



"Y" (why?) - D. Michael Hentrich - February 24, 2017

## PREFACE

One *interpretation* of a famous Zen Buddhist proverb goes: “*The greatest virtue can be seen in chopping wood and carrying water.*” The point is, there are many reasons for our actions. Some reasons are altruistic and noble. Often, our reasons are relatively small-minded and self-centered. The value of what we do, and the joy we can derive from our actions, is greatly affected by our reason for doing them.

The late Dr. Sun Myung Moon and his wife taught that people should “*Live for the sake of others.*” This did not mean one should live a life full of public activities. Rather, it was a statement of “purpose”. It was a “**ㄤ**” (why?) statement. A person might live a life filled with lots of public activities, missions, obligations and duties, but still not be living for the sake of others. For example: You’re going to cut the grass! But why? Why do you do whatever you do, *really*?

The purpose of this book is to help us recognize and evaluate our reasons for doing whatever we do in life. As you go through the various character sketches in this book, you may find yourself identifying with some of them.

What does it really mean to “*live for the sake of others*”? In its truest form, “*living for the sake of others*” means the genuine happiness of others has become the primary source of my own fulfillment. In other words, if *I’m* a person living for the sake of others, then **your** being happy is what makes **me** happy. If *you* are truly living for the sake of others, then **my** being happy is what

brings **you** the greatest joy and satisfaction. Such things as “sacrifice” and “compromise” become like unconscious computer sub-routines running in the background of our personality.

How many people today live that kind of life? Probably very few. It is my hope that this little book will offer you valuable and nutritious food for thought... about how and “**Y**” we live our lives.



1. The Nagged Husband .....	1
2. The Egoist.....	3
3. The Patriotic Citizen.....	5
4. The Good Neighbor.....	7
5. The Shamed .....	9
6. The Hired Groundskeeper .....	11
7. The Filial Son .....	13
8. The Feel-Gooders .....	15
9. The Tech Nerd.....	17
10. The Escapee.....	19
11. The Busybody.....	21
12. The Lawn Show.....	23
13. The Legacy .....	25
14. The CEO.....	27
15. The Socialite.....	29
16. The Avoider.....	31
17. The Hiding Place .....	33

18. The Faithful Wife .....	34
19. Pain Avoidance.....	36
20. The Good Husband.....	37
21. In-Laws and Outlaws.....	38
22. The Chore .....	40
23. The Missionary.....	42
24. For the Safety and Joy of My Children .....	44
25. The Habitualist .....	46
26. To Beautify the Neighborhood.....	47
27. For God’s Joy and that of Creation .....	49
<b><i>So what’s wrong with that?</i></b>	
Reflections on each character sketch .....	50

## 1. The Nagged Husband

What a week. I just wanna scream! I can't believe it's finally Saturday. I earned this morning; nobody home; peace and quiet. Let's see what's on TV. Feels so good to just chill; feet up. Got the chips, beer, remote—easin' into my cave; even got a cool breeze through the window. That's all I need.

[Bang—the kitchen door slams.] Hi dear. Are you up? I got the kids up and out this morning, brought the boys to the Jameson's house. Then, I went to the store and got some food for tonight and stopped by the bank. Are you there?

Yes, dear.

So, when did you get up?

Well, I, a, got up a little while ago.

Yeah? What have you been doing—anything? Any plans this weekend? You know there's a lot of stuff that needs to be done around here. The garage is still a mess. I must have told you about that about 50 times now. And the cars are filthy dirty. And, our yard is the worst looking one on the block. I'm embarrassed to be seen by the neighbors. So, are you just gonna lay around all day and do nothing? I mean I've got a few more things that need to be done around here, but there's no point even talkin about them if you don't get off the couch and do the basics. Joe, across the street, he's on top of it! He's always taking care of their cars and yard and stuff. Maybe we need to pay him to take care of things

around here since you're not doin it.

Okay, okay, I got it, dear. I'll get right on it. I was just about to get started. I was just gettin ready to go out and mow the yard. Yep, I was.

With your bare feet on the coffee table and a beer in your hand? I'll bet you were. Just like the last two weeks when you couldn't find the gas can for the mower. You're useless.

I found it, dear. I'm out the door already. The game can wait. I'll see the highlights later. I hear the yard callin me.

And don't forget to use that trimmer, too!

Are we living for the sake of others, yet? No, not yet.

## 2. The Egoist

How long are you going to be in that bathroom, dear? I thought you said you were going to mow the lawn.

Got it, dear; just getting ready. I was cleaning up my running shoes. They had some grass stain on them from last time—can't look tacky out there. Have you seen my hair spray?

What do you need your hair spray for? I thought you're going to cut the grass...

Now, then... That mower looks a sight, too. Wouldn't want someone to think I was some lazy bum runnin a sloppy ship here.

There—looks like new; wheels and all. These neighbors 'll be so jealous when they see this yard. They're gonna want *me* to come over to *their* house and do *their* yard, too. Sorry chums. No second class show here.

That premium grass seed I put down was pricey all right, but it was worth it. Makes the others yards around here look like weed lots. I could make a putting green with this stuff. People can tell I know what I'm doin here. Nobody's gonna out-do old Stan when it comes to yards. The women are probably on the phone right now, talking about how good it looks.

Oh, Brad. Out for a walk, are ya? How ya doin? Just thought I'd knock the rough edges off this old lawn here.

Come on, Stan. Nobody does it like you. How do you get it to look so good?

Oh, it's nothin. I didn't think anybody noticed. Just another old yard.

No, Stan, you need to give me a few pointers one of these days. See ya 'round.

I knew it. I can run rings around everyone in this neighborhood when it comes to yards. What would they do if I moved away? They'd probably beg me to stay, so the neighborhood won't get run down. Maybe I should host a lawn care show on TV. I could make millions. Gotta be careful not to smile too much when people look, though; I just play dumb, like I don't know what they're so excited about.

Where's that new super fertilizer and weed killer? Ah, here it is.

Are we living for the sake of others, yet? No, not yet.

### 3. The Patriotic Citizen

I can't stand these clowns around here. Nobody appreciates anything anymore. What do they think we fought in the war for? So they can live like lazy slobs? They have no idea the price we paid so they could own those houses and here they are living like slobs.

Look at this, will ya. It's the fourth of July and nobody's even flyin the flag. It makes me sick to see it. And there are those punks over there, smoking dope on the porch, right out where everybody can see 'em. If they were *my* kids, I'd straighten 'em out.

[A friend, Bill, drives up.]

Hey, Fred how ya doin?

Oh, I thought I'd cut the grass today, before it rains.

Yeah? I gotta do that, too. You know the town council made some new ordinances last month on how people need to keep up their property. You know, things like no bushes hanging over your fence into your neighbor's yard and no dandelions, and...

Yeah, Bill, they even said the grass should be kept between 2 and 3 ½ inches high.

Guess that nails about half of the deadbeats on this block. I hope the city will write 'em up. In fact, I'll make sure they do.

Glad you reminded me, Bill. I think my mower is set for 2 ½ inches, but

I'd better check that adjustment, just to make sure.

Yeah, Fred.

I got rid of my old gas mower and went electric this year. Less pollution and noise, you know. We never dreamed of electric mowers when I was a kid. I had to push the darn thing. Remember those? I hope someone appreciates it. That's what this country was made of—good old pride and American ingenuity.

When I get done with my yard, I'm gonna go down the street and have a word with that Smith guy. He's breakin every ordinance in the book with those old cars parked in front and trash all around. He's devaluing the neighborhood. He never picks up his dog poop, either. He has no right to do that. If he doesn't want to be a good American property owner, then he should go somewhere else, over to Russia where nobody owns anything. See how he feels about that!

You shouldn't own property unless you're ready to take care of it. It's the same with anything else. Freedom isn't free, you know. They should all spend a couple of years in the Peace Corp, or the military. Then, they'd appreciate what they've got. Like me.

Here, I think I'll hang this little flag on the lawn mower handle. Yeah, I like that!

Are we living for the sake of others, yet? No, not really. Not yet.

## 4. The Good Neighbor

Honey! Have you seen those dandelions in our yard? They're gonna spread to the neighbor's yard and make them hate us. You'd better do something about it.

Okay, honey. We don't need that kind of reputation. We've been trying to keep up our end of the neighborhood. It's always a fight. Not much rain this year, either.

Yeah. You know I was thinking to water the neighbor's front lawn a bit. It's gettin too dry and they're never home long enough to take care of it. The woman is a single mom and the yard is the last thing on her mind. She might even thank us for it. She should, you know.

Yeah, she should realize what good neighbors we've been. I told her I would keep an eye on her house when they're gone. She appreciated that—made me feel good.

Tommy said somebody in his neighborhood was written up in the newspaper for helping people. That's nice. I bet we help more people around here than they do. Maybe someone will write us up, too.

God only knows. We won't get recognized if we don't get those weeds out of there, though, and get some water on that lady's lawn. People will think were dragging the place down instead of being an asset to the community.

You know, they didn't even invite us to the block party a few months

ago. I can't understand it. I guess people don't appreciate us as much as they should around here.

When I get done cuttin the grass, I'll go visit Tommy and see what those famous "do-gooders" over there are up to—might get some ideas.

My precinct committeeman spot will be taken by somebody else in the next election if we don't pick things up a little more around here. Maybe we can start one of those "Neighborhood Watch Programs" or something.

Yeah. That's a good idea. Hey, you'd better get that grass cut quick, before it rains.

Yeah.

Are we living for the sake of others yet? No, not yet.

## 5. The Shamed

Oh, Ted, we've got bad news. You know that old man across the street who's always complaining about somebody or something? Well, it's about us this time.

Why?

He's screaming bloody murder because our grass isn't as perfect as his.

So what? Nobody listens to that old geezer, anyway.

Yeah, but now he's goin up and down the street, making trouble. Some of the neighbors won't even talk to me anymore. He says he's gonna get a petition to make us shape up or ship out.

He can't do that!

Well, he can, and he is. And Amber said she saw some people drive by our house the other day, pointing at our yard and laughing. She felt so bad she couldn't even go to school the next day. She said some of the kids heckled her. Maybe you should do something.

Seems like even the dogs around here all poop in our yard. Maybe it looks more inviting or something.

These people are all sick'os. Who cares about the damn grass, anyway? Okay, so I'll get the lawn mower out tomorrow and chop the weeds down. It'll look better for a few days, anyway.

Thanks, dear. I wanted to do it myself, but you know how that old mower is. I can't start it half the time. I didn't want to have it die on me in the middle of the yard.

I'll cut it, but I'm not gonna trim it! These people act like nobody has anything better to do than cut the grass. They should get a life.

I know, dear. But, what can we do? Next thing you know, we'll have the city at our door.

Yeah, or we might see our house on the front page of the paper.

Well, not today. I'll get that mower out and get it going long enough to smooth out the weeds. It would be nice to have a real yard, but who has time to invest in grass. Not me. That's for sure.

Are we living for the sake of others, yet? No, not yet.

## 6. The Hired Groundskeeper

Wow, I'm sure glad Mr. Johnson hired me to cut his grass. I'm really hurtin for money. Not the best yard to do, with all those boulders and trees and stuff to mow around. But, hey, what can you do?

Hi, Mr. Johnson, how are you, today? Thanks for letting me help you with your lawn. I really like helping people like you.

Thanks, I'll have to find somebody else like you when you get older and move away.

I'd better sharpen the blade, Mr. Johnson, and check out the engine. They need to be taken care of, you know.

Sure, you do that. I appreciate it. Come and see me when you finish.

I'm glad he's so nice. Now, how can I stretch this job out? At \$10 an hour, I need to get as many hours in as I can. Let's see. I can use up a couple of hours servicing the mower, and an extra hour trimming around stuff. Oh, and I can service the trimmer, too. Yea, that's good. He doesn't care. At least he thinks I'm doing a good job.

Maybe I should ask him for a raise. I can come up with some excuse that sounds good so he'll sympathize and pay me a little more. No, I've got a better idea! I'll fertilize the heck out of the lawn so it grows faster and I'll have to come more often to cut it. Yeah, that's it. And, it'll need more trimming, too. And the weeds! Oh, we can make this job really pay. I need to find a few more Mr. Johnsons and I'll be doin okay. You

just have to know the ropes in a job like this.

I should start a website consulting service for teenagers who want to learn how to milk their neighbors for all their worth. I'm becoming the expert at it.

Hi, Mr. Johnson! Oh, thanks so much for the cold ice tea. You really care about me and I appreciate it. Thanks.

Well, let's see. With 40 or 50 bucks this week for this job, instead of a measly 20, I can get that hot new game Danny showed me and maybe I can even copy the software and sell it for a few bucks.

Oh yeah, better get going on this grass.

Are we living for the sake of others yet? No, not yet.

## 7. The Filial Son

I really look up to my father. He's always working so hard. He's always thinking of how he can help our family. He never lets his emotions get away from him, so he doesn't yell or scold us too much. He's great!

And, he loves mom so much. What can I say? He's always doing things for her, and asking her how she is. They go for walks sometimes, and when they come back together, they seem so happy. I think mom really loves him. I don't know if I can imagine them being apart for very long.

I wish I could say the same for some of the other parents I know. Maybe I'm just lucky or something. I don't know.

My dad sometimes asks me to do this or that around the house, like cutting the grass. I can never say no. Not because I want to do it, you know, but, just because he's always doing so much and caring so much. I have to do it, even if I hate doing it; like cutting the grass. That's one thing I really hate doing. But, he expects us to be like him. He wants us to be respectful, and caring. He wants us to be responsible. He would be so disappointed if I were lazy and careless, like so many other kids. I'm so worried that I'll disappoint him. It's not always easy.

Hi, Dad!

Hi, Johnny!

Hey, dad, got some time to shoot some hoops with me today?

No, Johnny, I wish I could. I really do. But, I've got to help your aunt with some chores around her house and run some errands for mom. And, there are a few things that need attention around here, too.

Like what, dad?

Well, the grass is gettin long, for one thing.

I'll do it, dad. I've got you covered on that one.

Johnny, you're so good. I don't even need to ask you. I promise I'll make it up to you and we'll shoot those hoops the first chance I get.

Are we living for the sake of others yet? Well, we're on the right track.

## 8. The Feel-Gooders

What a great day!—blue sky, fresh air. I feel good.

So, son, what's your plan for today? No school today. Don't waste such a beautiful day.

No, dad. I was gonna knock around with my buds—nothin special.

That's great, but why don't you do something productive? Make yourself feel good by accomplishing something. Don't just waste the day. You won't feel good about yourself. Come on. Let's cut the grass this morning. Then, you can do what you want with the rest of the day.

Okay, okay, I'll trim and you cut. How's that?

Okay, but, the grass looks pretty good already, dad. It doesn't really need it. You just cut it last week.

Yeah, but you'll feel good about yourself if you do it. Don't let lazy thinking steal your chance to feel good about yourself. A man has to do something with his hands. Build something, fix something, clean something, create something. You know what I mean?

Yeah, dad, I guess you're right. But, the neighbors will think we're crazy, cutting the grass when it doesn't really need it.

Who cares what the neighbors think? You have to feel good about yourself, every day. That's why we do things. Isn't it?

I guess.

When I was your age, I had to do lots of things I didn't really want to do, but I found that when I finished them, I felt good about myself. So, I want you to feel good, too. When you get together with your buds this afternoon, you'll see the difference. They'll feel like crap 'cause they haven't done anything today, and you'll have your head up high. You watch.

Okay, dad, let's get it over with.

Are we living for the sake of others yet? No, not yet.

## 9. The Tech Nerd

Thanks, guys, be careful lowering that baby to the ground. Yeah, bring her right on in here. Thanks a bunch.

Wow, where's that box cutter? Gotta get all this wrapping off of her. There it is—the Maserati of lawn mowers: four speeds, three blades, self-sharpening, wind turbine vacuum... I gotta get some gas in her and take her for a spin.

Oh, man, where are my driving gloves? It's even got a radio. Where's my station?

Phil, are you getting the grass cut? We've gotta go to Berry's after dinner, you know, and it's gettin late.

Got it under control—I'll just kick it into high gear and get this job done in no time. Wow, backup alarm, too. Never know when some little kid might be behind ya when you're cruzin the yard. No time to mess around today. Better attach the bag and let this baby mulch and vacuum while we're cutting. Look at this baby—chrome and all. I bet all the neighbors will want to borrow it, or at least look at it.

Oh, man—dual LED headlights on the front. This baby's even street-ready. All I need is a license plate. Maybe I'll drive it to work sometime. Can't wait to see the look on the other guy's faces when I park this baby in the company garage. "Hey, Phil needs a parking sticker on his new lawn mower." This is hot!

Wait, I read that this thing's even got remote control. There's an app that can drive it from my smart phone. Too much!

Is that grass done yet? We gotta eat and go!

Oh yeah, I'm getting it finished. Just a few more passes here and there. Those fat tires roll right over the grass so it doesn't smash it down so bad... Bluetooth on the radio, too. Oh man.

Are you done yet? The food's cold already...

Are we living for the sake of others yet? No, not yet.

## 10. The Escapee

[Bang] (He hits the alarm clock.)

Wow, why didn't I shut that thing off before I went to bed? No reason to get up for anything this morning. It's Saturday. (Tries to sleep again, but can't.) Oh well, guess I'd better find some breakfast and see what's goin on around here.

Stepkids are gaming in the living room, usin' the TV. You guys ever finish a game? Anybody ever win? You guys are sick. Why don't you get a life?

Yeah, we were thinkin the same about you. At least we're up. It's already 11:30 you know.

Why don't you get a job or somethin. Cut the grass for somebody. Earn some money. Money—you know that green stuff you give the lady at Wal-Mart instead of shoplifting?

Funny

Hi, honey, leave my sons alone, will ya? At least they're not out sellin drugs or somethin. Lots worse they could be doin these days. Anyway, how can you open your mouth? They take after you, don't you think, even though they're not yours? Lazy and good for nothing. Day's half over and you're just getting up. Plenty to be doin around here, but NOOOOO, you're not doin nothin.

Does Pam have to play her rotten music so loud? Bet you can hear it in the next block. What's wrong with these kids these days? And the lyrics! Nobody could even dream of sayin that stuff when I was their age. You'd get your face slapped, if you were lucky.

And Joanie, she's got the computer all to herself. Can't even check my emails. There's just no room for me around here.

Honey, I've got errands to run and the dog has to go to the vet. There are things that need doin around here, like the grass needs to be cut, and the basement needs to be cleaned out, and the boxes in the garage need to be stacked up, and, and...

Yeah, you go on and get those errands run. I'll take care of things here.

Phew, I'm glad we've got a half-acre yard, here. The only peace I can find around this place is out here, just me and the lawn mower. I'm takin my sweet ole time at this. Gotta make this job last the rest of the afternoon. In fact, just the thought of finishing makes me sick...

Are we living for the sake of others yet? No, not yet.

## 11. The Busy Body

Hi, dear, sorry I was out when you woke up. I was planning to make a nice, hot breakfast for you. Ham and eggs, just the way you always like 'em.

When did you get up?

Oh, just a bit ago. I went through the paper and the mail, and was just checking the email and facebook.

Why don't you just relax? I'll get you something hot to drink.

Well, you know me. I gotta do somethin—can't just sit. I think I'll wash the pickup and polish the wheels.

Okay, dear, but after that, why don't you just relax?

We'll see.

(Later) Thanks for the sandwich. It was great. I gotta fix the washing machine. It's makin lots of noise lately. And, the door hinges are driving me nuts on the back porch. Nothin a little WD40 won't fix. Then, the yard looks terrible. I'd bet the neighbors are wondering when I'm gonna get around to it. Well, I've got some time today, so that's it. Gotta sharpen the mower blade and adjust the height, first; that's been needin to be done for a long time.

(Later) Honey, it looks great. Come on in and put your feet up and relax. You need to relax.

Yes dear, but that was just the mower work. Gotta do the trimming, now; lots of trimming to do over there by those bushes and by the fence and porch. Then, I need to spread that fertilizer I bought and get those weeds outa there. They're gonna make more trouble if I don't get 'em now. Then, the sprinklers need to be turned on and moved around here and there. That is, after I rake the grass I just cut.

Come on in, honey, it's too dark to see what your even doin out there!

Oh, I'm done in the yard. Still a few things I've been meanin to get to. Can't waste time, you know; just changing a light bulb out here. Never know if some prowler might come 'round. Gotta be able to see 'em.

Are we living for the sake of others yet? No, not yet.

## 12. The Lawn Show

Hey, mom. Can you pick up a bottle of that sunscreen that I like when you go to the store this morning? Thanks.

Hi, Sandy, today's the day. I found this fab two-piece at that new shop downtown and it fits me real good. Goes with my sun bleached hair, too. I can't wait to get out today with it, especially because Joe will be out today, too, cutting his grass across the street. He's just so dreamy. He wears that muscle shirt and tight shorts, too. You can tell he works out. I just dream about him all the time. Well, he'll get some eye candy today. He'll probably wear sunglasses so I won't notice that he's lookin at me all the time.

(Later) Thanks, mom. I was waitin for that. I thought I'd cut the grass today. Dad shouldn't have to do it all the time. He works so hard.

Wow, what got into you? Thanks, Penny. I'm sure your dad will appreciate it.

Perfect timing! There's Joe; he's lookin so good, with his abs and all. Wow, I hope there's gas in this thing.

(Later) Hi, Joe, hey, can you help me? I think this thing ran outa gas or something. It just quit workin.

Sure, Penny. You're lookin pretty good today. Whata great tan you've got. I couldn't help watchin you go back and forth with your long legs. I almost ran over a big rock in my yard. It should be against the law to

look so good. It's dangerous.

You're stupid. I didn't even know you were over there until my lawn mower quit and then I heard the sound of yours across the street. Can you give me a lift to the gas station? Sure, I'll get a gas can.

What would I do if you weren't there to help me out?

Yeah, well, I'm always ready to help you out, Penny. In fact, I've got tickets to the game tonight. Wanna come with me?

Oh, no. I've got plans. I'm pretty busy; maybe next time.

Guess I could see if Sandy would like to go.

Actually, I guess I could get out of what I was planning to do. Let me make a phone call and work it out. What time would you wanna go?

Are we living for the sake of others yet? No, not yet.

### 13. The Legacy

Here, kids. Hop on. Let's go for a ride. Watch your feet. It's dangerous down there by the blades. Sit up here with me. Ok, hold on tight. Ready? Let's gooooo.

Okay, that's all for today. Better go back inside the house. You never know when a rock will fly out from under the lawnmower and hit somebody in the eye. Go on. Go inside.

Okay, dad.

Kids need a good role model, especially these days. They need to see their dad out in the yard, doing the work around the house. They need to see their dad goin to work every day, supporting the family. What are we teachin these kids these days?

My dad was the same. He was a hard worker. Never saw him layin around the house. If there was something to do, he got right to it. No naggin him, no, sir.

And, my granddaddy was the same. I don't remember him too well, but I do remember that about him, and my dad talked about him a lot, too. I guess it runs in the family. Maybe it's in the blood.

They never hired anything done. Even fixing the cars; they did everything themselves. It's the German side. That's probably it. I hope my kids grow up the same way. I hope they notice these things like I did. It stuck with me my whole life and made me who I am.

This yard is lookin better already. They should come outside tomorrow and feel proud of their dad and their home. People need to feel proud. They need to inherit some basic things. I'd better do some more trimming over there. It looks a little shabby. That tree needs some pruning, too. Shape up around here. I know it'll come back in the future. The seeds you plant today will bear fruit tomorrow. I know that for a fact. You can see it in our family. I hope my kids keep the same tradition for their kids. Time will tell.

Are we living for the sake of others yet? Yes, a little.

## 14. The CEO

Mr. Rodriguez, there are things I do and there are things I don't do, and cutting the grass is one of those things I don't do. I'm an important man. My time is valuable. That's why I hired you and your company. This house represents Johnson Industries, of which I'm the CEO. There are 5 other CEO's in this neighborhood, and I intend to make sure that nobody's lawn looks better than mine. Do you understand me, Mr. Rodriguez?

I understand, Mr. Johnson. We have years of experience and we take care of two golf courses in town. We know how to make a lawn sing, and yours will be second-to-none, I assure you.

That's what I want to hear. There's a bonus in it if you do a good job. The men have to look professional, too. And I hope you don't drive up here in some rickety old trucks.

No, Mr. Johnson, I assure you, we are aware of all the sensitivities in your case. We will make you look good.

That's what I want. I need to work with people that will make me and Johnson Industries look good. That's it.

We are also taking care of Mr. Nelson, down the street. Do you know him?

Sure I know him. Whatever you're doing for him, make sure you do it better for me. Can you do that?

Sure, Mr. Johnson. We're cutting his lawn every third day, but for you we will do it every other day. And, we'll create a zero-scape garden over there near the gate, in the corner. That'll be super impressive.

That's it. And, make sure there are no weeds anywhere in sight.

No worries, Mr. Johnson. The lawn will be so well fed and treated that no weed could possibly grow in it.

Hey, by the way, could you put just a putting green over there by the fountain? That would take the cake and show everyone in the neighborhood who William Johnson is.

Got it, Mr. Johnson, don't worry. We've got your back..

Are we living for the sake of others yet? No not yet.

## 15. The Socialite

Come on, Ginger. I've gotta do the yard today. You gotta come and help me. I can't do it alone.

OK, but I can't do too much. I'm sunburned already.

You don't have to do anything. Just come over here and be with me. You can just sit on the porch. My mom made some cookies, yesterday. You'll love 'em.

Great!

And tell your brother I need him, too. He's not doin anything. Tell him he can have lots of cookies.

Okay.

I'm gonna call Jeff, too. He can do the hard part. In fact, I can get him to do most of it for me. I'll just be nice to him.

What about that guy that lives next door?

Oh yeah. That's a great idea. I've been dying to get to know him, anyway. I'll tell him I don't know how to start the mower and see if he'll come over to help me.

Let's have a tailgater after you get the grass cut. I can get my big brother to bring some beer.

Wow, what a great idea! We've got a couple of frozen pizzas in the fridge. I'll get them out.

I'll bring my boom box and tell my facebook friends to come over. We'll have a great time tonight.

You got cubes?

I'll pick some up on the way over.

I can wash some glasses and get things ready while you're out in the yard.

Great, Jackie can help me, too. She's always up for a party.

Yeah, me too!

Are we living for the sake of others yet? No, not yet.

## 16. The Avoider

What time is it? Oh no, it's 3 a.m. She's gonna kill me. I'd better try to sneak in quietly and hope she doesn't wake up and notice what time it is. There's no way I can talk my way out of this.

(Later) So, what time did you get in last night? I should have waited up but I must have fallen asleep on the couch.

Well, it wasn't too late.

How late?

I don't know. I didn't look at my watch.

It must have been after 1, 'cause I was watching a movie 'til then. I don't remember the end of it so I must have nodded off. Who were you with? There's nothing good goin on that time of night. What kind of trouble are you gettin into? I don't like those friends of yours, you know. That Danny guy is no good. You're gonna get in trouble hangin around those people. I'm sure they're all drop-outs. You slept in late this morning. You must've been out real late. How much did you spend? What did you blow your money on? You don't have money to blow like that, you know. You never knew the value of money. You're spoiled. You never worked for anything. I gave you everything, and what did you do with it? Those friends of yours probably spent it for you. You're always broke and that's why. The car's a mess, too. Where did you go? Looks like it was full of people and, no one was wearing

their seatbelt, either. I can tell. There's mud on the tires, too. Did you go down by the river last night? That's no good. Nothing good happens down there. I read about it all the time in the paper. Some kid was found dead last month down by the river. Still don't know who did it. I'm getting tired of you comin home late all the time. It's getting worse every week. What's your younger brother gonna do when he gets older. He's gonna....

Say, mom, I promised dad that I would get the grass cut and today looks like a good day for it. No clouds out there. So we'll have to finish this talk later. Don't worry about lunch, or brunch. I'm not that hungry. Better get started... See yaaaa.

Are we living for the sake of others yet? No, not yet.

## 17. The Hiding Place

These four walls are driving me nuts. And, there's nothing good on that damn TV—nothing but junk. Same disgusting people I have to deal with here. Why should I watch 'em on TV, too?

Nothing to do around here, either. If I go downstairs, I'll have to talk to my mom. Maybe I'll go sit on the back porch and read a book. No, that won't work. The neighbor lady will see me and try to hit up a conversation. I hate that. Why don't people just mind their own business? Can't they see I just wanna be alone?

Maybe there's something on the internet. No emails. No Facebook. Of course, I have no friends on my Facebook. Well, there's always music. I like my music.

(Later) What a life. I've heard that song a hundred times now. It's the same ole music every time. I'm getting sick and tired of it. I know. I'll get the lawnmower out and cut the grass. That'll kill a few hours. By the time I trim it and rake and stuff, it'll fill up the afternoon.

I kind of enjoy cutting the grass. The loud mower keeps people from talking to me. I can just be in my own world and get some peace of mind. Can't find it anywhere else, it seems. I hate those electric mowers; too quiet for me—got a gas trimmer too. I've got this day covered.

Are we living for the sake of others yet? No, not yet.

## 18. The Faithful Wife

Hi, honey, how are you doin at work? You know you really don't need to call me 5 times a day. I'm so busy here at home. I'm fine. The kids are at school. I'm just cleanin up around here for when you get home. Take care. Love you.

Man, I'm so afraid he's gonna call sometime when I'm runnin the vacuum or the dishwasher. I won't hear the phone and he'll think I'm out of the house, seeing another man. Oh, God, please help me. I know. I'll put the phone on vibrate and slip it in my bra. That way, I'll be sure to catch his call.

He saw the sink full of dirty dishes this morning. He'll see them all washed when he gets home, so that will account for part of the day. The laundry, too; I'll make sure his clean socks and underwear are lying on the bed so he'll see that I did the laundry, too. What else can I do? Wash the car. Yeah. I'll was the car, not at the carwash but here in the driveway. I'll do it late this afternoon, so he'll see the wet driveway and know that I washed the car. That's good. Man, every day is so hard.

(Phone) Hi Judy, how are you? Listen, I'd love to have you over today. I really would. But it's not such a good idea. My husband can always tell when someone's been over and he'll think it was some other guy. It's just not worth the fight. I tell you. And if I come over to your place, it's the same problem. So I don't know, Judy; I'm just dyin over here. I can't have any friends. I can't go out. But, at least I have a good husband. I'll talk later, Judy. Let's try to figure something out. Bye.

Oh yeah, then there's the yard. I can spend some time in the yard today. He'll see how much work I put in there. You can't cut the grass, trim the bushes, fertilize and put out the sprinklers if you're out on the town, now can you? That'll give me just enough time to prepare dinner just the way he likes it.

Oh, I gotta pick up his dry cleaning, too. Almost forgot about that.

Are we living for the sake of others yet? No, not yet.

## 19. Pain Avoidance

Oh man, look out that window. I wish it would just stop raining. The grass is getting longer every day. Come on! Give me a break.

Well, what can I do? If I don't cut it, it'll get so long it'll start to droop over and then it'll be really hard to cut. It'll choke out those darn dandelions if I let it grow, but those bigger weeds are startin to spread now, too.

If I don't cut it soon, the neighbors might call the city. I just know it. They did twice before. I'll get fined again, and I can't afford another \$300 for the stupid grass. I wish they'd just mind their own damn business and leave me alone. Who cares if my grass isn't cut?

If I wait one more week, it'll be hard for the mower to handle it. Then I'll have to walk real slow behind it and it'll take forever to cut. There's just no way out. I hate this job.

I should find a good apartment or townhouse somewhere. Those people never have to cut their grass. What a dream! I can't even imagine it. Never cut the grass. Wow, what I could do with my time, then. I could get in two more ballgames on TV. What am I doin here? I never should have bought this place. It's too much work.

Are we living for the sake of others yet? No, not yet.

## 20. The Good Husband

Hi, honey, welcome home. How was your day?

I was thinking about you all day long.

Really?

Really. I picked up this little bouquet for you, too.

You're so wonderful.

After I finish mowing the lawn, I thought we'd head for the beach. Maybe you could put together a lunch or some snacks or something.

You're gonna do the lawn today? Oh, I'm so glad. It's been lookin pretty shabby, and I just haven't had time to do it, myself.

I've got it, dear. Don't worry. Just get ready for the beach.

I know how much she loves it when I do things like take care of the yard. She hates lazy men. I love to find things to do that make her happy and she looks even prettier then.

She'll be glad to see the dead grass cleaned up, too. That's why I bought this lawn mower that vacuums while it cuts. I just want to make her happy. I get so much life out of seeing her happy.

Are we living for the sake of others yet? Yes; at least on the level of husband and wife.



## 21. In-Laws and Outlaws

Hi Fred, hi Mary, glad you could come over. Nancy's in the kitchen getting lunch ready. She's been cookin all morning.

Oh good. I'll go help her. She never wanted to learn to cook when she was a girl. She thought it was my job. Now she's got a family to feed and she thinks differently. I'll give her a hand.

Fred, what have you been up to? How's retirement treatin ya?

Well, I thought I'd be bored after I retired, but I've been busier than ever; so much to do around the place. And, the neighbors seem to need my help all the time; can't find enough hours in the day.

Well, I hope I have a better life than that. My idea of retirement is lyin around and relaxin in front of the TV with a can of beer and a good movie.

Yeah, I can tell! From the looks of your yard, you already started your retirement. At least you should keep your yard lookin good. Nancy didn't marry a bum. You've got a good job and I know you work hard at it. I like that in a man. But you need to take care of business around the house, too. The kids will learn from your actions. Do you want them to grow up like you?

Look at this front yard. See that thistle over there? It's spreading, and the kids won't be able to run around here without shoes on. You gotta get at this stuff. And those dandelions; they'll dry up and blow all over the neighborhood.

And look at these sidewalks. I always keep ‘em trimmed, you know. You have to get one of those trimmers that dig out the dirt and cut the grass next to the sidewalk, so it makes a nice, straight edge. It looks good. My lawn gets the full works every week.

Sure, Fred, but you’re retired. You have all the time in the world, but I have to work, you know.

That’s BS. I worked three jobs when I was your age and I still took care of the lawn the way I do now. In fact, I did the lawn for the old neighbor lady, on top of that. Everybody has the same 24 hours. If I can do it, you can, too. Do I have to come over here and do it for you? You’re a big boy. My daughter should be living in a respectable home with a respectable yard. That’s your job.

Lunch is ready!

Okay, we’ll be right in.

Sure, Fred. I’ll get on it this afternoon, right after lunch.

Good man. I knew you were a good man.

Thanks, Fred.

Are we living for the sake of others yet? No, not yet.

## 22. The Chore

You kids finish up your lunch now. We've got chores to do around here. Ever since your father died, I've had to do everything. So, I need your help. Understand?

Sure, mom. But, we've got basketball practice this morning.

And I promised Diane that I'd help her braid her hair today.

Okay, okay, I know you have stuff to do, but we've got chores to do around here, too and I can't do it all by myself. I'm already working two jobs. What do you expect from me?

No problem, mom. What do you want me to do?

Okay, Nathan, you straighten out the garage. I can't even park the car in it and I don't like coming home at night, when it's dark and parking out in the driveway. Can you do that?

Got it, mom; I'll do it after lunch.

And Todd, the computer is so slow and half the time I can't even get on the internet with it. I think it's got some problems—maybe some virus or something.

I got it, mom. I'll work on it today.

Thanks. And Steve, the yard is really bad. Can you work on it after basketball practice? Maybe Todd can help you if he gets done with the

computer.

OK, mom. I'll take care of it.

And don't worry about the kitchen, mom. I'll do the dishes and clean up when I finish at Diane's. I wish you didn't have so many worries, mom.

Well, that's life. You know, it's not always the way you want it to be.

(Later) I can never get over my dad dying like that. It hasn't been the same around here since then. I hate cutting the grass, but what can I do. I guess we all have to do our part, here. What would she do if she didn't have us kids around? And what's gonna happen when we go away to college and stuff? I don't even wanna think about it—can't wait for summer to end. But then, we'll have to shovel the snow. Oh well.

Are we living for the sake of others yet? No, not yet.

## 23. The Missionary

Hi, Brother Jim doin your household duties this morning, before you visit people?

Yeah, we did our scripture readings this morning, and after breakfast we wrote some letters and made some phone calls to set up appointments.

Looks like you're getting ready to cut the grass now.

Yeah, this is one of my offerings. I believe in living for the sake of others, you know. It's what God expects of me. It is important to live for others. Otherwise, you're just another selfish person, you know.

Yeah, and you know where selfish people go.

Well, this is kind of my offering for this month. John will do it next month, and so on. A son of God would live like this, so this is my path.

Well, not only a son of God, but a good husband would live like this, too—right?

Right, it's my mission. My life is a mission, to serve God and my fellow man. It's the godly way to live. There are plenty of scriptures to support it, too.

And there are other things that go along with it. You have to do it without any complaint. Complaining is spiritually dangerous and makes you sick. God can't bless a complainer. I'm careful to never complain.

You'll lose your blessing, whatever you're doing. It's an important aspect of holiness. Most religious people miss that point and lose their blessings because of their complaining.

I'm sorry to keep you from your lawn work, Brother Jim. No worries, I've got time before my appointments this afternoon. We've got 8 families to visit in this neighborhood. You have to live it if you're gonna teach others. You have to be an example. Of course, God's watching, even if no one else is. We know that. But still, I'm glad you came by to talk.

Sure thing, in a couple of months it'll be my turn to cut the grass where I live, so meeting you gets me in the right frame of mind. Thanks, Brother Jim.

Are we living for the sake of others yet? No, not yet.

## 24. The Safety and Joy of My Children

Morning kids, how did you sleep? Did you dream about anything special nice last night? What are you going to do today? You had to do lots of inside stuff yesterday because of the rain. But it's a nice day today. Maybe you'll want to have some fun outside. What do you think?

Yeah, dad, let's play outside!

Okay, great, but let me get the grass cut first and do some cleaning up out there. I saw some junk in the yard that you could hurt your feet on, and there are some thistles coming up out by the swing set. I saw them the other day.

Okay, but what are we gonna do 'til then?

Play with your video games or something.

Yeaaaaah!

Let's see; over there, yea those darn thistles. Ya gotta just dig em out. No magic pill for those. Poor kids, they just wanna have fun. Boy, there's more than I thought. And, there's some other prickly stuff here, too. I need to do some serious work here.

Now that's better. Now I can get the mower out. Oh I just love this backyard. It's just perfect for the kids. Got that sandbox and swing set for 'em over there. The grass is so thick and lush.

Gotta spread some more of that nice, soft bark under the swings, just in case they fall. Found a few pieces of glass over here, somehow. I'll look real close when I trim it all.

That's it. Looks good, now.

Hey kids. You can come out now and play in the backyard. Mother Nature is calling to you.

Where, dad?

All around you—look and smell and feel the beautiful nature. It wants to make you happy.

Really, dad?

Yeah, so take good care of it, and it'll take care of you.

Are we living for the sake of others yet? Maybe so, at least on the family level.

## 25. The Habitualist

What day is it? Wow, it's Tuesday.

What time is it? 3:00. Okay, I have to cut the grass now. What's the weather forecast? Rain! Yeah, the weatherman's been saying that for 2 weeks now. We haven't seen a drop. The grass isn't even growing. More weeds than grass. But, it's Tuesday afternoon and that's the day to cut the grass. Better get crackin. At 4:15 I have to check in on my mother-in-law. She'll be furious if I'm 5 minutes late.

It takes 12 minutes to trim. I have to do that first.

Now, I hope this thing starts. I just need another 27 minutes and I can get this grass cut. Left-to-right—right-to-left—up here—down there. Catch the terrace last. I could do it in my sleep. Must have done it a thousand times. Twenty-seven minutes is all it takes.

Are we living for the sake of others yet? No, not yet.

## 26. To beautify the neighborhood

It's so boring, all these flat, green, golf course lawns—so plain. Isn't anybody creative around here? We need some excitement. We need something creative here; something to get people's attention.

That corner over there we'll make into one of those rock gardens, with a big boulder in it. And, we'll put a little waterfall there, running into a little pond with a few golden carp. That'll be a good start. Have to put some screen over the water, though. There are a few cats in the neighborhood that would love those fish.

Then, over there, we'll put some of those sculpted bushes. I know a guy who's real good at trimming those things. Those are awesome.

Then, down by the street we can have some of those oriental trees that are shaped this way and that. What else?

Oh yeah, we can create some areas of brown bark and white rock, and a few stone statues here and there.

And up by the front door, we'll build one of those wooden archways and have those vines growing all over it, and up onto the house. That'll be amazing in the spring, when the flowers come out.

And speaking of flowers, Judy's great with flowers. She can do awesome things along the driveway and sidewalk, and up by the house.

Man, I'm so pumped about this yard. There are a couple of other young

couples nearby who can also get into this kind of thing. This might just spark them to do something even better. This might even start a healthy competition in the neighborhood, and that might spread to other neighborhoods. We'll get the TV crew out here later in the summer and turn this community into a regular showcase of nature. I'll keep my face and name out of it. I'm not looking for any recognition. I just want to see some beauty around here. Yeah! Isn't that what man is supposed to do? Take God's awesome creation and be His co-creators with it? Add to it with our own ideas? Mold it and shape it? Who knows; maybe even He'll be inspired.

Are we living for the sake of others yet? Maybe.

## 27. For God's joy and that of creation

Look at that blue sky. What a gorgeous day! Might be good to get out there and do some yard work this morning before it gets too hot.

Hey, those tomatoes are gettin big. More than we had last year. That's great! And those beans!

This grass feels so good under my bare feet and between my toes. I feel like a kid, again. It's nice and green. Guess that new fertilizer was the right mixture, this time. We had a few nice rains, recently, too.

Well, grass, you're looking pretty good, but how about a haircut? Whatayasay, guys? Let's look our best for the Man upstairs that gave you life, and so the people driving by here can love you all the more. Let's do it!

Ah, that smell of fresh-cut grass, it's so awesome. I can feel your smiles, you little guys. You look brighter, now. You just wanted to be loved, like everyone else in God's good creation, didn't you. I knew it. Well, I love you. I'll take care of you and make you look your best.

Any weeds? I'll take care of 'em. God's smiling down on you, now. All trimmed up, all smooth and glowing. You're good. Everybody that sees you will shower you with love, too. That's it. That's all there is, isn't it?

Well, let's not forget your brothers and sisters in the backyard, eh? They're hungry for love, too. Let's get at it.

Are we living for the sake of others yet? Maybe so.

## *So, what's wrong with that?*

### Reflections on each character sketch...

**#1 The Nagged Husband** – The husband is just thinking about his own comfort and how he can put an end to the nagging. The lawn seemed an easy way out.

**#2 The Egoist** – He is obviously infatuated with himself and his own image. The well-being of others seems to be the furthest thing from his mind.

**#3 The Patriotic Citizen** – Fred and Bill are self-righteously intent upon making sure everyone is like themselves, with the same values and perspective that they have. They can only respect people who are like themselves.

**#4 The Good Neighbor** – They are mostly concerned about what the neighbors think of them. They value their image in the eyes of their neighbors, not the neighbors, themselves.

**#5 The Shamed** – Ted and his wife are only motivated by negative opinions of others. Ted will cut the grass grudgingly, only because he has to appease his neighbors.

**#6 The Hired Groundskeeper** – The boy is only doing the job for the money, and he is taking Mr. Johnson to the cleaners, at that. He will exploit anyone to get what he wants and is dreaming of a future of doing more of the same.

**#14 The Filial Son** – Johnny has a sincere love and respect for his father and mother. He admires his father’s work ethic and heart towards the family. Johnny wants to return what he’s been given, mostly so he will not disappoint his father, but there is a growing motivation of love in his heart.

**#7 The Feel-Gooders** – The father’s concern is only with how good he feels about himself, and now he wants to make sure his son grows up to be like him. There is little concern for the well-being of others.

**#8 The Tech Nerd** – Phil is obsessed with his new gear. That’s what he values in life. Other people are not important to him.

**#9 The Escapee** – There is no place in this home or family for the stepfather. They are all totally into their own selves and their own worlds. Everyone is doing their own thing, so he finds his place in the same way, which for him is the backyard.

**#10 The Busybody** – This husband can’t sit still. He gets his value by always doing something. He can’t find any value in his life if he is idle. That makes very little room for other people and their concerns, unless by addressing their concerns he can make himself busy.

**#11 The Lawn Show** – Penny is all into herself and her good looks. Even her interest in Joe is just to feed her ego.

**#12 The CEO** – William Johnson is most concerned about his image and position. He lives to outdo his peers. It is all about him. There seems to be little room in his ego for others, except perhaps to use them for his own benefit.

**#15 The Legacy** – This father is living for the sake of others on the level of the family. He is thinking not only of his own children, but even of the future generations. He is a principled person. As his heart and spirit grow more, he will expand his compassion to larger levels, i.e., to the community, society, nation and even the world.

**#13 The Socialite** – She and her friends are so insecure, they can't do anything without making sure someone else is by their side, not for reasons of the heart, but to feel more secure.

**#16 The Avider** – This person is only concerned about his own skin and running away from any responsibility or consequences of his actions. He doesn't even have a mind to repent or change. Concern for others is the furthest thing from his mind.

**#17 The Hiding Place** – This person is living a very lonely life and is just looking for anything that might fill the emptiness. He lives one day to the next, just surviving.

**#18 The Faithful Wife** – This woman has an excessively jealous and untrusting husband who sees another man behind every curtain. She has become more consumed with allaying his fears than in building a love-filled marriage.

**#19 Pain Avoidance** – This guy only does what he is forced to do by his circumstances, and he looks for the path through life with the least amount of exertion. He is basically lazy and has little care for anyone or anything beyond himself. Comfort is his life's ambition.

**#24 The Good Husband** – What makes this husband happy is seeing his wife happy. He lives to make her happy. On the level of the marriage, he is living for the sake of others; for her sake. And, because

he is truly sincere, he is totally happy, also.

**#20 In-laws and Outlaws** – Nancy’s husband is only thinking of how to get his father-in-law off his back. He can’t wait until Fred leaves and he can be his irresponsible self again.

**#21 The Chore** – The kids feel like victims since their father died because they have to help their mother take care of things around the house. They feel trapped and are not accepting their situation and embracing it. They are complaining.

**#22 The Missionary** – These missionaries are religious people living a religious life. Their concern is doing what God expects so He will accept them. It is like a master-servant relationship. It is angelic, rather than as a son or daughter of the Father in heaven. Their relationship and motivation should be one of pure love for God and for one another, not duty.

**#25 For the Safety and Joy of My Children** – This father is thinking only of the happiness and safety of his children. He would do anything for their well-being. On the family level, he seems to be living for the sake of others. And, he is truly a happy man in doing so.

**#23 The Habitualist** – This person is on auto-pilot. He functions like a machine. When it’s 6:00, it is time to eat dinner. This is not even on a human level of life, let alone living for the sake of others.

**#26 To Beautify the Neighborhood** – This man has a passion to bring beauty to others; to inspire others. The key is he wants no credit for doing so. He is happy to see others inspired. He wants to multiply his own passion to the whole community. In this way, on a community level, he is living for the sake of others.

**#27 For God's Joy and That of Creation** – This man is so in love with God's creation that he is talking to the grass. He feels the joy of nature as he expressed God's heart of love for it. He only wants to create joy through acts of love. His focus is on the grass, but he is the kind of person who will treat the rest of the creation, including people, the same way, with no thought for himself. Truly, he is living for the sake of others.

*Now, let me ask: What might you do with this little book, now that you have read it, and why?*

Other publications by Dr. Hentrich...

*God Doesn't Want to be God Anymore*

*Angelic DNA*

*The Divine Principle Study Bible*