

Vanity, Pride, and Prejudice

Consequences of Being on Center Stage

Philippians 2:1-4

Even shy, retiring folk have their moments when inappropriate attention is coveted. The size of the stage really doesn't matter when it comes to such attention getting—it is wrong. Whether a full scale, very public production number or a quiet, semiprivate pity party, we have all appeared in the floodlights of selfishly motivated attention getting. An analysis is, therefore, in order. What occasions a parade of self? How might we control such extravaganzas? What is the Christ-like way of managing our appearances on center stage? Let's have a look.

Balancing Appearances

- Matthew 5:16
- Matthew 6:1

Manifestations

- Strutting our Stuff
 - Naaman (II Kgs. 5:9-12)
 - The irreverent rich (Ps. 73)
- Pity Parting
 - Ahab (II Kgs. 21:1-6)
 - Jonah (Jon. 4:1-11)
- Putting People Down
 - The self-righteous Jews (Rom. 2:17-29)
 - Pharisees (Matt. 9:9-13)
- Self-absorption
 - The Rich Man (Lk. 16:19-31)
 - Self-centered wealthy (Amos 6:1-6)

The Cure

- Boasting only in Jesus (Gal. 6:14; cf. 5:26)
- Finding comfort in the Lord (Heb. 13:5; cf. Ps. 77:2)
- Finding our worth in our relationship to God in Christ, not in our own righteousness (I Jn. 3:1; cf. Phil. 3:8-10)
- Lost in Jesus rather than in other things (Gal. 2:20; cf. II Tim. 4:10)

In the "Me Generation," self is particularly difficult to control. We all seek recognition in one way or another. There is, however, only one form of recognition that fully satisfies all our needs—the acknowledgment that comes from God. Through acceptable righteous behavior, we will doubtless also receive other kinds of positive reinforcement. Let us be content with God, pleased when we might glorify Him publicly or privately, yet work to avoid all inappropriate forms of attention getting. Life, after all, is not about me.

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