

# Unselfish Thinking and Bottom-Line Thinking

*“He who sows sparingly will reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.”*

2 Corinthians 9: 6-7

In this lesson, we are going to consider the last two thinking skills taught by John C. Maxwell in his book, *Thinking for a Change*. Before we look at these last two thinking skills, here is a review of the nine skills we have previously studied in lessons 1-5:

1. Acquire the wisdom of *big-picture* thinking.
2. Unleash the potential of *focused* thinking.
3. Discover the joy of *creative* thinking.
4. Recognize the importance of *realistic* thinking.
5. Release the power of *strategic* thinking.
6. Feel the energy of *possibility* thinking.
7. Embrace the lessons of *reflective* thinking.
8. Question the acceptance of *popular* thinking.
9. Encourage the participation of *shared* thinking.

**Discussion:** Of these nine thinking skills, which one is your strongest? Which one is your weakest? What are your plans for improvement?

## Experience the Satisfaction of \_\_\_\_\_ Thinking

Few things in life bring greater personal satisfaction than helping others succeed. When you spend your day unselfishly serving others, at night you can rest well with no regrets. There is surely no more noble occupation than helping others find success. Unselfish thinking is the key to adding value to others. Let's look at some of its benefits.

1. Unselfish thinking brings personal \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Unselfish thinking adds \_\_\_\_\_ to others.
3. Unselfish thinking increases the \_\_\_\_\_ of one's life.
4. Unselfish thinking makes you part of something \_\_\_\_\_ than yourself.
5. Unselfish thinking is the foundation for creating a \_\_\_\_\_.

## How to Cultivate the Ability to Think Unselfishly:

1. Put others \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Look for situations where people have \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Give without a desire for \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Help others achieve their \_\_\_\_\_.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ in people intentionally.
6. Continually check your \_\_\_\_\_.

**Discussion:** Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? “If you will help others achieve what they want, they will help you achieve what you want.” Discuss your answer.

### Biblical Case Study: The Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 25-37)

There are many examples in Scripture of unselfish thinking. Abraham was unselfish when he gave Lot the first choice of land. Jonathan models unselfish thinking in his friendship with David. Joseph shows the ultimate of unselfish thinking as he extends grace and forgiveness to his brothers who had terribly mistreated him. In the Good Samaritan story, Jesus teaches unselfish thinking. What are some lessons we learn from the people in the Good Samaritan story?

1. The victim: There are \_\_\_\_\_ people who need help.
2. The robbers: There are \_\_\_\_\_ people who hurt others.
3. The priest and Levite: There are those who \_\_\_\_\_ the needs of others.
4. The Samaritan: There are those who unselfishly \_\_\_\_\_ others.
  - The Samaritan intentionally walked \_\_\_\_\_ the wounded man.
  - The Samaritan showed \_\_\_\_\_ toward the wounded man.
  - The Samaritan took time to get personally \_\_\_\_\_.
  - The Samaritan gave generously of his time and \_\_\_\_\_.
  - The Samaritan committed to long-term \_\_\_\_\_.
  - The Samaritan was willing to be \_\_\_\_\_.

### Four Attitudes Displayed:

Only the Samaritan is unselfish in his thinking. Note that unselfish thinking produces unselfish deeds.

1. Robbers: What is yours is mine, and I am going to \_\_\_\_\_ it.
2. Priest: What is mine is mine, and I am going to \_\_\_\_\_ it.
3. Levite: What is yours is yours, and I am going to \_\_\_\_\_ it.
4. Samaritan: What is mine is yours, and I am going to \_\_\_\_\_ it.

The Samaritan's response to the wounded man was a beautiful demonstration of the power of unselfish thinking to guide our actions. Even though the Samaritan had no previous relationship with the victim, he cared about him anyway. He invested in the wounded man even though he would not gain anything materially from his actions. He would instead lose time and money. Why would the priest and Levite have been so selfish in their thinking? Think about these possible reasons:

1. They were in a \_\_\_\_\_.
2. They were too \_\_\_\_\_.
3. They suffered from \_\_\_\_\_.
4. They feared that involvement would be too \_\_\_\_\_.
5. They did not want added \_\_\_\_\_.
6. They were \_\_\_\_\_.
7. They were too \_\_\_\_\_ to serve others.

**Discussion:** Do you think the wounded man would have helped the Samaritan had the situation been reversed? Explain your reasoning.

**Biblical Case Study: The Apostle Paul (Ephesians 4:1-16)**

John Maxwell has often stated that a leader is at his best when he is developing other leaders. A leader who invests in other leaders must be both secure and unselfish in his thinking. Paul, like Jesus who was his example, faithfully and generously poured his life into emerging leaders. Just as Jesus selected twelve and mentored them on a daily basis, Paul intentionally served and added value to leaders and potential leaders. Paul was strongly committed to explosive growth. He understood that when he invested time and resources into developing leaders, the result would be the multiplied growth of the Church.

**Paul Demonstrated Unselfish Thinking:**

1. He looked for people he could \_\_\_\_\_.
2. He equipped \_\_\_\_\_ to do ministry.
3. He found and mentored emerging \_\_\_\_\_.
4. He empowered them to \_\_\_\_\_.
5. He gave them places to \_\_\_\_\_.
6. He was \_\_\_\_\_ – he developed leaders to plant churches.

A good leader can gather a group of followers and achieve some worthy goals. But it takes a great leader to develop and lead other leaders. Because Paul unselfishly poured himself into other leaders, the Church spread rapidly and Paul's influence continues to this present hour. What a legacy! Unselfish thinking is crucial in the lives of those who desire to make a lasting difference.

**Discussion:** Paul invested in the life and ministry of Timothy and other leaders. Are you faithfully mentoring other leaders? Review the six ways Paul demonstrated unselfish thinking. How can you apply these principles with those you are mentoring?

## Enjoy the Return of \_\_\_\_\_ Thinking

Most people see bottom-line thinking as related only to the financial world. They see it as financial profit or loss. If you are accustomed to thinking of the bottom line as it relates to financial matters, then you may be missing some things crucial to you and your ministry. Bottom-line thinking is really about results or outcome. Bottom-line thinking asks, "Are we accomplishing our mission?"

### Bottom-line Thinking Can Help You:

1. Provide clarity as you measure \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Assess the value of all your \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Make better \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Keep your team focused on the \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Increase your odds of long-term \_\_\_\_\_.

### How to Become a Bottom-line Thinker:

1. Decide what you want to \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Create a strategic plan to achieve the bottom-line \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Align all your \_\_\_\_\_ with the bottom line.
4. Align the \_\_\_\_\_ with the bottom line.
5. Make bottom-line thinking a \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Monitor the bottom line \_\_\_\_\_.

### Discussion:

- Have you thought about the bottom line for your life?
- Do you know *why* you are doing what you are doing in your life and ministry?

### Biblical Case Study: The 40-Year Journey (Numbers 33: 1-56)

The 33rd chapter of Numbers provides a review of the Israelites' exodus journey from Egypt to Jordan. It was quite a trip with lots of manna and far too much grumbling and complaining. Scholars tell us that the journey should have taken two weeks for completion. It lasted 40 years! Is it possible that the lack of bottom-line thinking was a key part of the problem? When we ignore the bottom line, drifting aimlessly through life is often the result. Look at what the Israelites did:

1. They were never fully \_\_\_\_\_ to the bottom-line goal.
2. They failed to establish daily \_\_\_\_\_ aligned with the bottom line.
3. They lacked \_\_\_\_\_.
4. They made \_\_\_\_\_ for their failures.
5. They blamed \_\_\_\_\_ for their lack of progress.

6. They were willing to settle for \_\_\_\_\_ than God's best.

7. They were unwilling to pay the \_\_\_\_\_ for success.

**Discussion:** How can you lead your team to develop bottom-line thinking?

### **Assessment and Application**

**Assessment:**

Are you making progress toward reaching your bottom-line life purpose?

**Application:**

Do you have a strategy for accomplishing your bottom-line life mission? What are the key elements or steps required to achieve it? What help will you need to achieve the goal?