

# Christian Living – “Aquila and Priscilla”

## *I T L?*

"Letters 1"

Dearly Loved Friends,

Have you heard the famous Frank Sinatra song “My Way?” While millions of people have enjoyed the beautiful melody, the words glorify the totally selfish way of doing everything “My Way!” It is easy to recognize that this is the lamentable way in which today’s society functions. However it is good for us to realize that while this attitude is so prevalent around us, we ourselves are not immune to some of these same selfish tendencies.

If people persist in doing things selfishly in their marriages, the results often produced could entail various problems such as continual arguments, gross unhappiness and misery, which are so unfortunate for their precious children. Instead of experiencing an environment of love and peace, with caring parental guidance, their children would often suffer untold heartache – especially when selfishness brings about divorce. Frequently children who have suffered this way will practice the same bad selfish habits in their own adult lives that they experienced and learned while growing up. Sadly this results in another broken home, leaving behind a trail littered with unfulfilled hopes and shattered dreams.

Yes, we know that our human nature’s selfish way is the “get” way! But, what does it get for us – for you and for me? Whenever we live selfishly – based on misled and deceived ways of thinking, we mistakenly think we’re going to get all kinds of enjoyable, valuable, and fun things! We naturally assume – and are sure (in our vanity) – that our way of thinking, our way of figuring and planning things, our way of doing things is a “great” way and is the right and best way for us!

Of course we think that our way is great, and must be the best! But . . . what arrogance! What ego! What self-deception! What vanity! What lack of Godly humility!

But, what is the reality? Doing things “My Way” gets for us exactly what we should expect: misery, unhappiness, problems, hassles and upsets.

It often brings about a myriad of hurts: accusations, harsh criticisms, hurt feelings, blaming other people, sometimes physical pain, and mental and emotional anguish.

It causes relationship difficulties: difficulties between spouses, parent-child problems, and destruction of both friendships and family relationships.

It also produces impatience, irritability, anger, being judgmental, vicious arguments, fighting, and sometimes even violence.

Oh what wretchedness! Is this what we truly want? Is this letting the light of God shine in our lives? Of course not! However, this is what we bring on ourselves by our continued selfishness.

We know that doing things “our way” – the way of human nature – is selfishness, and is very much Satan’s way!

Dear friends, let us ask ourselves individually – and honestly: “Do I often feel, think, say or do something that is utterly selfish?” Since we know that we habitually do these things, how can we overcome them and form new Godly habits? There is a spiritual tool that can be of inestimable value for us when used regularly – and not only for us, but also for creating a beautiful and loving legacy that we can leave with our children as we set a Godly example of dealing with each other.

Here’s that effective tool which is a vital key: With God’s help, start asking ourselves – regularly – a simple question when we’re about to feel, think, say or do something – especially if another person is involved: Is This Loving? – I T L? If it is a kind and loving feeling, thought, word or action, then go for it! If it does not pass this test, we must stop ourselves and then learn and develop Godly ways – and habits – of feeling, thinking, saying and doing. This assists us in developing Godly character. Using this simple test in all of our relationships helps us to be happy and loving people.

Some examples: Before we begin to say something critical to our spouse, ask: Is This Loving? I T L ? Before we raise our voices and bark crossly at our children, ask: I T L ? Before we get impatient and irritable on the job, ask: I T L ? Before we slam the door, ask: I T L ? Before we honk the horn angrily, ask: I T L ? Before we allow any feelings or thoughts of vanity, jealousy, envy, lust or greed, ask: I T L ?

This is the point at which we need to use this vital “I T L ?” key – before we get to the upset stage. Truly our battle against evil begins between our ears – in our minds (thoughts, feelings, and emotions). This is the point when we must begin praying in earnest – fervently – asking for God’s help to have the right and Godly thoughts, feelings and emotions before we say anything or take any regrettable action.

Friends, we know that God’s love is always directed outwardly towards others. We must not stubbornly insist on having our love be only directed inwardly towards ourselves. The more we learn to show more love towards others, the more we will become like Christ. Let’s all pray for the help and strength to do this in our lives now! Let’s continually remember to ask ourselves: “Is This Loving? -- I T L ?”

Truly God’s way is one of being helpful, uplifting and kind while being patient with others – full of compassion and total love! His way is a totally loving and giving way.

The Apostle Paul writes in “The Love Chapter” that :

“Love is always patient and kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered . . . .”

[1 Corinthians 13:4-5 – NIV]

When we truly desire to do God’s will (which always is best for us), we will not continually be seeking to get what we want – when we want it. Instead, we will be thinking more and more about what is truly best for the other person. We can only begin to imagine what marvelous changes could be made in people’s lives everywhere.

When we use this vital key – I T L ? – it will then enable us to become more successful in our marriages and relationships, and will carry us and our children down a superior trail of hopes fulfilled and dreams attained.

God wants to give us the best of everything! It’s up to us! It’s our choice! God tells us that we must choose: God wants us to choose happiness and joy – never wretched misery and pain! Do we want life or death?

“I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life . . . !”

[Deut 30:19 – NKJV]

We can change – and overcome – with the help of and by the power of God’s Holy Spirit!

We can become new and different people!

We can – each one of us – become a new creation in Christ!

We can become loving instead of selfish!

Instead of continuing with selfishness, which involves a “victim mentality”, plus blaming other people for our problems, we can begin to pray lovingly for other people. We can begin solving our difficulties with God’s help. We can ask for God’s help and intervention – and then go forward, doing our part, while trusting God in faith to help us!

Let’s continually remember to ask ourselves: “I T L ? -- Is This Loving ? -- I T L ?”

Also, instead of doing things “My way,” let’s live our commitment to God of doing everything “His Way!” When we live God’s Way – with Godly Love – Life will be Amazingly Wonderful!

The Lord Jesus Christ, our loving and soon-coming King said:

“This is how all men will know that you are My disciples, because you have such love for one another.”

[John 13:35 – Phillips]

and Jude said:

“Live in such a way that God’s Love can bless you.”

[Jude 21 – NLT]

May God grant you abundant love, joy and peace in all your relationships!

Aquila and Priscilla

P. S. – A suggestion: Perhaps you would like to pray this prayer:

Loving Father God,

Help me, please, to be more fully committed to Your Way – and increasingly to love other people just as I love myself. Thank you for helping and strengthening me – and for opportunities to show my love for others. Not my will, but Yours be done – in everything.

In Jesus name,

Amen

"Aquila & Priscilla" is a monthly column on Christian living, produced by the mutual efforts of long-time Church of God members, James and Martha Morrison - a.k.a. - Aquila and Priscilla.