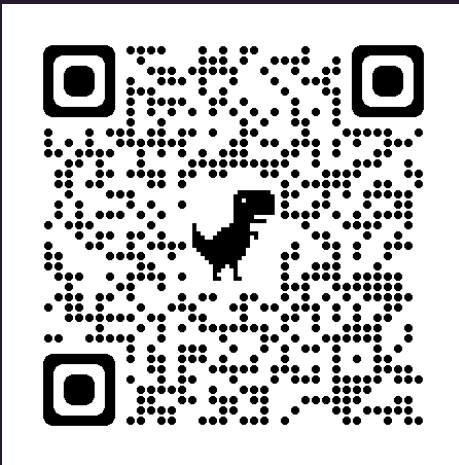


The Savior Complex: *Who is Saving Whom?*

Student Leadership Seminar, April 2022

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Our Discipleship Goals:

- Discipling leaders who will boldly declare the Gospel in a hopeless world
- Declaring the authority of an inerrant Scripture in a self-exalting world
- Depending on a sovereign God through prayer in a self-sufficient world
- Developing servants for the local church community in an individualistic world
- Discerning holy *and* culturally appropriate lifestyle choices in a sinful world
- Devoting ourselves to caring, one-another ministry in a self-centered world
- Developing discipline, character, and mutual submission in a self-indulgent world

The Savior Complex:

- *“A psychological construct which makes a person feel the need to save other people. This person has a strong tendency to seek people who desperately need help and to assist them, often sacrificing their own needs for these people.”* **Psychology Today:**

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-high-functioning-alcoholic/201702/the-savior-complex>

The Savior Complex- A Worldview Issue

The Secular Viewpoint

- Selfless sacrifice for needy people = Savior Complex
- Self-Care is the **Primary** Goal
- You help others **only** out of an overflow of time, strength, etc. and if there is clear benefit for you.

A Biblical Viewpoint

- There is a Savior. **We are not Him**, but we serve Him
- He calls and enables us to humbly serve and sacrifice for others **even in weakness**
- We need to exercise discerning care for our and others' good not to try to be their savior.



We Are Servants of the Savior!

- We are sent into Savior-prayed-for-places of service! (John 17:13-20)



Jesus' prayer in John 17

- 15- *I do not ask you to **take them out of the world**, but to keep them from the evil one.*
 - 18- As You sent me into the world, **I also send them** into the world.
 - 20- *I do not ask on behalf of [the disciples] alone **but for all who believe in Me** through their word.*

JESUS IS PRAYING FOR US AND OUR MINISTRY!



We Are Servants of the Savior!

- We are sent with Savior-given **gifts** for service (Eph 4:7,11-16)



Christ's Gifts in Ephesians 4

- 7- *To each one of us* grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.
- 15-16- But speaking the truth in love, **we are to grow up** in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together **by what every joint supplies**, according to the proper working **of each individual part, causes the growth** of the body for the building up of itself in love.

WE ARE ALL GIVEN GIFTS BY THE SAVIOR TO SERVE OTHERS!



We Are Servants of the Savior!

- We are sent with a Savior-like call to **humble** service (Phil 2:1-8)



Our call to humble service from Philippians 2

- 3-5- with **humility of mind**, regard one another **as more important than yourselves**; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for **the interests of others**. Have this attitude in yourselves **which was also in Christ Jesus**.
- 13- For it is **God who is at work in you** both to **will** and to **work** for His good pleasure!

WE ARE CALLED TO HUMBLY SERVE OTHERS!



We Are Servants of the Savior!

- We are sent as Savior-Dependent **Vessels** of service (2 Cor 4:1,7-18)



We are weak so God's power can be displayed in us! 2 Corinthians 4

- 1- Since we have this ministry, **we do not lose heart**.
- 7- But we have this treasure [the gospel] **in earthen vessels**, so that the surpassing greatness of **the power will be of God** and not from ourselves;
- 17- For momentary, light **affliction** is producing for us an eternal **weight of glory** far beyond all comparison.

WE FACE CURRENT, REAL, WEAKNESS FOR ETERNAL, SURPASSING GLORY!

We Are Servants of the Savior!

- We are sent into Savior-prayed-for **places** of service
- We are sent with Savior-given **gifts** for service
- We are sent with a Savior-like call to **humble service**
- We are sent as Savior-dependent **vessels** of service



However, we
are NOT
the Savior!





1. We are pointing people TO the Savior.

- Glorifying God has to be our first priority! (Matt. 22:37)
- Being united to Christ is what gives me security and my true identity (Col. 1:21-22)
- When my calling to love others is an outworking of my love for God, it frees me from tying my worth to people “needing” me or to the people I help “succeeding” in the way I want them to (Gal. 1:10)



Possible Warning Signs for Wrong Thinking about Your Ministry of Care:

- Valuing service for Christ more than abiding in Christ
- Conditioning others to depend on you rather than God
- Idolizing your reputation
- Neglecting your own health, spiritual life, and family
- Misplaced guilt for non-sin issues (“letting others down”)
- Nourishing resentment toward people who use you
- Experiencing over-responsibility for other people’s problems

From: Anna Mondal, “Love, Limits, and Mending Fences, Pt. 2”

https://www.biblicalcounselingcoalition.org/2021/01/29/love-limits-and-mending-fences-part-two/#_ftn2



2. Trust in the Limitless One!

- God loves to change people! (1 Cor. 3:6, Heb. 4:12)
- Build your own confidence in the Character of God (Psalm 46:1)



“Establishing limits glorifies God because it acknowledges that only He is limitless. Only our Sovereign King is all-powerful, all-knowing, all-seeing, and everywhere-present. We cannot be. It honors God when we acknowledge that we really can’t do it all for everyone. Only God can love limitlessly. We can model Christlike love, but we are not Christ. You and I cannot be the Savior, but we can point to Him.” *Love, Limits, and Mending Fences by Anna Mondal*



3. Embrace Your Role and Acknowledge your Limits

- Embrace a life of Christlike self-denial (Gal 6:2)
- Build your own community and share your burdens with others (Rom. 12:10-13)
- Remember that God has other servants too (Romans 12:3-10)



- Consider the priorities and finite resources you have as you trustingly and humbly establish healthy boundaries (Matt. 25:14-30)
 - What priorities has God called you to?
 - Think in terms of discernment and love as you put boundaries in place.



Discussion Questions

- How are you getting to know God personally so you can rest in His sovereignty when helping with people's difficulties?



Discussion Questions

- What ways are you sacrificing to serve others?
- Does this seem fulfilling or when does it seem to be overwhelming?



Discussion Questions

- With which of the “warning signs” do you tend to struggle?
How and why?
 - Valuing service for Christ more than abiding in Christ
 - Conditioning others to depend on you rather than God
 - Idolizing your reputation
 - Neglecting your own health, spiritual life, and family
 - Misplaced guilt for non-sin issues (“letting others down”)
 - Nourishing resentment toward people who use you
 - Experiencing over-responsibility for other people’s problems



Discussion Questions

- In what ways do you set healthy boundaries in your ministry relationships?