

# Fighting the Foes of Love

Pride fights against love. It cries out, "I am better than that sinner on the street!" Pride exalts us above the people around us, and subtly points out all of their "issues." Pride shakes our ever-swelling heads as we survey their depravity in comparison with our own "goodness." Much as the Pharisee's prayer we say to ourselves, "Thank God I am not like that person." Pride always starts with "I." If we are to overcome pride we must change the first noun in our sentences!

Love softly whispers, "The sinner on the street needs Jesus; what can I do to help?" At its best love whispers, "God loves the sinner on the street, just as He loved me; how I long for this person to find the love of Christ!"

Love requires an ocean of tears, for a world that is lost and dying. Love pours out rivers of prayers, filled with a longing to see the Kingdom of God come. Love never gives up. Love reaches out to the homeless man on the street corner, when pride would look down on him. Pride freezes the soil of our hearts, and forces the seeds of love to remain unfruitful on the cold surface. Only God can plow the soil of our frozen hearts! When He hears our prayer, "Lord, teach us humility," He will certainly answer. He will soften our hearts with the thought of God first, and others second. He will continue to plow these truths into our hearts, until the soil is soft, and love is sprouting in abundance.

Selfishness is a foe of love because it blinds us to anything but ourselves! Imagine wearing glasses that are mirrors, limiting your view to yourself. Many of us put these glasses on every day; they come in varying types, shapes, and sizes. The "pleasure glasses" give us a sharp view of our desires. With these glasses we become obsessed with our pleasure. The "pain glasses" give us a focus to all of the suffering that we can clearly see we deserve, and we become obsessed with our pain. Selfishness can be consumed with a desire for men's praise or a demand for their rejection. It can feast on either compliments or insults. It does not matter so much what, when, where, or why I am consumed

with something about myself, it only matters that the glasses are mirrors, and all I see is me.

This absorption with oneself will keep one from either knowing or giving true love. A person with low self-esteem will be offered love, but refuse it, for their pain glasses are all they trust, and in these glasses they see what they believe is the only truth, "I am too unworthy to be loved." A compliment directed to such a person will be met with an objection, "It was nothing. I really didn't do as good a job as you think." This type of selfishness is deceptive. It disguises itself as

humility, but its mirror glasses still blind its captive, who doesn't see the person complimenting them, but sees only what they didn't do to deserve the compliment!

When our eyesight is restored with the glasses of love, we can actually see the person who is thanking us, and the God who gave us the ability to do whatever merited the compliment. Then we are free to reply to the person who compliments us, "Thank you for your encouragement," and our hearts will sing, "Thank you Lord for this opportunity to serve you!"

The love of God is greater than anything we can imagine. It is a character of the Creator of the Universe! A Creator who has chosen to show His love in and through people! The foes of pride and selfishness daily seek to harden our hearts, or blind our eyes to this awe-inspiring truth. They keep us thinking about us. Our great escape comes when God leads us to think about Him first, others second, and we find a life so full in serving God's purpose, that we scarcely think about ourselves at all. This is an impossible feat for a man. Yet, it is possible with God. "Lord, teach us to love." **BB**

## TEEN TALK

WITH PRESTON YODER

