrity and a pure heart and for the glory of God with a heart of a servant.
- You declare this task is going to be done for the glory of God.
- When you live this way – you suddenly wake up and realize –

### **WOW - MAYBE THE WORK IS THE REWARD**

2. Maybe the **PRIZE** is in the **PROCESS**.
3. In everyday life being faithful in the routine of life, you can be **GRATEFUL** in the **GRIND**.

### **THERE ARE THREE ENEMIES OF THE TRUE REWARD:**

#### 1. **The PILLOW: The Seduction of COMFORT**

This may play out in your life as:

- What I really need to be comfortable is –
  - A better home – walk in closets, granite counter tops, heated tile in the bathroom, three car garage. If I just had that, I'd be happy.
  - A newer car – I need power seats, windows, heated/cooled seats. Sun/moon roof. If I just had that one, I'd be happy.
  - If I was just the boss, I could take life easy.
    - **God never called us to easy! He called us to deny ourselves.**
    - **Easy never changed the world, yet the pillow cries out – the seduction of comfort.**

#### 2. **The SHINY thing: The allure of constant DISTRACTIONS**

- We know what's important, but BING, the notification goes off and we're distracted.
- We wonder what they've posted on FACEBOOK, TWITTER, INSTAGRAM etc? NETFLICKS, and it tells you its 99% sure you will like the next one.
- We are over-programmed because we are so distracted.

- It's the donkey that always chases the carrot because you are distracted and never satisfied by the SHINY thing.

### 3. The TOWEL: The perpetual temptation to QUIT

- When the marriage gets difficult, "I can't take any more of this, I'm not in love anymore, it's not worth it – I'm throwing in the towel."
- When trying to get our finances together, we go to classes and realize it's us that is the problem and we are going to have to change wayward spending habits and develop a budget and get stricter on ourselves to get out of debt or have more for our family and to help in the Kingdom of God.  
I just give up: let's go out to eat or buy another something to make me feel better.
- Christianity doesn't work for me: I've tried God. I've been to church 2 times, I've read the Bible for a day, but it's not helping me.  
When I went to church I couldn't get the parking place I wanted.  
Somebody looked at me funny.  
I'm throwing in the towel.  
They don't appreciate me around here; I'm throwing in the towel.

**YOU CAN THROW IN THE TOWEL OR YOU CAN PICK UP THE TOWEL  
WIPE THE SWEAT OFF YOUR BROW AND GET BACK  
IN THE DAILY GRIND OF DONG WHATEVER YOU DO  
IN THIS MOMENT FOR THE GLORY OF GOD**

#### You realize:

1. The **WORK NOW** is the REWARD
2. The **PRIZE** is the **IN** the PROCESS
3. I can be **GRATEFUL** every day in the GRIND

**Selfish passion is about us.**

**There is a higher calling, not selfish passion, but about SELFLESS PURPOSE.**

**When you start doing the purpose of God for your life -  
PASSION will follow purpose.**