

## Self-Pity

### 1- Objectives

- ❖ Pity is a virtue when we look at the sufferings of others and are moved to help them but self-pity is not a virtue and is considered a sin.
- ❖ It is a comfortable chain holding us back from drawing closer to God.

### 2- References

- ❖ “Spirituality of Fasting” HH Pope Shenouda III
- ❖ “Mercy and Comfort” St. John Chrysostom
- ❖ <https://www.achievesolutions.net/achievesolutions/en/Content.do?contentId=3252>

### 3- Scriptural Verse

- ❖ “If you do not **forgive** men their trespasses, neither will your Father **forgive** your trespasses” (Matthew 6:15)
- ❖ “Lord do not charge them with sin” (Acts 7:60)
- ❖ “I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren” (Romans 9:3)

### 4- Lesson Guidelines

- ❖ Having pity is a virtue when we look at the sufferings of others and are moved to help them but self-pity is not a virtue but a weakness that need to be overcome.
- ❖ Self-pity is not a realization that there are trials and troubles in this world and that we are living in the valley of tears; it is also not the grieving process that we go through when we lose a loved one, or are enduring a difficult trial.
- ❖ We are talking about self-pity that is a spiritual illness and can be healed spiritually, but clinical depression needs to be addressed with professional help. However, sometimes spiritual illnesses turn into physical ailments.

### Symptoms of Spiritual Illness due to Self-Pity

- ❖ Self pity is marked by the concentration of my inner thoughts towards a bad incident in my life. So I find all of my mental energies concentrating on this one and how it has affected my whole life. For example, if I was mistreated by someone, this wound keeps festering in my mind throughout my day.
- ❖ When we pity ourselves, our minds are programmed with such negativity that we never look at reasons for us to be joyful and grateful and we never think that God promises a reward for those who suffer and bear their woes with resignation.
- ❖ Self-pity is a powerful tool by the devil because through it we lose joy and peace, we lose hope in our heavenly reward and we don't thank God for His blessings.
- ❖ Self-pity is marked by resentment towards God because He permitted this to happen; and towards others because we see them as the source of our woes and sorrow.
- ❖ It often manifests itself as bearing a grudge for a long time against those who even slightly hurt us; when this resentment and grudge against God and others continues to build up throughout life, we end up ruining our relationships with God and people.

### **Why Self-Pity is a sin**

- ❖ It separates us from God and ultimately weakens our relationship with Him when we doubt His mercy and love towards us.
- ❖ It ultimately leads to sin when we chose to feed the self-pity instead of upholding God's commandments; someone who is feeling lonely and wishes for a companion may enter in a wrong relationship with someone in order to fill that loneliness.
- ❖ To justify and validate their mistakes, people feel more self-pity; those who are not of a certain socioeconomic group may then go into trouble when they buy things they cannot afford in order to satisfy that self-pity (expensive clothes, expensive car ...).
- ❖ We begin to enjoy wallowing in self-pity, it becomes a source of comfort as with any habit, and it becomes a comfortable chain holding us back from drawing closer into a deep relationship with God.
- ❖ It ruins our relationship with others because we want them to pity us the way we pity ourselves and if we don't get that from them, then we resent them.
- ❖ It means that we never really forgive those who may have truly hurt us. Forgiveness is all about letting go the bitterness and resentment towards others and handing it over to God.

### **How do I know if I suffer Self-Pity?**

Ask yourself these questions:

- ❖ Do I tend to think and focus on my problems and woes when I am alone?
- ❖ Do I think that I have been treated unfairly by God? "Why did you let this happen to me?" "Why do I have to suffer these things?" "What's the point of all this?"
- ❖ Do I look at my life and wish that I had never come into existence?
- ❖ Do I look at the hardships in life and feel that they are too heavy to bear?
- ❖ Do I constantly compare myself to others and feel that I am worse off?
- ❖ Do I see joy and happiness in terms of earthly happiness instead of thinking of heaven and look forward to the extreme joy and glory that I will have there?

### **Remedies for self-pity**

- ❖ Humble and cheerful submission to God's will: God created me to enjoy happiness forever. That means whatever He sees beneficial for me on this earth to get me to that eternal happiness is good for me "My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience" (James 1:2).
- ❖ God's intention for our suffering is eternal good. Let us adopt Job's and Jonah's attitude when we are attacked with self-pity: "For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; and after my skin is destroyed, this I know that in my flesh I shall see God" (Job 19:25-26). "Your billows and Your waves passed over me then I said, I have been cast out of Your sight; yet I will look again toward Your holy temple" (Jonah 2:3-4).
- ❖ Do not flee from your Cross, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me" (Matthew 16:24).
- ❖ Have confidence in God's grace; He is helping us bear the crosses of life "God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it" (1 Corinthians 10:13).

## **5- Discussion Points**

- ❖ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F57tHX2bXiw>

## **6- Conclusion**

- ❖ Self-pity is our worst enemy and if we yield to it, we can never do anything wise in this world (Helen Keller).
- ❖ Self-Pity is a sin and a weakness that need to be corrected.
- ❖ “One thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead” (Philippians 3:13).

## **7- Activities / Workshop**

- ❖ See the movie in the previous link of discussion, and make groups to discuss different points related to the lesson from Nick Vujicic’s life.