

I. Defining the Culture of Entitlement. **Philippians 2:1-5**

"So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,"

- We live in a culture of entitlement.
 - Very strong sense of what we believe is owed to us
 - What is owed is stronger than what we owe to others.
 - Entitlement is unbiblical and lacks both love and humility.
- Let's define entitlement in contrast to humility
 - Entitlement asks: "What do I deserve?" vs Humility: "Who do I belong to?"
 - Entitlement says: "You own me" vs Humility: "Thank you"
- We are blind to entitlement (Blindness is the *nature* of pride — always blind to itself.)
 - Not limited to "I deserve free handouts and opportunities."
 - The second we feel disrespected, not considered, not listened to, or disagreed with, ferocious entitlement rises up and bears its teeth.
 - Entitlement is any time you say or think, "I deserve ... "
 - This is not to say that human beings don't have obligations to one another.
 - But my focus should be on what I owe others, not what I think they owe me.
 - Read James 4:1-10
 - I scratch and claw for what is "owed me."
 - This is self-provision, which is out of pride.
 - But I have not because I ask not.
 - When I ask God, He will provide. This is humility.

II. The Problem with Entitlement. **James 4:1-10**

"What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, 'He yearns jealously over the spirit that He has made to dwell in us'? But He gives more grace. Therefore it says, 'God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.' Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from

you. Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will exalt you."

- I deserve ...
 - In actuality, I *deserve* the wrath of God.
 - But what God has *given* us, not from anything we did or deserved, is His image and He called us His beloved.
 - You have to pick either what you deserve or what God wants to give you. You can't have both. In fact, you don't want both!
- Effect on the core identity of others
 - The entitled person devalues the divine value that God has placed within every human being.
- Entitlement defines our identity as non-relational.
 - Transactional, not relational
 - I am this, therefore I deserve that.
 - I did this, therefore I deserve that.
 - We were made to be children, dearly beloved by a Father.
 - Only found in relationship
 - Relationship with God is based on love, humility, and trust.
 - Entitlement is based on self, pride and suspicion.
- Entitlement is the antithesis of the Gospel of Jesus!
- Devil's advocate: ok, so I get taken advantage of, something wrong or unjust happens. I should just let it go? Get walked all over?
 - The question here is what is the LOVING THING to do?
 - Is it loving to let someone continue to hurt themselves or others?
 - Is it loving to let a relationship be broken and give no opportunity for reconciliation?
 - When I respond this way, even in a situation where I am the victim, I am seeking first and foremost to pay the debt of love I owe.

III. Breaking Free from Entitlement. **Romans 13:8; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7**

"Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law."

"Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."

- In order to break free from entitlement, you must not only get rid of one thing, but you must replace it with another.
 - Gratitude toward God – a debt that has been paid
 - Love toward others – a debt that I owe
- Gratitude and love can only stand secure on the foundation of humility.
- One author defines grace as "being invited to a place you don't belong."
- Concerns about entitled Christians

- If we live entitled, we are preaching a message of grace while living a life of works.
- When we act out of entitlement, we unintentionally broadcast to the world that God is not trustworthy to supply every need.
- Entitlement erodes relationship ... always. The church isn't a family if its members don't live in self-giving relationship.
- When we live under entitlement, we exchange what is good and best for what is earned and fair.