

Traits of the Self-life

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The following are some of the features and manifestations of the self-life. The Holy Spirit alone can interpret and apply these to your individual case. As you read, examine yourself in the very presence of God. Are you demonstrating the self-life? It shows itself as:

- #1. A spirit of pride.** Do you have an exalted feeling because of your success or position, because of your good training or appearance, or because of your natural gifts and abilities? Do you show an important, independent spirit?
- #2. Love of praise.** Do you have a secret fondness to be noticed, a love of supremacy? Do you draw attention to yourself in conversation? Does your self swell out when you have had a time to speak or pray in the presence of others?
- #3. Stirrings of anger.** Are you irritable, and do you cover it over by calling it nervousness or holy indignation? Do you have a touchy spirit, a disposition to resent and retaliate when disapproved of or contradicted? Do you throw sharp words at others?
- #4. Self-will.** Do you show a stubborn, unteachable spirit? Do you argue? Are you harsh, sarcastic, driving, or demanding? Do you come through as unyielding or headstrong? Do you have a disposition to criticize and pick flaws when you are ignored or decisions don't go your way? Do you have a peevish spirit that loves to be coaxed and humored?
- #5. Carnal fear.** Are you controlled by a man-fearing spirit, that causes you to shrink from duty? Do you reason around your cross? Are you afraid your commitment to righteousness will cause some prominent person to think less of you? Do you compromise principle to please others?
- #6. Jealousy.** Do you hide a spirit of envy in your heart? Do you harbor an unpleasant sensation in view of the prosperity and success of another? When someone is more talented or appreciated than you, are you disposed to speak of his faults rather than his virtues?
- #7. Dishonesty.** Do you evade or cover the truth? Do you hide or minimize your real faults and attempt to leave a better impression of yourself than is strictly true? Do you show false humility? Do you exaggerate, straining the truth? Do you show one face to one person and quite the opposite to another?
- #8. Unbelief.** Do you demonstrate a spirit of discouragement in times of pressure and opposition? In your heart, is there a lack of quietness and confidence in God, a lack of settled trust? Do you have a disposition to worry and complain in the midst of pain, poverty, or trials that God allows? Are you overanxious about whether situations will turn out all right?

#9. Religious formality. Are you complacent about the lost? Is your relationship with God characterized by dryness and indifference? Does your life lack spiritual power? Do you regularly meet God?

#10. Selfishness. Are you drawn to a love of ease, a catering to your appetites, a repeated hankering for short-lived pleasure? Do your joys and sorrows fluctuate around personal interests? Is there a yearning for money and earthly possessions?

These are some of the traits that generally indicate a carnal heart. By prayer, hold your heart open to the searchlight of God until nothing is hidden. **"Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting"** (Psalm 139:23, 24).

The Holy Spirit will enable you, by confession and faith, to bring this self-life to the death. Do not patch over, but be thorough. Nothing else will avail.

Oh, to be saved from my self, dear Lord,
Oh, to be lost in Thee;
Oh, that it might be no more I,
But Christ that lives in me.

"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10).

--E. E. Shelhamer, adapted

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