

XII. I'M A GOOD PERSON.

-- DISCUSSION Q'S: --

INTRODUCTION

We are not as good as we think we are...and when we believe the myth that we ARE "good people" it ruins the life Christ has for us to live. We must daily die to ourselves and our self gratification and justification and realize that even though we are worse than we believe, God is still better than we can imagine.

DISCUSSION

What do you think our culture believes about whether humans are good or bad?

EXPLANATION - Read Matthew 16:24-25 & Luke 14:33

What aspects of your life/self are the hardest to deny?

What are some ways we misinterpret the self-denial Jesus asks of us?

APPLICATION - Read Luke 9:23

Why is it important to make the practice of self-denial an ongoing habit?

What is the result of continually "picking up our cross daily"?

What is an example of "spiritual language" (worship song lyrics, Scripture, prayers, etc.) that doesn't reflect your actual behavior?

MISSION

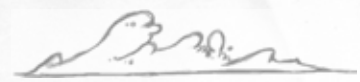
How can we encourage one another to live lives that reflect the songs we sing and the prayers we say?

How would you personally describe the freedom found in Christ to a non-believer?

Read John 7:10-18

HOMEWORK:

What is the best way to talk to others about the exclusive claims Jesus makes about salvation?



stupid summer

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TODAY'S VERSES:

Habakkuk 2:4

Matthew 16:24-25

Luke 14:33

John 12:25

Galatians 2:20

Genesis 3:5

Luke 14:26

Galatians 5:24

Luke 9:23

Luke 22:42

MY NOTES:

[OURELEMENT.ORG/STUPIDSUMMER](http://ourelement.org/stupidsummer)

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

ourelement.org/events



ELEMENT MEMBERSHIP INTERVIEWS

Next Sunday after service
sign up at Welcome Center

**ELEMENT U:
COHERENCE THEORY**
Wednesdays, 6:30p

SUPER SNACK SUNDAY
October 20th

PUMPKIN KILLING
October 27th, 2p

**EMOMS
HOLIDAY BAZAAR**
November 2, 9-3pm
Booths available - \$30
Emoms@ourelement.org



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— SERMON NOTES —

Habakkuk 2:4 Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith.

Too many people today think that humanity as basically good. We think that we, ourselves, are essentially good people who occasionally do bad things. Until we come to the place where we realize we have nothing good in ourselves, we will not live the free life that Jesus intended.

C. S. Lewis in Mere Christianity wrote this (it's long, just read it):

"The ordinary idea which we have before we become Christians is this. We take as the starting point our ordinary self with its various desires and interests. We then admit that something else—call it 'morality' or 'decent behavior,' or 'the good of society'—has claims on this self: claims which interfere with its own desires. What we mean by 'being good' is giving in to those claims. Some of the things the ordinary self wanted to do turn out to be what we call 'wrong': well, we must give them up. Other things... turn out to be what we call 'right': well, we shall have to do them.

But we are hoping all the time that when all the demands have been met, the poor natural self will still have some chance, and some time, to get on with its own life and do what it likes. In fact, we are very like an honest man paying his taxes. He pays them all right, but he does hope there will be enough left over for him to live on. Because we are still taking our natural self [my life apart from God] as the starting point.

As long as we're thinking that way, one of the other of two results is likely to follow. Either we give up trying to be good, or else we become very unhappy indeed. For, make no mistake: if you are really going to try to meet all the demands made on the natural self, it will not have enough left over to live on. The more you obey your conscience, the more your conscience will demand of you. And your natural self, which is thus being starved and hampered and worried at every turn, will get angrier and angrier.

In the end, you will either give up trying to be good, or else become one of those people who, as they say, 'live for others' but always in a discontented, grumbling way—always wondering why the others do not notice it more and always making a martyr of yourself. And once you have become that you will be a far greater pest to anyone who has to live with you than you would have been if you had remained frankly selfish."

"The Christian way is different: harder, and easier. Christ says 'Give Me All. I don't want so much of your time and so much of your money and so much of your work: I want You. I have not come to torment your natural self, but to kill it. No half-measures are any good. I don't want to cut off a branch here and a branch there, I want to have the whole tree down... Hand over the whole natural self, all the desires which you think innocent as well as the ones you think wicked—the whole outfit. I will give you a new self instead. In fact I will give you Myself: My own will shall become yours."

Jesus says if we want to follow Him, we must begin by denying ourselves.

- Self-denial is not self-rejection. God is delighted you exist.
- It is not false humility. It is not trying to pretend you're worse at something than you really are.
- Self-denial is not self-deprivation. You don't give up everything that brings you joy.

WHAT IS SELF DENIAL?

- 1) Self-denial is the process of being liberated from the compulsive need to have our own way.
- 2) Self-denial is the process of being weaned off of selfish attitudes that will never lead to life.

Death to self is always the death of a lesser, false, sinful self, so that a nobler, more glorious, God-honoring, alive person might be born. It's very important to understand what dies and what comes to life, and that there is no other way to the life God calls us to than dying to our sinful self.

We are not as good as we think we are...and when we believe the myth that we ARE "good people" it ruins the life Christ has for us to live. We must daily die to ourselves and our self gratification and justification and realize that even though we are worse than we believe, God is still better than we can imagine.