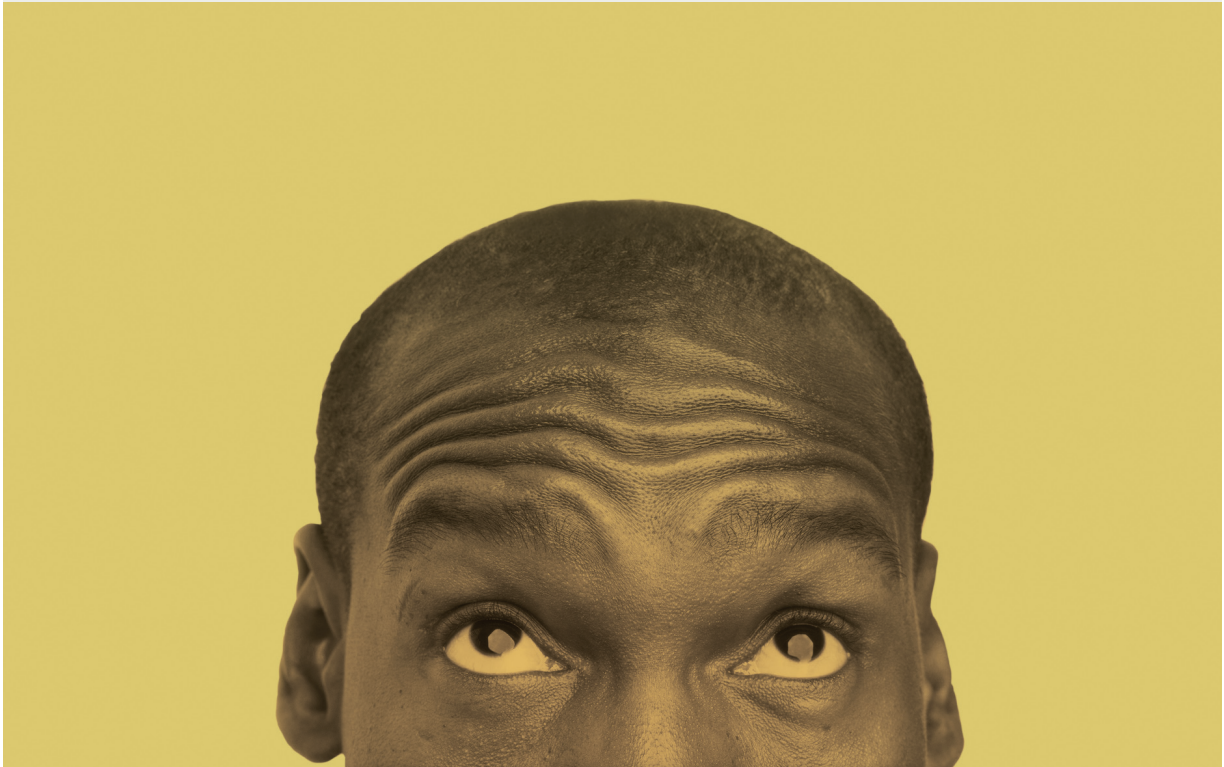




JOYCE MEYER
MINISTRIES®

Attitudes of the Mind

Change Your Outlook... Change Your Life!



Teaching Notes by Joyce Meyer

Joyce Meyer Ministries

Nanakramguda

Hyderabad - 500 008

Andhra Pradesh

INDIA

91-40-2300 6777

www.jmmindia.org

TN174

An Unselfish Attitude

Foundation Scripture: **Philippians 2:4-5**

I. Forget About Yourself.

- A. **Mark 8:34** – Disciples of Jesus must deny themselves (forget, ignore, disown, and lose sight of themselves and all their own interests).
1. Living with an unselfish attitude is our cross to carry in this world.
- B. **II Corinthians 5:15** – *And He died for all, so that all those who live might live no longer to and for themselves, but to and for Him Who died and was raised again for their sake.*
1. Jesus died so we might be free from unselfishness. He died so we might no longer have to live for ourselves.
 2. We can live for God and others, trusting God to take care of us.
 3. We can retire from the lifelong job of self-care.
 4. We can finally sing a new song – something besides *I Was Always On My Mind* **or** *What About Me*.
- C. **Philippians 4:5** – *Let all men know and perceive and recognize your unselfishness (your considerateness, your forbearing spirit). The Lord is near [He is coming soon].*
- D. Living only for yourself and selfishly seeking only what pleases you is like living in a prison.

1. In your little world there is only you! It is like a prisoner living in solitary confinement.
2. **John 12:24** – Unless we are willing to die to self, we abide alone; we live isolated lonely lives; very few people would call us friend; and when we are gone, nobody really cares that much. We have traveled through life, and the world is no better because we were here.

II. Declare War On Selfishness.

- A. Selfishness, it seems, is ingrained in every fiber of our being. There is no hope of it merely disappearing because we ask it to go – we must fight against it. We must literally declare war on selfishness.
 1. **II Timothy 3:1-2** – We live in very self-centered times. The opportunity to be selfish is everywhere.
 2. BUT the opportunity to be **unselfish** is also everywhere!
- B. **Galatians 6:10** – As occasion and opportunity open up to us, let us do good to all people.
 1. Learn to really listen to what people tell you about their needs and desires; and determine that if there is any way you can bless them, you will.
 2. Be a blessing on purpose! Don't wait until you are ordered to do good to others by God – and you have three confirmations that it really is God telling you to bless someone – before you will take action.
 3. Instead of saying: "I'll give and be a blessing if I really know it is Your will, God," say: "Lord, I'm going to bless everyone I meet unless You tell me not to."
 4. Let me give an example:

A Cold Day In December

A little boy about ten years old was standing before a shoe store on the roadway; he was barefooted, peering through the window, and shivering with cold. A lady approached the boy and said, "My little fellow, why are you looking so earnestly in the window?" "I was asking God to give me a pair of shoes" was the boy's reply. The lady took him by the hand and went into the store and asked the clerk to get her a half-dozen pairs of socks for the boy. She then asked if he could give her a basin of water and a towel. He quickly brought them to her. She took the little fellow to the back part of the store; and removing her gloves, she knelt down and washed his little feet and dried them with the towel. By this time, the clerk had returned with the socks. She placed a pair on his feet and then bought him a pair of shoes. She tied up the remaining pairs of socks and gave them to him. She patted him on the head and as she turned to go said: "No doubt, my little fellow, you feel more comfortable now." The astonished lad caught her by the hand and looking up in her face with tears in his eyes answered the question with these words, "Are you God's wife?"

5. I suggest we don't ever pray for God to do something that we are not willing to do if we are able.
- C. **Romans 12:1** – Dedicate all your members and faculties as a living sacrifice to God.
1. Let's not over spiritualize this Scripture, but instead, let it be worked out in our everyday life.
- D. **Philippians 2:4-5** – Let each of you be concerned for not merely his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Let Christ be your example in humility.
1. Learn to be genuinely interested in other people. Listen to them. Ask them what they like and what they want in life. Ask them to tell you their story; and believe me, everyone has one.
 2. People are desperate to be loved. They are desperate to find anyone who is genuinely interested in them.

E. Become violent against selfishness. Every time you recognize the feelings of selfishness rising up in you, resist them aggressively. Refuse to live for yourself.

1. Example:

- a. There are two seas in Palestine. One is fresh and fish are in it abundantly; the banks of the river are green and lined with beautiful green trees. Children play on its shores. Not far away Jesus fed five thousand people. The Jordan River makes this sea with fresh water from the surrounding hills.
- b. The Jordan River not only makes this sea called the Sea of Galilee, but it also makes another sea. This sea however has no fish, nothing is green, no birds nest nearby, no children play, and the air hangs heavy above it.
- c. What makes the difference in the two seas? The Jordan River flows into both, but they do two different things with what flows into them. The Sea of Galilee receives water and gives it out drop for drop. Water flows in and water flows out in equal measure. The other sea, however, thinks it is shrewder; it hoards its water jealously. Every drop it receives, it keeps. It will not even be tempted to be generous.

The Sea of Galilee gives and lives. The other sea gives nothing; its name is dead – it is the Dead Sea. There are two kinds of people in the world, just as there are two seas in Palestine.

F. **I Timothy 5:6** – The selfish person is dead even while he still lives.

III. Have You Washed Any Feet Lately?

A. **John 13:1-17** – Jesus washed His disciples' feet as an example to them of what they should do as they had opportunity.

1. Washing feet simply represents doing things for people which need to be done. In the culture of Jesus' time, people walked on dirt roads with sandals on their feet. When they came home, their feet needed to be washed – so Jesus washed them.
2. Foot washing was considered to be a lowly task, one that a servant would perform. After all, most feet are not all that pleasant – especially if they are dirty.
3. Serving is not a low position; it is not a sign that one has no real talent. It requires great spiritual strength, tremendous security, and confidence to serve with a good attitude.
4. True servants know who they are in Christ. They are not trying to prove anything. Having a “title” or what the world would call an “important position” does not matter to them.

B. **John 13:17** – Jesus told the disciples that they would be happy if they did these things.

1. Isn't the message then clear that we will not be happy if we don't do them?
2. Many people have no joy simply because they are selfish and self-centered.

C. Relationship is based on doing things for one another. Some people want everything done for them, and then they can't understand why people don't like them or why they have very few friends.

1. Some people say, “I'll do something for you if you will do something for me!” But I believe Jesus would say, “A more mature person will be the one to go first!”
 - a. **Luke 14:12-14** – Do things for people who cannot pay you back, **then** you will receive a reward from God.
 - b. The attitude of selfishness always wants to make sure that “**there is something in it for me.**”

- c. Quite often, we even get that same attitude in our giving to the Lord. I am tired of dealing with people who won't give into offerings unless I can convince them they will get rich quick.

God always blesses us when we give with a right motive. A right motive is giving to be a blessing – not giving to get blessed.

- 2. What are you waiting for?

Are you waiting for somebody to wash your feet before you are willing to wash theirs?

OR

Perhaps to FEEL like washing feet?

OR

For a more convenient time when you can do it and not get dirty?

OR

A time when you have nothing else to do?

Ecclesiastes 11:4 – If you wait for all conditions to be favorable, you will not sow.

- D. The same as we are **tempted** to do evil by Satan, we are also **tempted by God to do good**.

- 1. Are you doing a better job of resisting God than you are resisting the devil?

- E. **Acts 10:38** (KJV) – *How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who **went about doing good**, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.*

IV. You Can Change A Life Today.

- A. Random acts of kindness are one of the most powerful things in the universe.

1. **II Samuel 9:1, 3** – David **sought** someone to be kind to.
 2. He was the king. He did not have to look for lame people to help. But, then again, maybe he did – that is, if he wanted to remain king.
 3. How much do we lose because we try to keep everything?
- B. **Matthew 25:40** – If you have done it for the least of these My brethren, you have done it unto Me.
- C. Example:

The Story of Teddy Stallard

Ted Stallard undoubtedly qualified as one of “the least.” He did poorly in school and he was very sloppy in appearance – expressionless and unattractive. Even his teacher, Miss Thompson, seemed to enjoy wielding her red pen as she placed x’s beside his many wrong answers.

If only she had studied his records more carefully. They read:

1st grade: Ted shows promise with his work and attitude, but (had) poor home situation.

2nd grade: Ted could do better. Mother seriously ill. Receives little help from home.

3rd grade: Ted is a good boy but too serious. He is a slow learner. His mother died this year.

4th grade: Ted is very slow, but well behaved. His father shows no interest whatsoever.

Christmas arrived. The children piled gifts on their teacher’s desk. Ted brought one too. It was wrapped in brown paper and held together with Scotch tape. Miss Thompson opened each gift, as the children crowded around to watch. Out of Ted’s package fell a gaudy rhinestone bracelet, with half of the stones missing, and a bottle of cheap perfume.

The children began to snicker, but Miss Thompson had the good sense to silence them by splashing some of the perfume on her wrists and wearing the bracelet.

At day's end, after the other children had left, Ted came by the teacher's desk and said: "Miss Thompson, you smell just like my mother, and her bracelet looks real good on you. I'm glad you like my presents." When he left, Miss Thompson got down on her knees and asked God to forgive her and to change her attitude.

The next term, the children were greeted by a reformed teacher – one committed to loving each of them – especially the slow ones – especially Ted. Surprising, or maybe not surprising, Ted began to improve. He caught up with the other children and even passed some of them.

Time came and went; Miss Thompson heard nothing from Ted for a long time. Then, one day, she received this note:

Dear Miss Thompson,

I wanted you to be the first to know – I will be graduating second in my class.

Love, Ted

Four years later, another note arrived:

Dear Miss Thompson,

They just told me I will be graduating first in my class. I wanted you to be the first to know. The university has not been easy, but I liked it.

Love, Ted

And four years later:

Dear Miss Thompson,

As of today, I am Theodore Stallard, M.D. How about that? I wanted you to be the first to know that I am getting married next month – the 17th to be exact. I want you to come and sit where my mother would sit if she were alive. You are the only family I have now – Dad died last year.

Miss Thompson attended that wedding and sat where Ted's mother would have sat. The compassion she had shown that young man entitled her to that privilege.

