

# Exposing the Sin of Entitlement

by Phil Beach Jr.

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*Phil Beach Jr. explores the sin of entitlement and its impact on our relationship with God, urging believers to embrace humility and obedience to His will.*

**Scripture:** Ephesians 1:16, Philippians 2:5, Hebrews 12:5, 2 Peter 1:1, 1 John 4:7

**Topics:** "Humility", "Repentance"

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## Description

Phil Beach Jr. preaches on the importance of surrendering our sense of entitlement to God, using the story of Naaman to illustrate how entitlement can lead to bitterness, anger, and a lack of submission to God's will. He emphasizes the need to humble ourselves, repent, and embrace God's ways without conditions, just as Jesus and Paul did, who did not possess a sense of personal entitlement. The sermon highlights the transformation that occurs when we let go of entitlement, allowing God to work in our lives, correct us, and mold us into the image of Christ, free from pride and self-seeking.

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## Transcript

"God will crucify without pity those whom He desires to raise without measure!"

A.W. Tozer

Scripture Readings:

Ephesians 1:16-23, 4:11-16; Philippians 1:21, 2:1-16, 3:3-14; Colossians 1:25-29;

Hebrews 12:1-17; 2 Peter 1:1-11; 1 John 4:7-14; 2 John 8; Revelation 3:14-22

One area in our lives that God must crucify without pity is the deep seated belief that we possess "entitlement". According to the dictionary, entitlement is a right granted by law or contract, especially pertaining to the right to benefits and special privilege. As we look more closely at our Lord Jesus we can learn about the kind of life we are called to live in union with Him. We will also see clearly the sense of entitlement that lives in our hearts and be enabled to repent and embrace the Lord Jesus as our life! It is not until the truth (however imperfectly)

presented in this article is thoroughly wrought in a company of believers that God will commit Himself and the testimony of His Son in the manner that fully satisfies His heart.

## SEEING IN JESUS THE ABSENCE OF PERSONAL ENTITLEMENT

Walking hand and hand with the loving Savior means being joined to a Man who does not walk after the seeing of His eyes nor listen after the hearing of His ears, but is governed by His Father's good pleasure. He does not respond to the movements of earth nor possess a sense of entitlement but is led by the movements of heaven! As we grow in our functional union with Him, we will be enabled more and more to be as He is--to move only at His bidding, looking not at what we see with our eyes nor listening to what we hear with our natural hearing, but walking in step with our Father's heart! The Lord longs to be joined with those who are of the same mind and heart as He. Although joined with all true believers, Christ can functionally express his life and ongoing ministry only through those who are crucified deeply enough to live in the good of His movements. God is after a new creation man, Head and body in perfect organic union, under a new government, the government of heaven's movements alone, with a new business--the Father's purpose alone. Jesus, being the Way and the Life and Truth, is the man who fully satisfies God's heart. Now He is seeking to secure a body in which the fullness of His Manhood, in all its heavenliness and spiritual government is operational, so that the body and the Head are indeed, one in spirit, soul and expression! It is for this reason that God must deliver all those who will partake of Christ's fullness from any sense of personal entitlement. We cannot partake of the full reward of the inheritance prepared for all those who are called into fellowship with the Son of God unless we are made partakers of His selfless heart, through and through, and this means being mercilessly delivered from all that is unlike our Lord.

The Lord is going very deeply into our lives and exposing that which is unlike His moral likeness, so we may offer it up to the verdict of Calvary in order that in its place more of the image of the risen Lord may be expressed in and through us! What joy and glory to be

disciplined in such a manner knowing the outcome is being partakers of His holiness! Blessed be the Lord who alone is worthy to be praised and in whom alone our Father has found the kind of Son in whom he can be fully pleased. By Him we have been made partakers of the divine nature through which we are able to escape the corruption of this life and share in His virtue, excellence and eventual glory! In light of such a holy calling and prospect, nothing of earth matters except to do the will of our Father and finish it! When God's Spirit has full sway in our lives, He makes us share in the same longing Paul expressed in Philippians 3, "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead". His passion is for us to enter into a union with His life that is equal to a full measure so that, along with all others of like heart and faith, we may be made to know the fullness of His measure as a corporate body and be ready to receive His appearing, prepared as a bride adorned with His glory and lovely character! Truly our current misguided ideas that make us believe we have personal entitlements in our service to the Lord must be exposed without pity by the light of the Lamb and uprooted out of our lives if we have hopes of sharing together with the blessed Man of Heaven in time and in eternity, in functional unity and operational government! Christ Jesus, Head and body will be one in heart, mind and purpose, so that He may say of those He is calling to bridal affections, behold, as I am so are these, members of my body, my bone and my flesh. Even as Eve was taken out from Adam and was created from part of Adam himself, so that she was different then he but the same, being a counterpart and helpmate, so those who will be made partakers of Christ will be as He is, sharing in the heavenly calling and partaking of the heavenly promise of sitting with Him, in the age to come, in His throne, crowned with His glory and arrayed in His moral majesty and radiant likeness!

#### NEITHER CHRIST NOR PAUL POSSESSED A SENSE OF PERSONAL ENTITLEMENT

Illusions of entitlement prevent us from possessing proper spiritual capacity to be offered as a vessel through whom the majestic glory and beauty of the blessed Son of Man can be seen in functional capacity! He is not governed by a sense of personal entitlement but lives only unto

the will of God, being poured out as a drink offering in sacrificial love and service to the will of God in every generation. Such is the kind of Man God has in His presence, One who seeks nothing for Himself--One who does not feel entitled to anything, except His Father's will--One in whom perfect humility was fully made manifest when He, being God and deserving of all the glory and privilege that is His as God, out of perfect love and unity with the divine purpose of God, let go of all that He possessed as God and became a man, like us, excepting sin. He, never ceasing to be God, became a Man! As Man, He became a love-slave to His Father's good pleasure and will in all things and was wholly free from all forms of movement that sprang out of a sense of personal entitlement! He never insisted on any conditions in His service toward God and ministry toward sinful man. He, as God and as the perfect Man, had every right to claim and embrace entitlement, to demand high standards of living and the best of everything gave up all such entitlement and humbled himself even further. In ultimate obedience to the will of His Father, Christ lowered himself and became obedient to the death of the cross, there depicting the ultimate loss and abandoning claims to any personal entitlement, became a curse for our sake! He was spit upon, had a crown of thorns jammed on His head, drawing blood, and had his beard plucked out! What happened to entitlement, dear ones? What if He had insisted on the right to be treated better than this, insisted on the right to be treated with respect and to receive appreciation from those He had served and helped during His earthly ministry? What if our Lord insisted on only serving those who loved Him? What if our Lord felt it was His right to have been born, not in a smelly stable, but in a modern inn of His day? He, rather, accepted without animosity or bitterness the humble circumstances surrounding His birth. And now, we are commanded to let this same mind (that is in Christ Jesus) be in us!

What if Paul insisted on being wealthy, healthy and serving God only under those conditions? What if Paul felt it was His personal right to be given a place of honor and dignity among the churches and felt it was his right to be given a beautiful home, comfortable salary with benefits, and a three week paid vacation every six months? What if Paul resented the way he was

treated and the harsh and often death defying circumstances he was led into and told God that he could no longer serve him in this way? After all, Paul said that he was perceived as the scum of the earth and a spectacle to both men and angels! How could God allow His dear servant to be viewed in such a low-life way? After all, Paul had rights and entitlements being one of God's most useful apostles, didn't he? Perhaps Paul was misguided when he told the saints in Corinth that instead of taking one another to court so that they may receive the fair treatment which they "deserved", they rather ought to be wronged and taken advantage of and do nothing about it? Indeed, we can see in the life of Jesus and His dear servant Paul, the absence of this sense of personal entitlement and for this reason, Christ is given the honor from God as bearing the name above every name and Paul His servant is given the honor of being able to say, "For me to live is Christ".

#### SEEING THE SIN OF ENTITLEMENT IN NAAMAN

This sense of entitlement springs from deep within our hearts--more so than we are readily willing to admit. So often feelings of smoldering resentment, bitterness and feelings of anger and disgust live deep in our hearts and from time to time surface in the form of harsh, critical words or a cynical attitude toward life. Almost without exception, the root cause of these kinds of sins is a sense of entitlement, a feeling that we deserved something and because we did not get it, we have become poisoned by our pride.

One classic story of this sin of entitlement is found when reading of Naaman the leper in the Old Testament. Let's look at this story in detail and see if we find in ourselves the sin of entitlement as revealed in Naaman. 2 Kings Chapter five opens with the words, "Now Naaman, captain of the host of the King of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honorable, because by him the Lord had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valor, but he was a leper."

According to this account, Naaman was an honorable man, well-respected by many people and used by the Lord to bring deliverance to Syria. Yet in spite of all his accomplishments and the honor which men gave to him, there remained a great need in Naaman's life. God allowed Naaman to be afflicted with the grievous and devastating disease of leprosy. Despite all the personal glory and sense of fulfillment which he must have otherwise experienced in his life, Naaman was unable to be free from this deadly plague.

How wise God is to keep us reminded that only He can meet our deepest need. God will always, in His love and faithfulness, be sure to arrange something in our lives that will forever remind us of our ever present need for Him. VIEWING GOD AND HIS WORK WITH ENTITLEMENT CONDITIONS DEEP IN THE HEART As our story continues, Naaman, though wonderfully successful, is pierced with sorrow because of his desperate need. Through the course of events, Naaman learns that there is a prophet named Elisha who has power from God to heal him!

Elisha calls for Naaman to come to see him saying, "...and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel" (2 Kings 5:8.) The first thing that happens is that Naaman has the hope given to Him that perhaps his

leprous condition can be healed. Suddenly, after years of bearing the grief of being a leper, Naaman is personally called by the prophet to come for a visit. The second significant thing that is occurring here is that Naaman is beginning to form personal expectations, springing out of a deep seated belief that he is entitled to a certain level of respect and dignity, as to how he thinks God should work this great miracle, and how he should be treated by those God would use as instruments.

Here we learn a lesson about ourselves. Whenever God begins to give hope in our hearts about a certain situation in our lives, we immediately begin to speculate and formulate preferences about how we think God should fulfill the hope He has given us based on our deep seated sense of entitlement and the rights we feel are ours. Thus we set ourselves up to experience the grief of having God Himself crush our ideas about how He should bring about His promises. The Lord is never obligated to meet our demands and preconceived expectations about how we think He should execute His plan in our life or in the lives of other people.

Yet, God in His loving wisdom allows us to develop misguided ideas about Himself as a lesson to teach us how to trust His ways and not exalt and demand our own! What a loving Father in heaven! Well, let's read on and see how Naaman was guilty of the common mistake of expecting God to work in accord to his sense of personal entitlement. 2 Kings 5:10 tells us that when Naaman arrived at the house of Elisha, the prophet sent a messenger to him saying "...Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean."

Verse 11 reveals the beginning of God's process to expose and take away Naaman's sin of pride and deep seated entitlement. It reads, "But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, he will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper." What was the underlying sin of Naaman that is our sin as well? It was coming to God and those God may use in our lives with the sense of entitlement, believing we are deserving of a certain kind of treatment!

God began to instruct Naaman in the way He had chosen to free him from his leprosy, but Naaman had his own ideas that sprang out of a deep sense of what he thought he was entitled to, or what he thought he was deserving of. However these ideas and God's way were in opposition to each other. God was not planning to act in accord to Naaman's personal entitlement beliefs! God said one thing but Naaman demanded another. God frustrated Naaman's expectation which resulted in rage, anger, and bitterness toward God.

**THE SOURCE OF SMOLDERING RESENTMENT, ANGER AND BITTERNESS** Whenever God or people in our lives frustrate our expectations, we will become angry and offended if we do not immediately confess this conflict to God and cry out for a change of heart. If we fail to do this, we will become controlled by this anger and sinful attitude and its destructive effects will be seen in all our relations with people and with God himself! And yet, all the rage we experience can be traced back to the misguided belief of expecting God to work in a way that corresponds to the ideas of personal entitlement we hold deep in our hearts.

We can be held captive to deep, ugly rage and anger because somewhere back in our dealing with God and people, our expectations were frustrated and our personal ideas about what we think we deserve from God or people were not met. You may still be angry at God because your expectations were crushed and brought to nothing! Can you trace back and see where you, like Naaman, were angered because you did

not have things your way and today (perhaps months or years later) you live in misery and bitterness?

Maybe this spiritual condition is deep inside and you like to ignore it, but you know it is there, slowly eating away at you. There is hope! Christ is loving and forgiving. Confess to Him now, asking Him to show you the conditions you have put on God and people, that spring out of feeling that you "deserve better". Ask God for a fresh vision of the Lamb of God who gave up all personal rights and lived as a servant to God and men, expecting nothing but the faithful love and presence of His Father to be with Him always.

We see that Naaman convinced himself that God should have had Elisha come to him personally. Naaman felt entitled to have a private meeting with Elisha, but God had another plan. This feeling of entitlement was the cause of His sinful anger. Also Naaman thought God should have chosen a better river for him to dunk in! We can see ourselves through this man Naaman. How many times are we also guilty of telling God what we would rather do, setting limits or conditions on God and serving Him and others based on the criteria derived from entitlement.

We must learn that God's way is the only way and we cannot seek to serve God and His interests with conditions that spring out of our sense of personal rights. A bitter spirit can easily take root in us when we have in our hearts these deep expectations which God fails to honor. Beware dear saint! Such a root of bitterness and offense can destroy both you and those it touches. "Are not Abanah and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them, and be clean?"

So he turned and went away in a rage" (verse 12). Complaining, discontentment and evil speaking all spring from an offended heart that fails to obtain what it thinks it deserves. Because Naaman was determined to have God move according to his own desires, he was enraged when God told him differently! How often we find ourselves in the same state as Naaman: we are set in opposition to God's way and He frustrates us by refusing us our way and we turn from Him in a rage! Perhaps this condition is not openly but inwardly present in your heart today.

Are you inwardly dying because of an entitlement spirit that refuses to bow to God in a certain area of your life? Maybe you are demanding your own way and refusing to consider God's way because you are convinced that you are entitled to something better! We so often think we are entitled to so much. Perhaps you want respect, you want to be understood, you want to be loved, you want to be appreciated, or maybe even vindicated, and you feel it is your right and that you are entitled to this, but you have not received it.

But are you really entitled to these things? Did Christ make these kinds of demands as He served His Father's will? Does the Holy Spirit demand reciprocation for His selfless ministry? How often is God denied the respect and honor He so deserves, and yet He remains faithful in His continual care for us. Only as we begin to appreciate what it means to walk in the footsteps of the Lamb of God will we be able to truly be participants in this kind of love and ministry. And our Father, in His love and kindness, sets us up to see more clearly how utterly opposite we are in ourselves.

His grace then provides us opportunity to die to our own pride and rebellion so we can walk more fully in the abundant life of Jesus our Lord thereby sharing in His lamb-like nature that holds to no sense of entitlement! It is in this moment of decision that we must submit to the Father of our spirits and live! **THE MINISTRY OF THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST IN OUR LIVES** This story closes as we see the wonderful intercession of Naaman's servants, who convince him to humble himself, turn from his pride and deep seated sense of entitlement and obey the prophet of God.

Having been persuaded, Naaman, in verse 14, washes in the Jordan, and receives the fulfillment of the promise that had sprung up in his soul earlier: "Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean." This is an example of the victory that comes into our lives when we submit to God and give up all sense of entitlement. Please note that it was not until Naaman was able to repent, submit to God's way, and heartily yield to the word of the prophet that he received the promise!

We see a beautiful picture of the ministry of the Holy Spirit to all who are believers through the servants' pleading with Naaman. Even now Christ intercedes for us, His Holy Spirit calls, draws, persuades and convicts, and the Word speaks to us with one goal--to break our wills and our preconceived ideas and demands, which exalt themselves above God's perfect way--and bring us to a place of broken, heartfelt submission to Him, prepared to follow the Lamb without conditions or considering our personal rights!

Through the wonderful Spirit of God we are enabled to see the glory and perfections of our blessed Lord Jesus, the Man in Glory that is fully after God's heart. As we see Him, we see a heart that is entirely free from any sense of demanding personal entitlement rights, but which willingly gave up His life for the sake of His Father's justice and mercy. **GOD REBUKES AND CORRECTS THOSE HE LOVES AND ACCEPTS** Now, as long as the conflict rages and we have set our own wills and desires against God and refused to bow to Him, we will continue to see His chastening hand in our homes, churches and professions!

God will not remove His judgment from our lives until we bow in brokenness, humility and true heart contrition to Him saying, "Lord, we have sinned against You. We have been as rebellious children, demanding our own way and holding to the sin of entitlement in many areas of our lives toward you and our service toward others. Lord, we have behaved sinfully. Because of this, Lord, our homes are broken and often filled with unpleasant attitudes. Our children are going astray and our marriages are filled with smoldering anger, rage, bitterness, and evil speaking.

Our churches are filled with backbiting, slanderous speech and divisions too numerous to count. Lord, you have turned us over to our sins that we may be reminded of our need for You. Lord, have mercy! We confess our rebellion. We confess our pride as Naaman who, when learning your will, rebelled against it, demanding his own way! Lord, thank you for the intercession of Christ, the power of the Holy Spirit to convict, and the instruction from Your Holy Word! Have mercy upon us.

Deliver us, O God! Turn our hearts from rebellion and demanding personal entitlement to submission to the Lamb of God and His moral likeness which takes no thought for self interest." May God grant us all understanding that we may be stirred to seek Him and allow Him to uncover all areas of entitlement that lurk in our hearts so we may be free to love and serve Him without condition. May God graciously reach out to our families and His church -- shining the light of His truth and grace, bringing deliverance from any area of pride and a sense of personal entitlement that exalts itself above God!

You may be experiencing this kind of test even now! God may have put His finger on some area of your life. Maybe you are feeling you deserve more money, more earthly comforts, and better respect from your spouse or children. Perhaps you have not obtained the love and honor you feel entitled to from a friend or family member and because of this you have become bitter and emotionally detached from them. Perhaps you are struggling with anger because you believe you deserve more personal time and seem to never find it.

What if you lost everything as Job did? Would you in rage revile God and man because you feel you do not deserve such a thing? Do you feel a sense of entitlement regarding what you have or what you do not have and think you should have? After careful heart searching in the light of Lamb, we will discover, with dread and much sorrow that indeed, we are filled with this sense of entitlement so much that it is evident in most every area of our lives. But the fact remains: we do not deserve anything, except eternal damnation.

Anything beyond that is grace from a loving God who gives to us because of the perfect sacrifice of His Son. Oh, how we are in need of seeing this area of sin in our lives if we are to go on to spiritual perfection in Christ. When we do finally see clearly, we must not despair. As we cry out to Him and see Jesus, we can receive His heart which will free us from our own tendencies to embrace personal. God wants us to see what He is after in our hearts, and what is not pleasing to Him so that we may be able to give it to Him.

That's love -- not wrath. God does this so we will not be under His wrath but in union with His Son, who gave up all personal rights and asks us to do the same! In doing so we can by faith accept Him as our life and indeed, by receiving Him as our very life, moment by moment, we shall be ever free from falling prey to serving God or men with the illusions that we are entitled with special rights, but will, in union with the Lord Jesus serve the will of God without condition!

Then we can grow into a living body expressing the fullness of the Head, in whom all God's fullness dwells. God's heart will be satisfied when He sees the moral likeness of His Son fully formed in His bride--arrayed in His glory and moral majesty--wholly freed from this sin of entitlement and just like her Lord and Master--free to fully express the fullness of the Son of God and His amazing love! Then and only then will we be ready to meet our Lord in the air and we will be found waiting for Him on tip-toes, hands and hearts outstretched to Him, holding to no earthly treasures but having Him alone as the object of our love and passion.

**A FINAL WORD--DO NOT BECOME WEARY WHEN GOD CORRECTS YOU** Perhaps one of the greatest temptations we face is to begin to despise and resent the correction and child-training the Lord brings into our lives, because we fail to see His loving intention. God's chastening in our lives has a two-fold meaning. First it means to be corrected and disciplined because of moral failure. Second it means to be trained and taught so as to prepare us for adulthood. Both of these ideas are included in this passage of God's Word.

To despise is to take lightly by not taking to heart. When we are being taught and disciplined by our Father in heaven we are always tempted to treat it too lightly and miss the lesson He is seeking to teach us. We are just like our children. Sometimes when we are seeking to correct or train them, we are compelled to say to them, "Please pay attention to me". How annoying it is when we see their eyes wander away and by their actions we can tell they are taking the whole experience lightly. We are just as guilty before the Lord as our children, dear ones! Our pride and ego resents being corrected by the Lord and even worse, when the Lord chooses to use another person to correct us!

Some may be quite willing to endure God's correction when they are receiving it from His hand directly, either from His Word or by His Spirit. But if God should use another person to correct and chasten, oh, how our hearts can well up with anger. God uses many ways to teach and correct us and we must not ever despise any of those methods. Is there festering resentment in

your heart today because the Lord has tried to correct you? Are you fainting and feeling like giving up because you are heavy hearted over the Lord's dealings in your life? Perhaps you have been called to endure a lengthy trial and you feel you have no more strength. Sometimes the Lord's rebuking hand upon our lives that is intended to bring us to deeper repentance is almost unbearable. During this time, we can very easily close our hearts and become hard and calloused. Our emotions can rage out of control with feelings of despair, confusion and a sense of hopelessness. We may be tempted to isolate ourselves from others and become unwilling to acknowledge our faults or seek help. Pride and a deep sense of personal entitlement despise the call from God to humble ourselves and admit to guilt and our need to confess our faults to others. Should this happen, we will be in danger of serious injury and may not finish the course the Lord has chosen for us. We must remember that God loves us very much and all His dealings in our lives, as painful as some of them may be, are always for our good, so that we may come to know Him more fully and partake in His moral likeness and holiness, so that together we may become the body of Christ through whom His fullness may be revealed. It is the Lord and His voice that we must learn to both listen to and obey and God's chastening and child training in our lives are so that we may learn this vital lesson.

Finally, God tells us in His Word to be imitators of Himself and His Son through being transformed, from glory to glory into the image of Christ. Paul too tells us to follow Him as he has followed the Lord. Peter tells us to arm ourselves with the same mind as Christ, being prepared to suffer without demanding any personal entitlement. By these many exhortations, the Lord is calling us to abandon and remove ourselves from all sense of entitlement in our service toward Him and each other. May we find grace at this time to participate in this call and take heed to the Word of exhortation in our closing thoughts. "...My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth... Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby" (Heb. 12:5, 6, 11).

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