

[Faith, Hope & Love_Part14](#)

Jesus is our **Jehovah Jireh**—and He has been pleading with us to agree with Him that He is our Provider of everything we need for this life and for godliness. And, as we know, Jesus is **Jehovah Qanna**—our Jealous God—so He fully expects us to look only to Him to be our provision and nowhere else. The enemies in our soul, however, always militate against His provision as they vie for our loyalty and affection. But they offer us nothing but lies. Not a single one of you has become healthy and stable by listening to the lies of these enemies and worshiping their gods. In fact, just the opposite; you have been consumed by their darkness. Whereas, those who have learned to let Jesus be their provider get to experience all that comes with Jesus—all the personal attributes of His character and nature: His love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (***Galatians 5:22-23***). All these things come with His presence in your life. In addition, He also gives those who look to Him to be their provision abundance, confidence, and tremendous stability and endurance in this life (***John 10:10; Revelation 2:7; 3:11; James 1:3-4***). All these things come from Him.

To experience these marvels that come with Him and from Him, you must let humility be birthed in your spirit and have its full effect. This is the humility to lay aside your perspective of this life (who you are, what you have endured, and so on) and adopt His perspective of all things as you look at your life through the lens of the Kingdom of God. You must be willing to believe that Jesus is who He says He is—your complete Provider—and bet your lives on it looking nowhere else for resources. Our study last week on who we are in Him offered up to you, on a silver platter, the resources to make this a permanent perspective shift. Those of you who

love, or are learning to love, this humility probably spent the week studying and meditating on those truths; and, as the Lord promises, it will have its full effect in your lives. You can count on it. For according to **Hebrews 4:12**, the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It even exposes our innermost thoughts and desires. And it is through the Word of God that your mind will be renewed—cleansed—resulting in your being transformed into the image of your lover Jesus. The Spirit of God effects this transformation so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good, pleasing, and perfect (**Romans 12:2**).

Unfortunately, those who don't pursue this path of humility will remain conformed to this world and will always live, think, and feel according to its pattern. All those who have made the choice to love this world, be warned, the love of the Father is not presently in you (**1 John 2:15**). You have exchanged the love that you could have—the love of the Father—with the love for this world and your perspective of this world. You must ask yourself, have you made the choice to agree with God that He is Lord and He is the only one who is good? Those two truths sum up all of the Names of God. If you have not made this choice, then I am sorry to say you still love the world and have not rejected it for the Kingdom of God.

As far as these enemies in our soul, we have looked at the way Jesus is our **Jehovah Jireh** our Provider for fear, our personal goodness, our failure and shame, our pride (which was also closely connected to our goodness), insecurity and the victim mentality. And tonight we are going to consider Him to be our Provision for our selfishness, or what I like to call self-love. Selfishness or self-love is very closely connected to pride and personal goodness. Remember, I told you that these

enemies share much of the same spiritual DNA. As an enemy, selfishness is very tricky and deceitful such that very few people readily identify with being selfish. Thus, this is a very important enemy for us to understand because it operates in our soul with such stealth. When we think of selfishness, most of us just think of a person who does not want to share their stuff. And, it's true, we all have some level of that behavioral selfishness going on (some more than others); but in our "goodness" we tend to keep it mostly under control which is why we do not really identify ourselves with selfishness, we only kind of identify ourselves with possibly having some selfish tendencies. I categorically expect few so called believers would ever admit to being fundamentally selfish individuals. But I believe the scriptures would argue that absent the intentional slaughter of this enemy, you are selfish, I am selfish, and pretty much everyone is selfish.

Therefore, let me provide a different perspective to illumine your thoughts about selfishness. I believe selfishness describes a person who fundamentally loves themselves more than they love anyone else, including God. Selfishness and self-love, I believe, are synonymous. A selfish person holds on to themselves instead of giving themselves away. They protect their personhood and really don't want anyone to threaten it. At the core, selfish people are very lonely, but even their loneliness becomes to them a comfortable hiding place; after all, it seems better than the risk of letting someone else into their true personhood. And all their coping mechanisms are the practical means by which they keep people from getting too close. If we feel in any way threatened that someone might venture in too close, we tend to thrust our coping mechanisms on them giving them a "reason" to reject us up front so we don't have to reject them overtly. I want you

to think about how many of the coping mechanisms we have listed in our teachings on faith to which this sort of behavior applies—so many! But even if our coping mechanisms do not do the job, we have no problem eventually pushing people away in order to protect what we love the most.

Let me give you a personal example of this kind of selfishness. I figure if I use myself as an example it might be easier for you to examine yourself; but, believe me, if my example does not work its wonders in your soul, I am in no way averse to using you as an example. We have talked many times about my trifacta. It actually is a perfect example of true selfishness and the deception that our personal goodness wraps around our selfishness so we never ever come to grips with the evil of this enemy. My trifacta was made up of justice issues (which highlighted the depth of the victim mentality in my soul), self-protection, and personal goodness. It was a glorious and powerful combination that kept me oh so safe and oh so alone. The tricky thing about this combination is that I was so deceived by my goodness that I could never see my selfishness. My goodness was so capable and “Christian” that I was able to “serve others” and “give myself” to them and be available to love on them through all manner of crisis’s and circumstances. I gave them Jesus and felt really good about it. But here is the thing, I never actually let anyone behind my walls of protection. I could give a lot, more than most, but never would I share the Steve behind the wall. It was pure selfishness and self-love. And people knew that something was missing in our relationship. No one could really put a finger on it, but everyone who was close to me felt it and they were deeply dissatisfied. The true intimacy was not there; they could taste of it but not ever truly experience it. And it made them angry. I masked intimacy with service, a listening ear, attention,

and so on; but those things are not the same.

I was subconsciously afraid of what people would do to me and how they would take advantage of me and hurt me, so I protected myself. The hard cold facts are that I loved myself more than I was willing to love those in my life; and I allowed my “loving” activity to be a mask or my excuse and justification for never truly letting people into my soul. And this trifecta impacted my ability to enjoy God’s provision for my life and the very things He always wanted me to experience from Him and from others (including, tenderness, gentleness, acceptance, and relational security and intimacy). Don’t misunderstand me, these are all things that people in this body tried to freely give me, but because of my entrenched selfishness I was not even able to see it much less receive it.

This selfishness impacted my ability to have peace and rest in my own family and my ability to have true intimacy with any of you. Yet, many of you were such great friends to me. You loved me, were tender with me, gentle, and ever so gracious and accepting. You tried to provide all the things I craved; but I was unwilling and unable to receive it. I was selfish because I was scared. I feared the more I opened myself to your love, the deeper I could be hurt by you; and I had been hurt enough by those who were supposed to love me that I never wanted to feel that hurt ever again. But all of it made you feel awful and made you feel insecure as if something was wrong with you; but it was my brokenness not yours that was the true problem. It was the stealth enemy of selfishness and self-love that was working in my soul.

Thankfully, Jesus brought the earthquake into my life to destroy my trifecta, and it was not pretty. But it was very, very effective. It tore off the mask of my personal goodness and brought the issue of my selfishness right up to the front of my face

where it was no longer hidden. Now I had to make a decision by faith to let Jesus be to me all that He said He is: My **Jehovah Nissi**—my banner and my refuge; my **Jehovah Rapha**—my healer; My **Jehovah Raah**—my Shepherd; my **Adonai**—my Lord and Master; and **Jehovah Qanna**—the Lord who is jealous of me. When I decide to finally agree with God and live in the humility He was asking me to live and bet my life on the fact that He is my provision for fear and selfishness, I began to know Him and experience Him quite tangibly as my actual provision for all these things. He brought healing to my wounds. I also found that He was the person to which I could flee when I was afraid and felt like holding back, self-protecting, and not giving myself to others. I realized He was my Shepherd who led me down this path and was going to guide me through the steps of learning how to trust others and let them into the “Steve” behind the wall. I became confident that He had my back and I did not need to live in fear any longer. I also realized that as my Lord He had orchestrated every single detail of my life, including the earthquake, and He is jealous lover who wanted me to experience Him through the people He had ordained in my life to love me and be tender, gentle, understanding, and compassionate with me. Jesus truly became my **Jehovah Jireh** for my selfishness.

As we have been talking about agreeing with God and living, *by faith*, in the humility of active belief, I have seen a similar form of selfishness and self-love rise its ugly head in many of you; it has always been there, it just is no longer hidden under your layers of camouflage and personal goodness. God has been pressing on you and what has been coming out is the antonym of humility; it wrecks of self-sufficiency and the belief that you are ok, you can be good, you are good, you don't really need anyone, you have what you need or you can get what you need, and

you definitely don't want people to get behind the wall of protection that you have erected. This sick attitude declares: I love me; and you don't get to have me. Let's look at what the scriptures say about this deepest form of selfishness.

Matthew 16:24-28

Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and will then repay every man according to his deeds. Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom."

This is a phenomenal passage that speaks to those who love themselves more than they love God and others. Jesus says that if anyone wishes to come after Him, if anyone really wants Him, he must deny himself; and "deny" is given to us in the *aorist middle imperative*. That means it is to be our way of life from beginning to end (*aorist*), it is to be a decision that we dig down deep into our soul and make for no one is going to make it for us (*middle*), and it is a command to be followed by those who really want Jesus (*imperative*). But this word deny means that we are to utterly disown self—to utterly abstain from self-love. This brings up a big question about you and your walk with God. In this passage, Jesus has laid down the

prerequisites for being in an abiding relationship with Him, for being a disciple. But like the deception of goodness and selfishness, our religious deception is so great that we often believe we have this great relationship with God when in reality we don't. Have you obeyed this command? Have you utterly disowned or abstained from self-love? Have you dug down deep into your soul and agreed with Him that abstaining from selfishness is the right choice to make and the way you are to always live? Once again, agreement with God is the pathway of humility.

Whoever wishes to save their life will lose it. With regard to the first part of this statement, "wishes" is in the *present active*, but "save" is in the *aorist active*. It addresses the person who in the now wants to always live in a way, from beginning to end, as if they are actively saving their own life. They want to reinforce the walls, put up an addition, and withdraw or isolate themselves behind those walls and protect themselves from anyone who just might hurt them. And keep in mind, like mine, this behavior is usually masked by all sorts of Christian "love" and acts of "service" (there is a lot of "love" being given, but no true intimacy being shared).

As to the second part of this statement, this affirms that if you choose to live this way you will lose your life, and being in the *future active indicative* it is a statement of fact. The life of abundance, intimacy, joy, peace, love, and so on that He has for you will be lost on you and you won't know what it means to be loved, you won't know what it means to be safe, you won't know what it means to be cared for, you won't know what it means to truly belong, and you will remain perpetually lonely. It is such a tragedy. What does it profit you if you gain the world but forfeit your soul? You can find a way to go after and get everything this kingdom of the world may offer you, but if you don't let yourself be loved (which means you cannot truly

love), then what does it matter. True relationship, which is what we all crave demands mutuality and reciprocity for without it you are not really giving, but are still selfishly protecting. Is it all really worth the loneliness and loss? Is it worth no one really ever knowing the “you” behind the wall? For me it wasn’t.

However, whoever loses his life for Jesus’ sake will find it. In this statement, “loses” is in the *aorist active*. Thus, whoever has made the decision to give up their self-love as a way of life for the purpose of knowing and coming to Jesus, they will find their life, and “find” is in the *future active indicative*. It will happen, and that is a statement of fact. It does not happen right away or all at once, but it will happen as the enemies in your soul are slaughtered and Jesus takes up more and more residence in your soul.

I love this final thought in this passage; although, I have to say, it has always confused me. Jesus said, “Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.” I used to think so literally and wrestle with the fact that every one of those disciples died, no one was raptured or escaped death. So how could His statement be true? But, in context, I now understand it. Jesus was stating a very sad reality. When He says, “whoever loses his life for my sake will find it,” “loses” is in the *aorist active subjunctive*. The *subjunctive* indicates that it is uncertain whether they will or will not lose their life. He does not make them lose it—no one can force them to lose it; rather, it is a choice—a lifestyle decision (represented by the *aorist* tense)—that they must choose to make. But the sad reality is that so few will actually make that choice to die to self-love and this deepest form of selfishness. Thus, some of those standing there would not taste death, they would not make

that choice to put off their flesh and crucify it. Thus, their removal of the flesh from their bodies will not come until He appears and literally burns it from them (**1 Corinthians 3:10-15; Revelation 19:7; 15:2**). Said another way, many of you will waste your life loving yourselves, loving your goodness, loving your religion, and you will not find your life by choosing to lose your life for Jesus' sake. You will not let Him be your **Jehovah Jireh**—your provision for this life and for godliness. And you will not know complete freedom as a Royal Priest until the first resurrection. It will be a total tragedy. Now, let's turn to **Luke 6:38-40**.

Luke 6:38-40

Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full—pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back. Then Jesus gave the following illustration: "Can one blind person lead another? Won't they both fall into a ditch? Students are not greater than their teacher. But the student who is fully trained will become like the teacher.

I believe that this passage has been taken out of context so many times and used to get people to give more money. But the immediate context is not financial. The immediately preceding verse deals with judging, condemning, and forgiving those who have harmed you. The context is relational not financial. Give and you will receive. The only way to truly receive is if you take down your walls of self-protection, crush your selfishness, and give yourself away. Don't try and save your

life but give it up. And if you give, you will receive in return. Jesus will fill you and be to you everything that He says He is. You will also experience Him though others whom He possesses and, like me, you will be rich (relationally that is) beyond measure. You will not be lonely anymore. “God places the lonely in families; he sets the prisoners free and gives them joy” (*Psalm 68:6*). “Oh taste and see that the Lord is good; how blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him...they who seek the Lord shall not be in want of any good thing” (*Psalm 34:8, 10*).

Yes, Jesus will fill you up. Your gift of yourself will return to you in full—pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. This is what He means when He says that He came to give life and to give it in abundance (*John 10:10*). The amount you give will determine the amount you get back; or said another way, the extent to which you now die and lose your life will determine the extent to which you truly get to live and find your life and experience His abundance. They are proportional because it is a zero sum reality. What I mean by that is if your flesh (these enemies) occupies a space in your soul, then the Spirit of God does not dwell or abide in that part of your soul. But if you slay these enemies and then take the territory, the Spirit of God will move in and abide in you as you abide in Him. So again, it is all proportional; to the extent you die you live.

The illustration of a blind person is so apt for our condition. We are so deceived by our goodness that we are blind people never truly seeing the depth of our selfishness. Can one who is blind to the truth lead anyone else in the truth? No! They will both fall into the ditch and crash terribly. Hiding behind my trifecta, I could only lead this body so far. I could not lead you to the place of Jesus’ abundance because I had not actually taken the risk myself to go and experience it. I could lead

you to the wall and that was it. But I have become trained and I can now say that in this area of my life I have become like my teacher. Like Jesus who gave up His place in heaven to come down to earth to give up His life that He may take it up again, I have had to walk down that same path of death in order to receive my true life. He set the example and I followed. I had to get off my throne of self-love, lay aside my selfishness, and choose to believe, as a lifestyle, that He is **Jehovah Machaceh**—my Protector and **Jehovah Matsuwd**—my Fortress. I had to agree that Jesus would be my Provider and thereby choose to no longer be my own protector or my own fortress. I had to make this decision of faith regardless of what I circumstantially experienced, what I felt, and what I thought of the job God was doing in my life. I chose to believe this to be true and I bet my life on the NAME; and I now have come to know and experience Jesus as my **Jehovah Machaceh**—my Protector and **Jehovah Matsuwd**—my Fortress. Consider the following.

Psalm 91

Those who live in the shelter of the Most High will find rest in the shadow of the Almighty. This I declare about the Lord: He alone is my refuge, my place of safety; he is my God, and I trust him. For he will rescue you from every trap and protect you from deadly disease. He will cover you with his feathers. He will shelter you with his wings. **His faithful promises are your armor and protection.** Do not be afraid of the terrors of the night, nor the arrow that flies in the day. Do not dread the disease that stalks in darkness, nor the disaster that strikes at midday. Though a thousand fall at your side, though ten thousand are dying around you, these evils will not touch you. Just open your eyes, and see how the wicked are

punished. If you make the Lord your refuge, if you make the Most High your shelter, no evil will conquer you; no plague will come near your home. For he will order his angels to protect you wherever you go. They will hold you up with their hands so you won't even hurt your foot on a stone. You will trample upon lions and cobras; you will crush fierce lions and serpents under your feet! The Lord says, "I will rescue those who love me. I will protect those who trust in my name. When they call on me, I will answer; I will be with them in trouble. I will rescue and honor them. I will reward them with a long life and give them my salvation."

This is the God I get to experience because I have bet my life on His name; and He wants you to do the same; He wants you to dig down deep into your soul and make the decision to finally agree with Him that He is your **Jehovah Jireh**. Before, I could not lead you beyond the wall, but now I can. The trifacta has been breached and broken down and now I can lead you to that place of deepest intimacy because I have made the Lord my refuge, my fortress, and my tower of strength. He wants you to follow in kind. But if you are still not convinced of the fact that if you are ever going to have a true intimate relationship with Jesus (and true intimacy with those in your life whom Jesus' possesses) your will need to put away selfishness and self-love, then I want you to consider His words in **Luke 14:25:-33**. His words are staggering for so many reasons.

Luke 14:25-33

Now large crowds were going along with Him; and He turned and said to them, "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and consider whether he is strong enough with ten thousand men to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions."

The first two uses of "cannot" are staggering. If you do not now hate as a matter of practical fact—"hate" is rendered in the *present active indicative*—your own father and mother, wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even your own life, you cannot be His disciple. If you do not now make the choice to die to your flesh as a matter of practical fact—"carry the cross" is rendered in the *present active indicative*—you cannot be His disciple. And "cannot" in both of these instances is in the *present passive indicative*. That means that as of right now, if you don't hate your life in this way, He does not let you be His disciple, and that is a

statement of fact. You may think you are His disciple, want to be His disciple, but He won't let you be His disciple at this point in time despite your "good" intentions. How intense is this reality? I am taken back and floored by the truth!

His disciples are those who have dug down deep and made the choice to expunge from their lives their selfishness and any other attachment to which they might cling. Jesus really left nothing out of the equation. To hate your father, mother, wife, children, brothers, and sisters, and yes, even your own life means that in comparison to being a disciple of Christ you must love them less or even detest them. Nothing can come before Him—nothing! He must be the sole relationship to which you cling; He must become your sole possession. That is why He says, "None of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions." Contextually, He is not talking about material things, but all those relationships in your soul which you cherish and possess and hold closely to your heart. That includes your relationships with selfishness or self-love, your goodness, your pride, your fear, your failure and shame, your insecurity, your victim mentality, and so on. Your possessions must go!

You must choose to hate it all and give it all up or else, for a third and perfect time (**14:33**), you cannot be His disciple. He won't let you and that is a statement of fact (again, it is in the *present passive indicative*). And "give up," as expected, is in the *present middle indicative*. That means it must be done now (*present*), it is a choice you have to dig down deep into your soul and make (*middle*), and this is a statement of fact without exceptions (*indicative*). There is no way around this truth. You must give up your possessions and your selfishness and self-love if you want to truly know Jesus by His name. That is why He tells you to count the cost and uses

this example of building a tower or going to war. If you want a safe refuge, if you want a victory which leads to peace, you must know what it will cost you. It will cost you everything. But to the extent that you give, you will receive everything in return, pressed down shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. After all, your **Jehovah Jireh** has given you everything you need for life and godliness; you just need to learn to appropriate it (**2 Peter 1:3-11**).

Being a true disciple of Jesus Christ is a big deal; it is an all-in type of deal. The form of Christianity that lets people love themselves and protect themselves (and not even address the issue) as long as they go to church, faithfully tithe, serve their neighbors, and be “good” people, is fake. I am not the one saying that, so don’t be alarmed by my words. Jesus has said it; be alarmed by the words of **El Shaddai**, the Lord God Almighty. Unless you are willing to give up your life, hate your life, and die to all that you possess in your soul, you cannot, cannot, cannot be His disciple; He won’t let you! That is why He said that if you seek to save your life you will lose it. You may gain religion, you may gain worldly success, you may gain worldly acceptance by the Christian community, but when it comes to Christ you are simply not His disciple; you are just a want-to-be. It’s quite a sobering reality.

Selfishness—self-love—is gross; but we must call it what it is. If you have been unwilling to agree with God, then I am afraid you are dominated by the enemy of selfishness. It is a thief; it steals away your opportunity to experience the very things your heart craves: intimacy, being known, being loved, being tenderly cared for, and so on. Kill this enemy, destroy it, and learn to hate it, despise it, and utterly reject it. Please agree with God; give your life away and receive your true life.

Let’s Pray