

## The Trap of Religious Self-Centeredness

One reason why we do not enjoy the Lord and make spiritual progress is that we often fall into the trap of religious self-centeredness.

While we know that God is infinitely great in every way, and worthy of all our praise and worship, too often we find ourselves continually trying to get something out of Him.

Perhaps it is because we are so needy and the people around us have so many overwhelming needs, and God has give us so many great promises, and we tend to think that if only this need were met, that person healed, that problem straightened out, etc., that things would be better.

The above, and many hidden reason, particularly the way sin has made us self-centered, has caused us to have a self-centered approach to God. Many are continually asking Him for His blessing, and trying to figure out ways that will cause God to answer prayer.

What should we do? There is no question that we are told to come boldly and to ask largely of God. The promises regarding prayer and the greatest in the Bible. However, something seems to be wrong. We should be the most blessed people in the world.

1. We must realize that the bottom-line is that God wants US. Therefore we must learn how to give ourselves to Him in a personal relationship manner -- without trying to do so, so we can get something out of Him.

2. We must realize that the botton-line is that God wants to give HIMSELF to us. This against is in the context of a personal relationship. And we must not look upon this relationship as the way of getting something from Him -- using Him, trying to take His promises and provisions and manipulate Him through them. We have to repent for such sin, confess it and forsake it.

3. We must realize that the bottom-line is that God wants the relationship described above to be constantly maintained in a growing personal relationship that is quite apart from begging for some gift -- as though God Himself were not sufficient.

4. We must realize that the work of the Gospel inside our life and outside is God's work and not ours. He has our best in mind. He has made every provision for us. He wants us to give ourselves to Him so He can give Himself to us, and He wants that relationship to always be the basic and most important factor in our Life.

5. We must realize that no spiritual blessing can be truly spiritual if we look upon it and use it in some way apart from the relationship described above. If we separate the Bible from the Living Word, Jesus Christ, then the Bible may soon become an idol, no matter how high we revere it.

Illustrations of this principle are many: The Disciples Prayer, for example.