

Self-sacrificing James (son of Alphaeus)

The following seven traits and behaviors are clues to the presence of the Self-sacrificing style. A person who has a strong Self-sacrificing tendency will demonstrate more of these behaviors more intensely than someone who has less of this style.

1. **Generosity:** Individuals with the Self-sacrificing personality style will give you the shirts off their backs if you need them. They do not wait to be asked.
2. **Service:** Their “prime directive” is to be helpful to others. Out of deference to others, they are noncompetitive and unambitious, comfortable coming second, even last.
3. **Consideration:** Self-sacrificing people are always considerate in their dealings with others. They are ethical, honest, and trustworthy.
4. **Acceptance:** They are nonjudgmental, tolerant of other’s foibles, and never harshly reproofing. They’ll stick with you through thick and thin.
5. **Humility:** They are neither boastful nor proud, and they’re uncomfortable being fussed over. Self-sacrificing men and women do not like being the center of attention; they are uneasy in the limelight.
6. **Endurance:** They are long-suffering. They prefer to shoulder their own burdens in life. They have much patience and a high tolerance for discomfort.
7. **Artlessness:** Self-sacrificing individuals are rather naïve and innocent. They are unaware of the often-deep impact they make on other people’s lives, and they tend never to suspect deviousness or underhanded motives in the people to whom they give so much of themselves.

Self-sacrificing James (son of Alphaeus) in Action

At its best and most noble, this is the personality style from which saints and good citizens are made. Like those with Devoted style, these individuals live to serve others. However, where Devoted types attach themselves to people or groups and are motivated by their need to belong, Self-sacrificing types are motivated by their need to help and to give.

They work selflessly and often in the background for their causes or for the people (boss, spouse, friends, children) they serve. They’ll say things like, “Don’t thank me”—but secretly, in ways they find hard to recognize, they really want and need the appreciation; they just have a hard time accepting it. If they don’t get the thanks that they are ambivalent about, they will find themselves resenting the people they serve, which can be very confusing for them.

Self-sacrificing people must often take care that they don’t give away too much. These individuals commonly do more for others than they do for themselves—sometimes, for example, loaning a friend their car when they need it themselves for an important engagement. They unwittingly make themselves vulnerable to people who tend to take advantage of people who are extremely giving by nature.

Highly Self-sacrificing people often feel unworthy of receiving love. Their form of love is all giving, which can frustrate those who would like to give to them too. They also feel guilty about experiencing pleasure themselves, although they are usually willing to provide pleasure to another person. They are quite capable of pleasure, though, and are more likely to indulge this ability when there is no one around for them to take care of.

Issues of the Self-sacrificing James (son of Alphaeus)

Because of their tendency to do it all and to be all giving, sometimes they over commit. While it is “more blessed to give than receive”, we also need receivers—without them givers would have no one to give to. Receiving done well can be a gift. It is hard to help Self-sacrificing since they often refuse or resist all efforts to help them. They can undermine both their efforts to help as well as the group they are a part of by taking on more than they can handle and then not letting anyone else help them or even know they need help. A sharp eye has to be kept out for this type so they don’t get in over their heads or do themselves in since frequently they will not acknowledge they need help and will be especially willing to bear burdens that were not intended for them—weakening them and the one whose responsibility it was to bear the burden in the first place.

Scripture for the Self-sacrificing James (son of Alphaeus)

Since they are fighters by nature, Peter, the epitome of fighters, has much to say to the Self-sacrificing personality type; however, since their character is to sacrifice and help others, some of the classic things one might say to a fighter don’t apply as directly to this type but instead must be said differently. Instead of saying they are not doing enough or helping others enough, they must begin to understand there is another type of selfishness that comes from either shame or the unwillingness to receive help from others. Peter addresses this in 1st Peter 3:13-18 when he writes: ¹³Now, who will want to harm you if you are eager to do good? ¹⁴But even if you suffer for doing what is right, God will reward you for it. So don’t be afraid and don’t worry. ¹⁵Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if you are asked about your Christian hope, always be ready to explain it. ¹⁶But you must do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak evil against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ. ¹⁷Remember, it is better to suffer for doing good, if that is what God wants, than to suffer for doing wrong!

¹⁸Christ also suffered when he died for our sins once for all time. He never sinned, but he died for sinners that he might bring us safely home to God. He suffered physical death, but he was raised to life in the Spirit. ◦

And again in 2nd Peter 1:12-21 when he writes: ¹²I plan to keep on reminding you of these things—even though you already know them and are standing firm in the truth. ¹³Yes, I believe I should keep on reminding you of these things as long as I live. ¹⁴But the Lord Jesus Christ has shown me that my days here on earth are numbered and I am soon to die. ◦ ¹⁵So I will work hard to make these things clear to you. I want you to remember them long after I am gone.

¹⁶For we were not making up clever stories when we told you about the power of our Lord Jesus Christ and his coming again. We have seen his majestic splendor with our own eyes. ¹⁷And he received honor and glory from God the Father when God’s glorious, majestic voice called down from heaven, “This is my beloved Son; I am fully pleased with him.” ¹⁸We ourselves heard the voice when we were there with him on the holy mountain.

¹⁹Because of that, we have even greater confidence in the message proclaimed by the prophets. Pay close attention to what they wrote, for their words are like a light shining in a dark place—until the day Christ appears and his brilliant light shines in your hearts. ²⁰Above all, you must understand that no prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophets themselves ²¹or because they wanted to prophesy. It was the Holy Spirit who moved the prophets to speak from God.

Therefore the Self-sacrificing James must remember that all their sacrifices are for Christ and his kingdom but pale in the comparison to the ultimate sacrifice Christ already made. You cannot out sacrifice the one who gave up his life as a sacrifice for your life and a “ransom for many”.

Self-Esteem

AM I REALLY IMPORTANT TO GOD?

GENESIS 1:26-27; PSALM 8:3-8

God made us in his image or likeness, the first sign of the value he places on us. No other creature on earth is made in the image of God. The second sign of the value God places on us is that he placed people over all creatures on earth.

PSALM 139:13-16; JEREMIAH 1:5

God made us with great skill; he crafted us with loving care. He showed how much value he places on us by the way he made us.

PSALM 139:17

Almighty God thinks wonderful thoughts about us all the time. He looks inside of us and sees our real value.

PSALM 139:1-3, 6

God values you so much that he watches over you no matter where you are or what you are doing. This truly is wonderful, too wonderful to believe. But it tells you how special he thinks you are. God cares about everything we do because he loves us so much.

1 CORINTHIANS 6:19-20

God values you so much that he even allows your body to become a temple in which he lives. God does not need to live in you. He can live anywhere. But by choosing to live within you, he declares you his temple, his dwelling place. What a great value he places on you to do that!

GALATIANS 3:26; GALATIANS 4:7

God values you so much that he thinks of you as his child.

MATTHEW 28:20

God promises to be with us always; why would he want to be with us if he didn't value us?

HOW DO I DEVELOP A HEALTHY SELF-ESTEEM?

ROMANS 12:3

Healthy self-esteem is an honest appraisal of ourselves, not too proud because of the gifts and abilities God has given us, yet not so self-effacing that we fail to use our gifts and abilities to their potential.

1 PETER 4:10

Giving actually increases our value, our self-worth, because it allows God to work more effectively through us.

Promise from God: Matthew 10:29-31

²⁹Not even a sparrow, worth only half a penny, can fall to the ground without your Father knowing it.
³⁰And the very hairs on your head are all numbered. ³¹So don't be afraid; you are more valuable to him than a whole flock of sparrows.

Service

THE WHOLE IDEA OF SERVICE SEEMS TO RUN COUNTER TO WHAT WE ARE TAUGHT—TO DO OUR OWN THING. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A SERVANT?

PHILIPPIANS 2:5-9

In a most striking picture of servanthood, Jesus humbles himself through obedience.

MATTHEW 20:20-28

Jesus revolutionizes our understanding of leadership by teaching “downward mobility.”

JOHN 13:1-17

By performing the task of a slave, Jesus models how far we are to go in serving one another.

ROMANS 6:12-14

The Spirit of God transforms our motives for serving.

HOW CAN I SERVE GOD IN MY LIFE TODAY?

JOSHUA 22:5; 24:14-15

A servant is loyal and obedient to his master—even when it's not convenient.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:4-11

We serve the Lord by recognizing our spiritual gifts and enthusiastically investing them in the ministry of the church.

MATTHEW 25:14-30

Regardless of the level of our gifts and abilities, God expects us to invest ourselves boldly for his glory.

Promise from God: Matthew 16:25

²⁵If you try to keep your life for yourself, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for me, you will find true life.

The Self-sacrificing James (son of Alphaeus) Role in God's Kingdom

As helpers and servants for Christ and the church they are without peer. Their willingness to give and sacrifice so others may enjoy the fruits of God's kingdom or even be more comfortable is truly admirable. They are of a giving heart and in much need in a selfish world. They are often hesitant to use some of their other gifts and talents since it might mean recognition. This is not just their loss but can affect those they would be serving in this way as well but with more limelight than they are comfortable with. To truly understand this personality type read the life of Jesus the ultimate Self-sacrificing

personality. Martha is another example of this personality. Read below for more understanding.

Martha

Many older brothers and sisters have an irritating tendency to take charge, a habit developed while growing up. We can easily see this pattern in Martha, the older sister of Mary and Lazarus. She was used to being in control.

The fact that Martha, Mary, and Lazarus are remembered for their hospitality takes on added significance when we note that hospitality was a social requirement in their culture. It was considered shameful to turn anyone away from your door. Apparently Martha's family met this requirement very well.

Martha worried about details. She wished to please, to serve, to do the right thing—but she often succeeded in making everyone around her uncomfortable. Perhaps as the oldest she feared shame if her home did not measure up to expectations. She tried to do everything she could to make sure that wouldn't happen. As a result, she found it hard to relax and enjoy her guests and even harder to accept Mary's lack of cooperation in all the preparations. Martha's frustration was so intense that she finally asked Jesus to settle the matter. He gently corrected her attitude and showed her that her priorities, though good, were not the best. The personal attention she gave her guests should be more important than the comforts she tried to provide for them.

Later, following her brother Lazarus's death, Martha could hardly help being herself. When she heard Jesus was finally coming, she rushed out to meet him and expressed her inner conflict of disappointment and hope. Jesus pointed out that her hope was too limited. He was not only Lord over death; he was the resurrection and the life! Moments later, Martha again spoke without thinking, pointing out that four-day-old corpses are well on their way to decomposition. Her awareness of details sometimes kept her from seeing the whole picture, but Jesus was consistently patient with her.

In our last picture of Martha, she is once again serving a meal to Jesus and his disciples. She has not stopped serving. But the Bible records her silence this time. She has begun to learn what her younger sister already knew—that worship begins with silence and listening.

STRENGTHS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ◆ Known as a hospitable homemaker
- ◆ Believed in Jesus with growing faith
- ◆ Had a strong desire to do everything exactly right

WEAKNESSES AND MISTAKES

- ◆ Expected others to agree with her priorities
- ◆ Was overly concerned with details
- ◆ Tended to feel sorry for herself when her efforts were not recognized
- ◆ Limited Jesus' power to this life

LESSONS FROM HER LIFE

- ◆ Getting caught up in details can make us forget the main reasons for our actions
- ◆ There is a proper time to listen to Jesus and a proper time to work for him

VITAL STATISTICS

- ◆ Where: Bethany
- ◆ Relatives: Sister: Mary. Brother: Lazarus

KEY VERSE

“But Martha was worrying over the big dinner she was preparing. She came to Jesus and said, ‘Lord, doesn’t it seem unfair to you that my sister just sits here while I do all the work? Tell her to come and help me’” (Luke 10:40).

Martha’s story is told in Luke 10:38–42 and John 11:17–45.