



Defeating Selfish Ambition | Week 3 DISCUSSION GUIDE

OVERVIEW

In this message, we learned the characteristics of self-ambition and how to defeat it.

DISCUSSION

Feeling invisible and unrecognized can lead to deep frustration, often causing people to fall into selfish ambition. **Selfish ambition** is: **Living focused on ourselves, our wants, and our desires at the expense of others.**

Adonijah, one of King David's sons, felt entitled to the throne and took matters into his own hands. **1 Kings 1:5: Now Adonijah, whose mother was Haggith, put himself forward and said, "I will be king."** His self-promotion, driven by ambition, led to his downfall. **James 3:16** reminds us, **For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.** If selfish ambition is the root, self-promotion is the fruit. In contrast, Solomon waited for God's appointed time to become king, showing that true success comes when we trust God for our promotion rather than pushing ourselves forward.

- Have you ever been in a situation where you were really determined to win something, only to realize later it wasn't as important as you thought? What was it?
- What can we learn from Adonijah's attempt to promote himself in 1 Kings 1:5, and how does it contrast with Solomon's approach to leadership?

Three Characteristics of Selfish Ambition

1. **Overly ambitious self-promoters pretend to be someone they are not.**

Adonijah, King David's son, sought to present himself as the next king by pretending to be someone he was not. He displayed the outward signs of royalty, trying to appear as his father's choice for the throne, though it wasn't true. Similarly, when we pretend to be something we're not to gain acceptance or success, people often see through our pretense, leading to a loss of trust and respect. Over time, pretending or self-promoting can distance us from the very people we're trying to impress, leaving us unfulfilled and exposed.

- Why do you think people feel pressured to pretend or present themselves as something they're not?

- Have you ever tried to be someone you're not? Give an example.
- In what ways can acknowledging and embracing your true self be more beneficial than self-promotion or pretending?

2. **Self-promoters attract those with a similar spirit.**

Adonijah knew David had chosen Solomon as the next king, but he was willing to divide the nation to pursue his own ambition. He gathered support from key figures like Joab, David's army general, and Abiathar the priest, who aligned with him for selfish reasons. Joab and Abiathar were both driven by selfish ambition, showing that those who promote themselves often attract like-minded individuals with their own agendas.

- What are some dangers of surrounding yourself with people who share selfish ambitions, as seen with Adonijah, Joab, and Abiathar?

3. **Selfish ambition eventually falls apart.**

Adonijah schemed to crown himself king while David was still alive. However, his plan was exposed, leading David to install Solomon as king immediately. Adonijah's selfish ambition was ultimately his downfall, and after continued scheming, Solomon ordered his death (1 Kings 2:25). Adonijah's story serves as a reminder of the consequences of trusting in self-promotion over trusting in God's plan.

Two Keys to Defeating Self Ambition:

1. **Put others first and live humbly.**

Solomon exemplified humility by putting others and the kingdom first, allowing God to elevate him rather than grasping for power like Adonijah. He recognized his limitations and sought God's wisdom, trusting in God's timing. As **Proverbs 3:34** says, ***He mocks proud mockers but shows favor to the humble and oppressed.*** Living humbly and serving others, as Solomon did, opens the door to God's grace and favor.

- Why do you think humility and serving others are essential to living a fulfilling and purposeful life?

2. **Trust God is working on your behalf in ways you cannot see.**

Solomon trusted God even when the situation looked grim, as his brother Adonijah appeared poised to take the throne. Instead of scheming, Solomon waited on the Lord, demonstrating faith that God was working on his behalf. **2 Corinthians 5:7** says, ***For we live by faith, not by sight.*** Solomon's example reminds us that God is moving in unseen ways, orchestrating His plan for our lives even when we don't immediately perceive it.

- In what ways have you seen God work in your life behind the scenes, even when the situation looked bleak at first?

LIFE CHALLENGE

This week, ask God to search your heart for areas where you can be more humble, put others first, and grow your trust in Him. Be open to what He says and willing to grow in those areas!