***The Intercession of the Holy Spirit, No. 2
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We continue this morning in Romans 8:26-27. Our subject is "The Intercession of the Holy Spirit, Section Number 2."

The curse that Paul has been telling us about in the context of Romans 8 here concerning the results of Adam's sin has indeed brought on disease in the human race, the consequence of man's own evil acts bringing on divine justice. God's holiness does necessitate the punishment of moral evil, but He is not the cause of that suffering. That is the consequence of what others have done to themselves. Christians, while suffering under God's curse, we are told, also enjoy the absolute certain hope of resurrection in the future when they will be freed from the effects of the curse. No more disease, no more suffering, no more death.

But, Paul goes on to say, "That's not all." In addition to this hope of resurrection to overcome the effects of the curse on nature, the believer is also sustained while waiting for that grand hope in the future. He is sustained now by the prayer intercession of God the Holy Spirit. Man is a finite creature struggling with personal weakness, Paul points out. He is not godlike. Man's inherent weakness, therefore, Paul has told us makes him ineffective in prayer, and yet prayer is the key factor in dealing with Satan and in living in the devil's world.

**Secular Humanism**

The great satanic lie which is promoted in society denies the inherent weakness of man that God has referred to here which necessitates this tremendous help by God the Holy Spirit, and instead in our society there is now declared that man is possessed not of weakness but of power actually that enables him to potentially become God. And therefore, the fad today, the in-thing today is to turn the eyes of people upon themselves, upon what they are and what they can become.

This generation of Americans, as you all know, is imbued with the philosophy of secular humanism which has as its basic premise that man is the center of all things and not God. Now, we have in the past gone over in some detail the "Humanist Manifestos" 1 and 2 which are a gross declaration of the lowest kind of viewpoint toward the Word of God, toward the mind of Christ, toward what God thinks and has relegated man to the position that belongs to God alone. So, we're not going to go over that. We're just going to remind you that that's the basic concept of secular humanism: that you yourself are the main thing in the universe and everything revolves around you.

So, the principle of secular humanism is to indulge oneself in this life in the pursuit of happiness and to expect nothing in terms of a heavenly future. Now, the manifestos say that in so many words. We do not look for something beyond now in terms of a heavenly reward. We look for all that we're going to have right here on this earth. We do not look to the help of some supernatural deity to enable us to have these good things; we look only to ourselves to make this possible.

Well, you have, of course, now by such a statement, by such a viewpoint stepped right up to the very threshold as looking upon man as deity. And that's ultimately what we're going to get. Once the true God is rejected, then imperfect man becomes his own God, and then it is very natural for him to turn to self-admiration and self-worship ultimately.

The book of Romans 1:25 tells us that's exactly what happened. Paul says, "Who [unbelievers, Word of God rejectors who] changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, Who is blessed for ever. Amen."

Now, there is the whole key to what brought about the degeneracy of the human race. They had the Word of God. They had knowledge of God. It was widespread, and they turned against that truth about God and ultimately, when they turned against God's truth, they turned against God. And when they turned against God, they had no place else to turn but to themselves. So, suddenly, they began worshipping themselves and the creatures that God had made rather than the God that had put that all together.

One cannot be self-centered and God-centered at the same time. That's all that verse is saying. You cannot be self-centered and God-centered at the same time. One or the other.

Now, the goal of secular humanism is to be self-centered, and it is expressed by the overall word of "self-actualization." Self-actualization means to develop everything that you potentially see in the inherent powers of the human being. Therefore, we have these hyphenated "self" words, of which you've heard many, such as: we should pursue self-esteem; we should pursue self-love; we should pursue self-image; we should pursue self-realization; self-worth; self-confidence; self-help; self-improvement; self-power; self-importance; self-indulgence; self-fulfillment; self-knowledge; and on, and on. Once you start thinking about it, you're amazed at how many hyphenated words there are with the word "self."

In the world of commercial advertising, this has been very evident. All of you have seen the ad on television that says, "It costs a little more, but it's worth it." That's how it started. It started off with, "It's worth it. It costs a little more, but it's worth it." I forget what the product was - some cosmetic or something. But after a while, you discovered, if you were listening carefully, that they changed the word. They knocked the "it's" out, and they changed it to, "You're worth it. It costs a little more, but you're worth it." And then, if you kept listening carefully, you noticed that they crossed out the "you're," and they change it to "I'm." "It costs a little more, but I'm worth it." And you see this gal coming up, she's all sweaty and worn out with the kids and the cooking, and she sinks into this tub, and she pours this stuff in, and she says, "It costs a little more, but I'm worth it."

**The Promotion of Selfism Among Christian Leaders**

Now, there in the advertising world, you have seen the progression of zeroing in, focusing in on self. The admiration of great potential worth. The secular humanistic exaltation of self has unfortunately been absorbed within Christian circles now. Some want to use these words just to be hip, just to be up there with what is going on, just so they'll seem to be as intelligent as the psychiatric world that uses these terms. But the amazing thing is how many Christian writers and Christian leaders are teaching the concept of self-orientation as a biblical concept.

And not the least of them is the great man out on the west coast in California, Robert Schuller who has written a book entitled, "Self-Esteem: The New Reformation." In that book, Schuller says a person is in hell when he has lost his self-esteem. A person is in hell when he has lost his self-esteem. Now, you can interpret that a lot of ways to make it come out nice, but when you put everything together that he has says, you cannot make it sound all right, that he is simply saying that a person has misery if he does not have self-esteem.

Is that true, or is that not true? He also says self-esteem or pride in being a human being is the single greatest need facing the human race today. Self-esteem or pride in being a human being is the single greatest need facing the human race today. That's what psychiatry tells you. Is that true?

The Word of God tells you that the greatest need for a human being today is to be born again and then to be taught the doctrines of scripture, to be taught the doctrines of scripture so that you can put your life together in an orderly fashion where God can bless and can use you.

Robert Schuller himself has a problem with the presentation of the Gospel as it is done by fundamentalist, Bible-believing Christians. In a quotation in "Time Magazine," March 18th, 1985, on page 70, Schuller is quoted as saying, "I don't think anything has been done in the name of Christ and under the banner of Christianity that has proven more destructive to human personality and hence counterproductive to the evangelism enterprise than the often crude, uncouth, and un-Christian strategy of attempting to make people aware of their lost and sinful condition."

Now, why would he say a thing like that, that it's terrible to alert people to the fact that they're lost, they are doomed, they are without hope, they are without Christ, and they're headed for the lake of fire for all eternity? And that without God coming in to give them a solution, they can't make it. They cannot save themselves. They cannot come up with the absolute righteousness necessary to enter into heaven. But he calls that crude and uncouth and counter-productive to evangelism. Why would he say that? Because he's the possibility positive thinker-oriented mentality who begins with the premise that man has something within himself to esteem and that is of great value. The Bible viewpoint is indeed completely counter to that.

In 1 Timothy 1:15, we read, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." That is the problem that people have: that they are sinners and that they are completely devastated by that.

Luke 5:32 says this, "I came not [Jesus said] to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Jesus calls them "sinners." Jesus tells them that they are lost. All these success techniques that are being taught today are based on this concept of self-esteem, and what Schuller is saying is that that's the greatest need that people have in order to update the Reformation.

James Dobson who writes many books that are very popular has said, "If I could write a prescription for the women of the world, it would provide each one of them with a healthy dose of self-esteem and personal worth taken three times a day until the symptoms disappear. I have no doubt that this is their greatest need." But the greatest need of women today is not big doses of self-esteem and of personal worth but is regeneration and a knowledge of the Word of God to know how their lives should work.

When people come and time to time to me with distresses in their life, sometimes it's marriage, sometimes it's kids. And very often, it's people who have sat right here and they've been given a lot of instruction in the Word of God, and then they go out and they marry some dog. Now, they come to me, and they say, "What am I going to do about this person? Every day, he is out-of-kilter." And the thing that is out-of-kilter is out of orientation to the Word of God. The person is a self-esteem person, a self-oriented person. Selfism is at the core, and they will not yield to the Word of God. Well, it is because people have picked up these ideas concerning the value that is inherently in them, the potential that is inherently in them that cause them to go out and to make these stupid mistakes devoid of spiritual orientation. And I can tell you, it is tough to change it.

It is interesting that Dr. Dobson says, "Only that the symptoms will disappear." And, of course, if you've got measles, you can use cosmetics to cover up those red spots. You've removed the symptoms, but you've not removed the disease. The false goal of self-esteem is actually the basis of the women's liberation movement and all the monstrosities that that produces. That's where that concept leads to.

Tim LaHaye has written a book on how to win over depression. If you read that book, you will discover that that book is laced with the concept of developing self-love to cure your depression. He hammers away again and again: start loving yourself, and you'll stop being depressed. But the truth of the matter is, that it's because people are preoccupied with themselves and their self-love that causes depression in the first place. This is what leads them astray. This is what gets them off-track. Occupation with self is the principle of secular humanism, not the Bible. The principle of scripture is occupation with Christ, and it makes all the difference in the world.

So, you see, the same writers who often decry the influence of secular humanism in the political arena accept its basic premise of selfism in the spiritual realm. Such a premise was unknown in Christian circles a generation ago. It wasn't until secular humanism has made its recent popular inroads that now the Christian gang is getting on the same bandwagon with the same concepts.

Jimmy Carter's sister, Ruth Carter Stapleton, was a promoter of selfism as a way of developing spiritual power. People would go to her little retreat here in the Dallas area, and they would be taught basically to love themselves. She would have an exercise called, "The Mirror Exercise." A person would stand before a mirror, and they would look at their image and say to themselves, "I love you."

She found, however, that some Christian people particularly recoil from saying that, probably because they knew themselves so well. But the problem was that they found that there's something about them in their Christian conscience that recoiled them from doing that. So, she would train them to simply say the word, "I." "I." Say it several times. Go buy a mirror, "I," then say, "I love." "I love." And finally, say, "I love you," until they acclimated themselves to be able to look in the mirror and say the whole thing without any qualms of conscience, gradually building up an acceptance to such an unbiblical concept as self-love.

Ray Mossholder runs a series of Christian seminars in which he teaches self-love as an expression of the glory of God. One of the great things that is popular now that the charismatics have popularized: congregations together chanting something so that hypnotically, they get to accepting something.

Mossholder has taken Colossians 1:27, the phrase, "Christ in you, the hope of glory," and he has gradually revised that from saying, "Christ in you, the hope of glory," and he will have a whole audience chant this together, "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Then he will change that and say, "Christ in me, the hope of glory." That's a favorite little device these days: to change a word of scripture to include yourself. "Christ in me, the hope of glory." And then, he leads the audience up to the third level where they all are saying together, "I am the hope of glory." Christ in you is the hope of glory. You are in Christ, Christ is in you. That means you are the hope of glory. And he's turned around to selfism in a very subtle way from a very true biblical principle to a statement which is false. "I am never the hope of glory. It is only Christ in me, as the scriptures say, that is the hope of glory."

Richard Dobbins, another popular seminar leader, also likes to lead the audience in chanting statements. He uses, first of all, the true statement, "God loves you." And of course, God does love you. Then he takes that, and he makes variations on that, and he gets a whole audience chanting in unison, first of all, "I am a lovable person." "I am a lovable person." Is that true? Then he says, "I am a forgivable person." And they all chant that, "I am a forgivable person." Is that true? Then he says, "I am a valuable person," and they all chant that. And is that true: I am a valuable person?

This, of course, is not true of man. Romans 7:18 says, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not." Christ died for mankind. As a matter of fact, the scriptures tell us, in spite of the fact that he is not lovable, not forgivable, and he is not valuable.

Romans 5:8, "But God commendeth his love toward us, that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." If we are indeed lovable, forgivable, and valuable, then people don't need Jesus Christ, and they don't need the provision of the cross. Is there something to love in us? Yes. What does God love in us? He loves the absolute righteousness He puts in us, and that's all He loves. It's the righteousness that He puts in us. That's what He loves. He pays so that we can indeed be forgiven. We're forgivable because he paid and therefore, He forgave us. We are not only forgivable, we are forgiven on the basis of what He has done. He gives us value as those who've been made in the image and likeness of Jesus Christ, because He transforms us into that image. That's how we become valuable.

But man in himself is not a lovable person. He's not forgivable. He's not valuable. He is devoid of all these things except that God comes in and does all these things for him. This is simply humanistic terminology, humanistic ways of phrasing something that is basically not true.

So, Christian leaders everywhere are telling people that the ultimate sin is failure to love yourself. And you should be aware that that's what's on the theological scene. Many of them do it to be hip, to be cool, to be accepted in the age of secular humanism. The affluence of this generation of Americans, of course, lends itself to the spirit of self-centeredness, so even in Christian circles, because Christians are so well-off, they are ready to accept this concept of self-centeredness. A self-centered Gospel is being sanctified with misapplied scripture that was the product of liberalism and secular humanism. And here, of all things, it's being accepted by Bible Christians.

Christians, thus, are less interested today because of this selfism that is permeating the Christian community. Christians today are far less interested in asking what they can do for God in service. They're more interested in asking, "What can He do to make them successful?" Selfism has been dignified. But now, of course, the people who promote this are going to come along and say, "Oh, there's a biblical basis for this. We are saying this because this is what the Bible teaches."

**Biblical Passages in Opposition to Secular Humanism**

So, let's look at a few verses so that you can ask yourself, "Is that what these passages are really teaching: this concept of secular humanism of centering on self?" Chuck Swindoll who has written several books of a devotional nature on the west coast says a major reason why a husband doesn't love his wife is because he doesn't love himself. Is that true? A major reason why a husband doesn't love his wife is because he doesn't love himself. Ephesians 5:28-29 are presented to sustain this, "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church."

Does this passage tell you that men must learn to love themselves so that they will be able to love their wives? Not at all. What this scripture is saying, is obviously, that man already love themselves. And because they already are engrossed with self-love is the reason they don't love their wives. It is their self-love that interferes with their caring for their wives in a loving manner and treating their wives in a loving manner.

So, the apostle comes along and says, "Listen, you men know how you love yourself. You know how you're willing to take care of every need and every whim and every concern and to indulge yourself. Now, you treat your wife with the same kind of love that you have for yourself." That love is already there. You don't have to teach people to love themselves. A husband is to love his wife as he does himself when he deals with her, to care for her with the same care as his natural self-love leads him to care for himself.

Some writers use Matthew 22:36-40 to defend the concept of selfism which is now permeating the Christian community. Matthew 22:36-40, "'Master, which is the great commandment in the law?' Jesus said unto him, ''Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.'"

We are being told by many Christian writers that there is a third element to consider here: love for God, love for neighbor, but it all begins with love for yourself. And they use these verses to demonstrate that until you love yourself, you will not be able to love God. Until you have a great self-love, you will not be able to love your neighbor. But what this text, again, says, you see, is that people already love themselves and that they should love others in the same degree and in the same way. Love thy neighbor as thyself. Love thy neighbor as you already, doggone well, love yourself.

But the promoters of selfism reverse the biblical order to say that self-love must be developed before there can be God-love or neighbor-love. Now, this teaching that Christians can only love God and others to the degree that they love self is totally false. As a matter of fact, 1 John 4:19 puts it into a true perspective. 1 John 4:19 says, "We love him, because he first loved us." That's just the opposite. We love Him because He first loved us! We don't love Him because we first love ourselves. We love Him because He first loved us. We already love ourselves. There is no prerequisite anywhere in the Bible calling for self-love before one is able to love God and to love others. That is a pure idea from secular humanism.

Mental attitude agape love, the Bible very clear in stating as a product of the Word of God to which the Christian has responded with positive volition. John 14:21, Jesus says, "'He that hath My commandments [doctrine], and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me [If you have doctrine, you have capacity to love God]: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him.'" The Bible is very clear that love is the product of the Word of God; it is not the product of some self-effort.

It is interesting how these Christian writers who are not ignorant themselves of scripture have missed the passage of 2 Timothy 3:1-5 which completely refutes the self-love concept. In 2 Timothy 3:1-5, we read, "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. [Why? Why in the days before the rapture is society going to be coming apart at the seams and will it be times of violence and tragedy and terror and hazard to human beings? Verse 2.] For men shall be lovers of their own selves."

Now what are you going to do with a passage like that? We are being told we must develop self-love, self-esteem, a good self-image, and all the rest of it. The Bible says society is going to be ripped to shreds when people finally turn and devote themselves to developing love for themselves. And then, it lists the consequences of self-love in the verses that follow.

".covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy [all of these you can tie back as a direct consequence of the attitude of self-love], Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power of it: from such turn away."

What is it that has made men who have been in positions, sensitive positions of our government access to top-secret items, what is it that causes them to be willing to sell those secrets to our enemies except their self-love which makes them traitors? Selfism is being presented as a form of godliness, but as Paul points out here, it is barren of spiritual power.

The Lord Jesus Christ was very explicit in the attitude that should characterize those who are to follow Him. In Mark 8:34-35, it is very clear that selfism was not the pattern that the Lord called upon us to follow. Mark 8:34, "And when He had called the people unto Him with His disciples also, He said unto them, 'Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." Whosoever is going to follow Jesus Christ must not pursue self-love, self-esteem, self-exaltation, self-promotion, but he is to deny himself.

The word "deny" is the Greek word "aparneomai." "Aparneomai," this is the ordinary word for "deny." When it adds this little preposition "Apo" here in the front, it means to totally reject, absolutely, totally, unequivocally reject. So that, the Lord Jesus is using a terribly strong word here when he talks about who's going to follow Him? Those who totally reject self. Not even just reject yourself but absolutely, totally, in all aspects reject yourself. And stop making a big thing over yourself, and stop self-exalting, and stop pursing all the self-desirable things that you think you should pursue.

This idea of this word is exemplified in Matthew 26:34, where Jesus says to Peter, "'Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crows, thou shalt deny me thrice.'" And the Lord Jesus uses this word right here, "Peter, you are going to deny me totally, absolutely, without reserve." Utter rejection.

Did that happen? Matthew 26:70, "But he [Peter] denied it before them all, saying, 'I know not what thou sayest.'" They accused him of being with Jesus of Galilee. Verse 72, when they accused him again, and again, he denied with an oath, "I do not know the man." Verse 74, "Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, 'I know not the man.' And immediately the cock crew." Now, it's obvious that that's exactly what Peter did. He utterly, completely, totally rejected and denied Jesus Christ.

What the Lord Jesus requires is that we deny the spirit of self-love which leads to indulging our own desires. Saving one's life on earth for self is to lose it in terms of its eternal potential. Mark 8:35 points this out, "For whosoever will save his life [selfism] shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it." What the Lord Jesus calls upon the believer to do is to disregard his occupation with self and to be preoccupied instead with Christ.

Self-esteem. Who would know better about that than the Apostle Paul? 1 Timothy 1:15 tells us what he thought of himself. Paul says, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." Now, what kind of self-esteem is that, to say that I am the lowest, the rottenest sinner of the lot? In Ephesians 3:8, Paul has this to say, "Unto me, who am the least of all saints." No, he didn't say, "the least." I misquoted. "Unto me, who am LESS than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."

The LEAST of all the saints. Now, what kind of self-love, what kind of self-esteem is that? Most of you would rate yourselves very highly as Christians. Most of you would give yourselves a pretty good score on Christian maturity, on Christian integrity. But the longer the Apostle Paul lived, the less esteem he had for himself. Not more. It was only the grace of God and what that grace made him that had any value in his eyes, and he knew that that had nothing to do with himself.

So, in 1 Corinthians 15:10 he could say, "By the grace of God I am what I am: and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." "Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." Even after the grace of God came and worked in my life, I was still nothing! I was still the same rotten thing I always was. He had pulled me out of the burning of hell, and he set my feet on the road to heaven, but I still had a sin nature and, left to myself, I would soon demonstrate that there wasn't anything to be proud of at all. Yes, I worked for the Lord. Yes, I was very fruitful in God's ministry, but it was the grace of God that did that for me. And it was not I. At my peak of performance, it wasn't I. It was what the grace of God was doing. Now, that is a true picture, a true evaluation of one's self. In the Christian life, the pattern is to give the preeminence to Jesus Christ.

And so, Colossians 1:18 says, "And He is the head of the body, the church: Who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence." Proper, godly position of the Christian is not occupation with self but is to be occupation with Christ. And when you understand, have an appreciation, for the holiness of God, then you will understand that there is nothing to fall in love with in yourself, to be esteemed in yourself.

In Isaiah 6:1, Isaiah says that, "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon the throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple." And verse 3 says, "And one cried unto another, and said, 'Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: and the whole earth is full of his glory.'"

And what was Isaiah's response to that kind of experience with the holy God? Verse 5, "Then said I, 'Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.'" There was no self-exaltation or self-love or self-esteem on the part of Isaiah once he had a perspective on the holiness of God.

In the book of Job, the very first verse, we have this describing this man Job, "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect [blameless] and upright, one that feared God, and eschewed evil." Here was a man that God gave a good score on relative to his own godliness. He was perfect and upright. But the more Job learned about the holy character of God, the less self-love and the less self-esteem he had all along the line until when you get down to the end of the book of Job 42. What do we read in verse 6 but Job saying, "Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

The clearer picture he had of the holiness of God, the less esteem he had for himself, because that's the truth about us. Job knew his own depravity, and he loathed it. He didn't fall in love with it. But Job moved up from being a slave of that natural depravity through the Word of God till he could make that dramatic statement, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." Someday, He will raise him again.

Of course, what can we say when it comes that all-time classic example of self-love that will nicely tie up everything we've said this morning. In Luke 18 in the parable that Jesus gave concerning the Pharisee and the tax collector. Luke 18:10-14, "'Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a tax collector." Now, you decide which of these men had developed self-love. Which of these men had developed self-esteem? Which of these men had developed self-admiration, and all the other self. And which of them had not done that?

"The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.' And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, 'God be merciful to me a sinner [Which means, "God, be propitiated to me, a sinner; God, give me a basis for satisfying your justice against me."]. I tell you, this man [the tax collector] went down to his house justified rather than the other [the Pharisee]: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

I think in this parable, it is clear which one had the self-esteem and which one God approved, and it was not the one with the self-esteem. The tax collector who recognized his lack of worth because of his sin was the one that God approved, not the self-loving Pharisee.

And so, we live today in a tremendous, satanic deception. The secular humanist concepts of hyphenated self is not taught in the Bible as a legitimate goal for Christians to pursue. Selfism is the natural consequence of the American pursuit of happiness by self-indulgence, and it is now being justified and dignified by Christian leaders with pretext that do not apply. In humanism, the focus is always on me. In Christianity, our eyes are on the Lord.

Ego-boosting sermons are being constantly preached from pulpits in our country today to people who, of all things, are already self-centered, self-loving, and self-indulgent. People by nature remember how to superiority complex. Every now and then, somebody comes to me and says, "Boy, that person acts this way and this way, and I know they're just struggling with an inferiority complex." And I say, "Are you kidding? That's not an inferiority complex. The reason that person's acting that way is they have such a superior attitude about themselves. That gal, that man is shot through with superiority complex. That's why they're acting like that. They're acting in their own natural way.

And so, they'll express it in a false humility. Anytime you find someone who's telling you about how humble they are (this character stands up in the pulpit, he looks on the ground, he shuffles his feet), you know that that is one of the most arrogant slobs you're ever going to meet. And don't be taken in by his purported, pretended humility. That is not his natural characteristic. It is not of any of us. It will be expressed with others in open arrogance; with others with a hot, short temper; with others in downright cruelty. But it's all superiority complex. We're all shot through with it.

And don't kid yourself. The conspiracy that has entered the Christian community of the promotion of selfism as the legitimate goal of the Christian life, I can assure you, is preparing Christians for tears at the judgement seat of Christ when they discover the consequences of pursuing the selfism. And it is preparing the unbeliever for the horrors of the lake of fire.

The spirit of selfism which is rampant in our society and is taking over in the Christian community now leads to one more devastating step which is indeed the most foremost, dramatic, preparation of this world for the antichrist that we have ever seen or anybody else that's ever lived on the face of this earth. Because selfism, when fully accepted and fully believed, leads to the next step of self-godhood, self-deity. And next time, we're going to pick it up at that point and see the consequence even among Christians who have begun to believe that they are little gods.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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