

Self-centeredness

Temptations approach us in a variety of ways. Some come on strong, seeming irresistible, but if I turn to God immediately, they prove temporary.

But one temptation is very subtle, yet always with me. Insidious and incessant, it occupies my mind so unobtrusively that I rarely recognize its presence. But it does its work, dominating my thoughts, draining my energies, filling my daydreams with pleasant but delusive visions.

That temptation is self-centeredness, or preoccupation with myself, or just plain selfishness. One term can hardly capture all its shades and subtleties. Though I truly want to spend all I have serving our Lord, I catch my mind dwelling on my own recognition, my own comfort, my own well-being. My imagination is conquered by fantasies of my own glorification. They bring a temporary “high” but seem ridiculous and vain in the light of reality.

Such thoughts mock my deepest desires to glorify Him, only and always, completely and constantly. But despite my best efforts, the pull of self-centeredness is more consistent than my efforts to banish it. It just never goes away.

Or almost never. Come to think of it, it is nowhere to be found when I focus on God. When I look to Him, and when faith realizes His presence with me, my mind and heart are so filled with Him that selfishness vanishes. I only find worship, sharing my needs and concerns, confessing my sins, pouring out my heart. Things tumble out of my soul that I didn't know were there. Sometimes He is more real and “comfortable” than a best friend, yet so exalted that the throne room is here and now.

But there is another time when self-centeredness disappears. When I actively love others and let my energies flow toward sharing God's love with them, life seems natural, free from the distortions of self. Even when love's demands cause fatigue and pain, I find a rightness, a liberty, a peace.

Lord, draw my thoughts more and more into You till all my life – all my energies, every moment – flows out in love and worship.

Hymn: [Holy Father, Only You](#)

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