



**Main Idea:** Contentment comes by way of subtraction.

Do you remember that show *The Biggest Loser* (as of 2023, this show still exists!). Contestants compete to transform their bodies and decrease their weight.

On that show, the more of yourself you lose, the more you win!

That's what we're going to explore in this message. Rankin Wilbourne asks, "What if contentment comes by way of subtraction and not addition?". It works in weight loss, but I think it also works in life.

There are some things about us that Jesus is calling us to let go of, to subtract from our lives. This runs against our culture, where everything centers around you. We love to take selfies, post selfies, look at our selfies. I even saw a product recently called a Selfie Toaster! You put in the bread, and it burns an image of you on your breakfast. We certainly love ourselves!

But the message here is there's something about you that needs to change, that needs to be lost and abandoned, that needs to die.

Jesus is going to tell us that we need to let three things die.

## Let Your Self-Importance Die (10:13-16)

*13 And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. 14 But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. 15 Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." 16 And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them. (Mark 10:13-16, ESV)*

The disciples take charge of the situation. They think they're a big deal. They don't wait for direction from Jesus.

Better not bother Him with small matters!

But Jesus is a humble Savior. He isn't too important for kids with all their squirminess and dirty fingers and boogers. He wants to bless the children and free His disciples from their self-importance, as well.

Whom do you avoid associating with because you think you are above them? They're not cool enough, don't have enough clout. Nobody follows them, and you don't want to be lame by association.

Jesus' kingdom isn't for the important people. We have to become like a child:

*"Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." (Mark 10:15, ESV)*

Here's a humbling reality: children cannot own property. Children don't have any standing or positions of power in society. They don't have any assets or purchasing power. They're just needy.

We don't want to be seen as helpless. We want to look good and win. We want people to recognize us as somebody. We want social power, to be the funny one or the beautiful one or the smart one.

These desires can make us emotionally fragile. We tend to pout and mope when we're not viewed or treated the ways we feel like we deserve.

It makes us anxious and insecure. Always trying to figure out where we stand with other people.

Jesus invites us into the freedom of letting our self-importance die. Do you remember what it was like to be a little child? Do you remember your life before social media, before constantly comparing yourself to others?

### **Let Your Self-Improvement Die** (10:17-31)

Carol Burnett once said, “Only I can change my life. No one can do it for me.” Now, you may not know who Carol Burnett was, even though she was on television for seven decades. But you’ve definitely been influenced by this mindset. It floods the entertainment industry, and worse, it floods our culture.

This probably sounds so normal to us. You might be wondering what’s the problem?

If we could change our lives, then Jesus should have been stopped on that road to Jerusalem and never been crucified. In this next encounter on the road, He shows that there is no hope in self-improvement.

*17 And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” (Mark 10:17, ESV)*

We know this guy as The Rich Young Ruler. He’s got all that this world admires: wealth, youth, and popularity. But he had something that many in that position do not have: he had morals and deep convictions.

He sees the kingdom of heaven as one more thing that he can acquire with his power of influence. Something that he can handle. He asks Jesus:

*“Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” 18 And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone.” (Mark 10:17-18, ESV)*

He says, “Good teacher,” meaning, “you are good just like I am good.” No wonder Jesus challenges him on that.



## ***The Jerusalem Road***

### **Getting to Know Them**

- What are your favorite things to do on a road trip?
- What are some of the worst experiences you've ever had on a road trip?

*Read: Mark 8:27-38*

### **Getting to the Text**

- What do you think the disciples were expecting as they traveled the road to Jerusalem?
- Why does Jesus pose the question that He does? Why does He get personal in this way?
- In what ways does the “path” that Jesus is on differ from the disciples’ expectations?
- Jesus told Peter, “Get behind me Satan”! Why does He call him that? What point is He making?
- Jesus teaches that we need to lose ourselves to save ourselves. What does this mean?

### **Getting to the Heart**

- The disciples wanted a conquering king who would make life easier for them. How is this similar to what we tend to want to fix life for us?

- What about you? How would you answer Jesus' personal question, "Who do you say that I am?"
- If Jesus would promise to make life easier for you right now and give you everything you wanted, but you couldn't have Him, what would you honestly think of that deal?

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