

## Scripture Reading

### **A Reading from the Book of Proverbs (Proverbs 3:5-6)**

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight. The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

### **Reflection – Self-Centredness our Greatest Obstacle to Holy Love**

***Lean not on your own understanding (Proverb 3:5).*** Self centredness is a way of attitude, thinking and mindset that is not in line with the truth. It is a flaw in character that idolises self and places self above other people. The person is deceived into thinking the world revolves around her. Her privileged position / situation in life may deepen the deception further. Her primary interest in a situation or matter is how it affects her or her situation. Her first instinct is always to protect her own interest. She is very quick to protect and defend her rights.

***Self-centredness is due to inordinate self love and pride.*** Self love and pride are hidden faults in the heart of the self-centred person. Such a soul is unlikely to acknowledge the presence of these faults in her character and is more likely to think that her heart is in right standing with God and others. However, once such a person faces honestly this self-knowledge, the bondage due to self-centredness is weakened as she is then unlikely to accept unquestioningly the deceptive suggestions that the evil one is constantly trying to put into her mind.

***Inordinate self love opens the heart to many sins.*** Without the armour of humility, it is easy for the Deceiver to tempt the self-centred one. Such a one is susceptible to lack of charity, jealousy, pettiness, impatience, grudges, hatred, unforgiveness, and no real interest in the welfare of others. Such a soul may display disordered woundedness as it has no intention of letting go, forgive and forget past hurts and offences. She is either dwelling in the past nursing past hurts and grievances or in the present very much occupied in maximising one's own advantage e.g. in maximising wealth or enjoyment / amusement or pleasures or clinging on to power. The time is spent fulfilling the whims and desires of the self.

***Self centredness is the work of the evil one and distorts the truth.*** It is the Enemy that reminds the soul of past hurts, relives grudges, encourages unforgiveness and justifies obsession with own whims and desires. A self-centred soul does not submit to the truth but distorts it to suit her own selfish desires. She clings to her own opinion and has no interest when another is presented. Perhaps the greatest casualty of truth is how the person looks into her own heart. Such a self-centred one is complacent with whatever virtues she thinks she has, and are convinced her actions are based on righteousness. And so she continues on her path of self-deception and detriment of her soul until she is awakened from her spiritual sleep by a big trial that God mercifully sends into her life.

***They triumphed over him (Satan) by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death (Revelation 12:11).*** Through the Precious Blood of Jesus we are freed from all evil bondages including those of self-centredness and given the power to live in Christ's selflessness and righteousness. The evil in our life is weakened by our testimony to what Jesus has done for us.

### **Conversation with Jesus**

Precious Lord, You are the selfless One. You said to those who want to follow You: Deny yourself, pick up your cross and follow Me (cf. Matthew 16:24). By Your sacrificial life on earth, You teach me how to live like a child of God. Help me walk in Your footsteps in true love and humility. By walking in this path of true light, may all my hidden faults be exposed to me. Teach me to put You first in my life. I humble my heart so as not to accept the deceptive suggestions the evil one is constantly putting into my head. Purify my mind and unite it to Your thoughts. Purify my heart and fill it with holy and divine love. May I live not for myself but only for You who are worthy of all my love. Mary, Protectress of the Faith pray for me. Thank You Jesus. Praise You Jesus.