

September 20, 2020

## Life in the Spirit

### Romans 8:1-11

We've all heard the adages that business is a "dog-eat-dog world," and sometimes you have to be ruthless to get ahead. According to a new study from UC Berkeley, that is not the case. "The evidence is in: Nice [people] don't finish last, and being a selfish jerk doesn't get you ahead. That's the clear conclusion from research that tracked disagreeable people—those with selfish, combative, manipulative personalities—from college or graduate school to where they landed in their careers about 14 years later."<sup>1</sup> The research shows that those nasty coworkers were no more likely to receive promotions and power than those with agreeable personalities. If you want to get ahead, being a jerk doesn't help.

Being generous, kind, and trustworthy in the workplace leads to better relationships and produces better outcomes, according to the Berkeley study. Does this apply to life outside of the office? Paul seemed to think so.

In this week's Key Verse, Paul said something similar about life in Christ: "The attitude that comes from selfishness leads to death, but the attitude that comes from the Spirit leads to life and peace" (Romans 8:6). If we only think of ourselves and what earthly treasure and power we can obtain, we cannot lead a full life as God intended. The student book author says that the peace that encourages us to act in a positive, unselfish way comes from the Holy Spirit: "If we allow the Spirit to create love, joy, peace, and especially self-control in us, we can more easily see the right path. Many of our bad choices come from feeling hurt, bitter, or fearful."<sup>2</sup>

According to the Berkeley study, "ample research has shown that jerks in positions of power are abusive; prioritize their own self-interests; create corrupt cultures; and, ultimately, cause their organizations to fail. They also serve as toxic role models for society at large."<sup>3</sup> Being disagreeable and selfish doesn't just affect you; it ripples out to your coworkers, your friends, your family, creating waves of negativity. Being a selfish Christian can have the same affect. This week be conscious of your actions and how you treat those around you. Let the Spirit be your guide as you choose peace.

1. Have disagreeable people gotten promotions at your workplace (or former workplace)? How did that make you feel?
2. In what ways can you be a better coworker or friend to others?
3. How has the Holy Spirit helped you lead a more peaceful life?

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<sup>1</sup>From [news.berkeley.edu/2020/08/31/being-a-selfish-jerk-doesnt-get-you-ahead-research-finds/](https://news.berkeley.edu/2020/08/31/being-a-selfish-jerk-doesnt-get-you-ahead-research-finds/).

<sup>2</sup>From *Adult Bible Studies*, Fall 2020, by Chuck Aaron (Cokesbury, 2020); page 31.

<sup>3</sup>From [news.berkeley.edu/2020/08/31/being-a-selfish-jerk-doesnt-get-you-ahead-research-finds/](https://news.berkeley.edu/2020/08/31/being-a-selfish-jerk-doesnt-get-you-ahead-research-finds/).