If you have not heard people talk about self-care, well I’m kind of jealous because you may be living off the grid or staying off of social media. And I kinda want that to be my life. Except not like in the Educated memoir type of way. You know, in the semi-normal kinda way.

Self-care is a hot topic today in modern society, psychology, and the church. It’s something I talk about often, too. Because it’s important.

The idea is simple. It just means that we take care of ourselves. We understand our needs and make sure those needs get met (through Jesus or another person or some other means).

In the church we are taught a lot about serving, laying down our own lives for the sake of others, and to follow Jesus. We are taught to consider others more important than ourselves, and to do unto others as we would have them do unto us.

We are taught that to love is to sacrifice, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.

And that’s all true. And there is not enough of that love going around.

But we are also taught to love our neighbors as we love ourselves.

And how is that possible without a love for self in there somewhere?

But all of this can get out of hand, out of balance.

We can lean so heavily into self-care and self-love that we prioritize self over everyone else. We even at times will step on others just to get on own needs met, thinking that is some way to “be true to ourselves.”

And we can go the other way, too. We can completely neglect ourselves to the point of illness and poor health (in all areas of health) because we are sacrificing so much for others.

And I get how this can feel confusing.

The very savior that we love and follow and imitate gave his life for us all so that we can have life. The greatest act of love ever known to man.

Is there a place for self-care over self-love in the Christian life?

Well let me share a bit more about the life of our Savior. Jesus took excellent care of himself while living on this earth. He knew when he needed to do ministry, to give of himself, to teach and do miracles. And guess what? He knew when he needed to rest, too. He would withdraw to be alone, to pray. He would spend time alone to prepare for his next right thing, to recharge, to grieve, before making decisions, and when in distress.[[1]](#footnote--1) He knew when he needed to sleep and leave a place when he was not welcome. He knew when to break bread and fill his body back up. He know how to take care of himself as he was taking care of so many others.

And there was no hint of selfishness in it. Because he would not have been able to give of himself to others day in and day out without spending time to take care of himself, too. God can do this, but though Jesus was God, he was also fully man. And as human beings, we must understand our own needs and limitations. We can’t serve until we have nothing left. We can’t run on empty. Our job is not to save the world. Jesus already did that with his life.

But we also want to make sure our self-care is not becoming selfish or self-indulgent.

So how can we do that?

We need to assess in our life if there is a gentle balance between taking care of ourselves and taking care of others. A give and take. Pouring in, then pouring out. Pouring in, then pouring out. When we only care to love on ourselves and get our own needs met at the expense of others, that is selfishness and not what God wants of us.

Here is a better approach.

Pay attention to your life. To your needs. Are they getting met? Because you will burn out quickly if they aren’t.

My favorite way to understand what your needs are is a tool called the wheel of health. Google has lots of examples of these, but the idea is that there are various areas of health in our lives. There is spiritual health, mental health, emotional health, social and relational health, intellectual health, financial health, and the area of our lives dedicated to serving others. We can look at each area, and consider if we are healthy. If not, then most likely some needs are not met in that area.

For example, if my spiritual health is not not in a great place, it could be because I am not getting enough bible or prayer in my daily routine. And I need those things desperately.

If my relational health is not in a great place, it could be because I am not spending enough quality time with my people. And I need that desperately, too.

You look at each area carefully. And notice where you are not healthy. Then spend some time writing down as many needs as you can think of in your life, met and unmet needs. Write them all. Which needs are not met? How can you get them met? Notice how the areas of health aren’t just all about you, though. They are about others, too. Because we can’t be healthy if we only care about ourselves. We can only be healthy when we care about ourselves and others. When we love God, love people, AND love ourselves.

To end our time today, I will end with a quote from Parker J. Palmer in his book Let Your Life Speak. He says,

“Self-care if never a selfish act- it is simply good stewardship of the only gift I have, the gift I was put on earth to offer others. Anytime we can listen to true self and give the care it requires, we do it not only for ourselves, but for the many others whose lives we touch.”

Thanks for sitting a while with me. I trust that taking care of yourself in a non-selfish way will help you make one more step toward wholeness so that you can finally see what good relationships are made of.

And P.S. I created a wheel of health for you to download to see each area of health and an example of a chart that you can use to write goals in each area to get your needs met. I trust these will help you! You can find it on the resources page on my website, [www.kerrahfabacher.com](http://www.kerrahfabacher.com).

You can find me on instagram @kerrahfabacher

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And a big thanks to my friend, Robert Hargrove, for creating the music for our podcast, and fellow hope\*writer, Alana Dawson for editing the show.

Until next time, friend.

I’ll see you soon!

1. https://toeverynation.com/6-times-when-jesus-chose-solitude-over-people/ [↑](#footnote-ref--1)