

MESSAGE NOTES

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Scott Wilson
Student Family Pastor

The Face of Love

Part 3

How to NOT Serve Your Family

Ephesians 5:22-6:4

1. Pretend nobody's _____.

1 Corinthians 11 (NIV)

Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

1 Timothy 4:12 (NIV)

Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.

2. Fail to set _____.

Proverbs 22:15 (The Message)

Young people are prone to foolishness and fads; the cure comes through tough-minded discipline.

3. Tie your love to _____.

4. Solve all their _____.

5. Push your _____.

1 Corinthians 13:5 (NIV)

It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

Psalms 101:2 (NIV)

I will be careful to lead a blameless life— when will you come to me? I will walk in my house with blameless heart.

Additional resources available at The Source.

Love is not selfish

*Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor. **Romans 12:10 (NIV)***

We live in a world that is enamored with "self". The culture around us teaches us to focus on our appearance, feelings and personal desires as the top priority. The goal, it seems, is to chase the highest level of happiness possible. However, the danger from this kind of thinking becomes painfully apparent once inside a relationship with another.

If there were ever a word that basically means the opposite of love, it is selfishness. Unfortunately, it is something that is ingrained into every person from birth. You can see it in the way young children act, and often in the way adults mistreat one another. In fact, almost every sinful action ever committed can be traced back to a selfish motive. It is a trait we hate in other people, but justify in ourselves. Yet you can't point out the many ways another family member is selfish without admitting you can be selfish too. That would be hypocritical.

Why do we have such low standards for ourselves but high standards for our family members? The answer is a painful pill to swallow. We are all selfish to the core.

When a father or mother puts his or her interests, desires, and priorities in front of the family's, that's a sign of selfishness. When an adult child constantly complains about the time and energy spent meeting the needs of another family member, that's a sign of selfishness. But love does not "seek its own" (1 Cor. 13:5). Loving family members – the ones who are enjoying the full purpose of God – are bent on taking good care of the other flawed humans they get to share life with. That's because true love looks for ways to say "yes".

Love is never satisfied except in the welfare of others. You can't be acting out of real love and selfishness at the same time. Choosing to love your family will cause you to say "no" to what you want so you can say "yes" to what they need. That's putting the happiness of a family member above your own.

Love also leads to inner joy. When you prioritize the well-being of your family member, there is a resulting fulfillment that cannot be duplicated by selfish actions. This is a benefit that God created and reserves for those who genuinely demonstrate love. The truth is, when you relinquish your rights for the sake of others, you get a chance to lose yourself to the greater purpose of that relationship.

Nobody knows you better than your family. And that means no one will be quicker to recognize a change when you deliberately start sacrificing your wants and wishes to make sure others' needs are met. If you find it hard to sacrifice your own desires to the benefit of another, then you may have a deeper problem with selfishness than you want to admit.

Ask yourself these questions:

- Do they see me looking out for myself first or them first?
- Do they believe I have their best interests in mind?
- Do I want them to feel loved by me?
- Do they know that I am listening to them?
- Do I truly want what's best for my family member?

Remember, your family member also has the challenge of loving a selfish person – YOU. So determine to be the first to demonstrate real love to them, with your eyes wide open. Be the true "face of love".

"Do nothing from selfish or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves."

Philippians 2:3 (NIV)

Today's Challenge

Whatever you put your time, energy, and money into will become more important to you. It's hard to care for something you are not investing in. Perform an act today for a family member without expecting anything in return – not a response and not an action. Choose something you might not normally do or you might find difficult to do.

Reflection:

What did you choose? What happened when you performed the act? What was their response?

*adapted from *The Love Dare* by Stephen and Alex Kendrick;
"Day 3 - Love is not selfish".