

A Character study:

Selflessness

“And how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

2 Timothy 3:15-17

This character study is designed to illustrate this character trait using verses, stories, consequences of sin and blessings of obedience found through out the Bible.

Each day you will learn a verse, read a story where this sin is illustrated, then discuss the consequences of this sin followed up by the blessings of obedience. I encourage discussion with your children on ways they can help one another to stay free from this sin.

Resources: This study was created using references from the Bible and the book “For Instruction in Righteousness” by Pam Forster

Selflessness

Memory Verse:

Phil 2:4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

Day 1

What does selflessness mean? Showing unselfish concern for the welfare of others

What does selfishness mean? Concerned chiefly or only with yourself and your advantage to the exclusion of others

What does our verse for the week say about being selfish?

Story:

Acts 5:1-11 (Ananias and Sapphira lie regarding money and are put to death.)

Blessings of Obedience:

Both Ananias and his wife lied out of greed, what do you think would have happened had they not been greedy?

Consequences of sin:

Acts 5:5 When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died.

Acts 5:10 At that moment she fell down at his feet and died.

Questions:

1. Who does verse 4 say that Ananias and his wife lied to?
2. How did their selfishness affect others in the church?
3. How do you think your selfishness affects others?
4. When we are selfish are we glorifying God?

Matt 25:41-46 Then we ignore man's needs, and do not minister to him, we are doing the same to Jesus. Ask your child "How would I treat Jesus if he had this need?" encourage them to treat others to do as Jesus would do!

Activity:

Today would be a good day to make WWJD bead bracelets to remind your child to ask themselves "What would Jesus do?"

Teach your child to be generous. 2 Corinthians 9:8 says, " And God will provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others." Teach them to be thankful for what God has deemed necessary in their life. This could spill over into to a lesson about tithing. You could have your child donate some of his toys. You could also practice being generous by teaching your child to share.

Challenge:

Think of others first, give to those who ask.

Matthew 5:42 Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.

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Day 2

Story:

Joshua 7 Achan lead to theft, dishonesty and death, and his nation was defeated in battle

Blessings of Obedience:

Achan chose to be selfish, how would it have been different if he'd chosen to be selfless?

Consequences of sin:

Joshua 7:25 Joshua said, "Why have you brought this trouble on us? The LORD will bring trouble on you today." Then all Israel stoned him, and after they had stoned the rest, they burned them.

Questions:

1. Did God give everyone a chance to be selfless?
2. Achan stole out of selfishness, was his sin found out?
3. How did Achan's sin affect others?

Challenge:

1 Cor 10:24 "Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being." Today, challenge your child to ask "What can I do for someone else to bless him and make his life more happy?"

Activity:

"Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." **Matthew 20:28**

Serve, serve, serve! The best way to teach your child to be selfless is to give him opportunities to serve others. If you are not able to set something up outside of the home, have him serve others inside of your home. Crown him the new dinner helper. Have him set the table, get napkins and drinks for everyone and require him to help clean up after dinner is over. Have him take out the trash or have your daughter help with laundry. Serving each other at home will help set them up for service outside of the home.

Some things your children can do to serve others at home:

- Put away siblings laundry
- Help mom with household chores (Vacuum, dust, dishes)
- Help take care of animals
- Clean a sibling's room
- Pick up other's shoes from the front door and put them away
- Help cook dinner and clean up afterwards

Some things your children can do outside of the home:

- Volunteer to help stuff mailers at church
- Visit elderly in nursing home
- Help serve food at local homeless shelters

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Day 3

Story:

Luke 16:19-31 Rich man hid his eyes from the poor, he did not receive treasure in heaven.

Blessings and consequences:

Luke 16:25 But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony.

Questions:

1. Why was the rich man in agony?
2. What do you think would have happened if the rich man had helped Lazarus?
3. Did the rich man have any of his possessions in hell?
4. What types of treasures are we to seek after while here on earth?

Matthew 6:19-20 Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.

Challenge:

Share something with a sibling today.

Acts 20:35 "...And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

Activity:

Teach your child that serving comes with "no strings attached". We don't serve in hopes of being paid, receiving praise or even expecting a thank you. We serve because we want to be like Jesus. Spend some time making cards and/or cookies for your neighbors or someone you know who is homebound. Explain that Jesus would want to serve this person/family and that it is a blessing to do God's work. Afterward, talk about how serving made your child feel.

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Day 4

Story:

Matthew 26:27 Judas Iscariot was greedy, it led to the betrayal of Jesus and his own death.

Blessings of Obedience:

Judas was selfish, but how was Jesus selfless in this situation?

Matthew 26:55-56 In that hour Jesus said to the crowd, "Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? Every day I sat in the temple courts teaching, and you did not arrest me. But this has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled."

Consequences of sin:

Matt 27:5 So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself.

Questions:

1. What did Judas betray Jesus for?
2. Was it worth it?
3. How did God use this situation for good?
4. Is it worth it to be selfish? What does the Bible say?

1 Timothy 6:6-10 But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

Challenge:

Being selfless glorifies God, today be selfless when playing with siblings.

Matt 5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

Activity:

Thank-you notes! Require that your child write thank you notes anytime they receive something. This takes the focus off of them and nurtures a heart of gratitude.

One final Note:

Haggai 1:6 "You have sown much, and bring in little; You eat, but do not have enough; You drink, but you are not filled with drink; You clothe your selves, but no one is warm; And he who earns wages, earns wages to put into a bag with holes."

Selfish ambition will never fill us up, only accepting Jesus into our hearts will fill the void we carry. If your child has not accepted Christ into his heart, ask if they would like to do so now. If they say yes, lead them in a short prayer similar to this:

"Dear Jesus, Please forgive me for all the bad choices I've made. I believe You are God, and that You died on the cross to save me from my sins. Please come into my heart and save me today. Be Lord of my life from now on and lead me to make good decisions based on your Word. I love you Jesus! Amen."

Alternate Prayer: Dear God, thank you so much for your Word. I pray that you would help me to be less selfish and instead think of others first. By doing this I can be a good witness and show Your love to them through my actions. I pray that I would glorify you in all I do and say.



Selflessness

Selflessness Card: Add the selflessness apple to your character tree! *(If you haven't already, put up a tree using brown and green construction paper. Each week you will add a new apple to the tree)*

Review Questions:

1. How does our selfishness effect others?
2. How does our selflessness effect others?
3. How does selfishness effect our relationship with God?
4. How does our selflessness glorify God to those around us?

Application:

1. What does selflessness look like in our home?
2. How can we practice selflessness?

Prayer:

Dear Jesus, Please help me to have a heart of selflessness. I ask that you would give me the strength to give in all circumstances so that I can glorify You. I thank you and praise you for all you've done for me. Amen.

Additional Verse:

Acts 9:36-41 Dorcas restored to life because of her charitable deeds.

Matt 5:42 Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.

Luke 21:1-4 Poor widow was honored because she gave all she had.

Proverbs 28:27 He who gives to the poor will not lack, but he who hides his eyes will have many curses.

Matt 19:21-22 Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

2 Cor 9:7 So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.