

escape entitlement

The sin of entitlement can be likened to a deadly virus: you can't see it, but it can kill you. It is rooted in pride and self-centeredness and the "me first" culture. It is when we feel that we deserve and are entitled to do whatever we want, whenever we want, with whomever we want, and how we want—losing our sense of accountability and responsibility. If you think you don't struggle with it, you may be "asymptomatic". You see it in others, but you fail to see it in yourself! How do we escape this toxic behavior of entitlement?

set biblical expectations (luke 15:11-19)

The sin of entitlement manifests itself when we put ourselves first and demand to be treated in an exceptional way just like the younger son in the parable who lived only for himself. He demanded his share of the estate to spend on his pleasures even while his father was still living. The younger son squandered all that he had. He ended up feeding swine and even feeding on the pods that the pigs ate. He realized that nothing in the world would be enough to satisfy. The wrong expectations of the younger son caused him to feel entitled. In the same way, our wrong expectations can cause us disappointments. The cure for our entitlement is not to lower or raise our expectations, but to base them on what the Bible tells us. What then should we expect in this life? In John 16:33 we are told that we are to expect trials, but we can take heart because Jesus is with us and has overcome the world.

offer thanksgiving (luke 15:20-24)

Another way to battle entitlement is thanksgiving. The younger son came to his senses and decided to come home to be a servant at his father's house. However, his father showed him compassion and demonstrated unconditional love by celebrating his return! We can practice thankfulness by learning to count our blessings and not our burdens. The Bible tells us in 1 Thessalonians 5:18 that we are to be thankful for everything.

What can you thank God for today? We can also look at Ephesians 1:3-9, and be thankful of the following:

- We are blessed with every spiritual blessing (Ephesians 1:3)
- We are chosen by God (Ephesians 1:4)
- We are adopted into His family (Ephesians 1:5)
- We are redeemed and forgiven of our sins (Ephesians 1:7)
- God has revealed to us the mystery of Jesus as our Savior (Ephesians 1:9)

this week's memory verse

"I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."

PHILIPPIANS 4:11,13



surrender to God (luke 15:25-28)

Do you have a victim mentality? Do you often compare yourself with others? Do you feel that you deserve to be treated better? The older son sulked, threw a tantrum, and focused on what he believed his father did not do for him. He was missed out not only on the joy of his brother's return, but all that was his through his father (Luke 15:31-32). If we are not careful, we could fall into the same trap as the pharisees who were self-righteous and focused on fulfilling the law, rather than falling in love with God. Jesus teaches us in Matthew 16:24-25 that as His followers we are to die to ourselves and deny ourselves. We are to live a surrendered because it is no longer us, but Christ living in us (Galatians 2:20).

God is always here for us and gives what is best for us. He wants us to clean up the toxic waste dump we carry around inside of us. He calls us to have zero tolerance for things that hurt others (Colossians 3:8-9), but instead put on a heart of compassion (Colossians 3:12-13). When we surrender to God, we won't have a list of resentment, but being filled with the Spirit we are able to escape entitlement, live in gratitude, and have an endless list of things to thank God for each day (Galatians 5:16)!

discussion questions

What biblical expectations should you set for yourself during this pandemic?

What are five blessings you have received from God lately?

What area of your life do you need to surrender and what action will you take to do this?

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