

## ***Narcissism***

The ancient Greeks told the story of Narcissus, a young man quite proud of himself and of his appearance, who had little care and love for those who loved him. One day he saw his reflection in the waters of a pool; he fell in love with the reflection, apparently not aware it was of himself, refused to turn his gaze away from it, and died there.

Narcissus' story has been used ever since as a warning to people regarding falling so in love with themselves that others are entirely forgotten. Narcissus' name is now used for an ever growing tendency in modern culture: narcissism.

Narcissism is best understood as an attempt to satisfy one's vanity, continually displaying self-absorption and proclaiming one's perceived superiority in various attributes. One could rightly consider modern Western culture as the "Age of Narcissism." The philosophy of the day exalts the individual as the godlike determiner of what is right and what is wrong. Since self-promotion is the surest way to get noticed in a competitive job market and business environment, those with narcissistic inclinations seem to get further than those who display more humility. The cult of celebrity is all about the formation of narcissists; we see far too many young people grow up on television before our very eyes becoming ever more self-absorbed, immoral, and thus intolerable. Marketing promotes narcissism, knowing that the more you feel honored by a retailer or brand or entitled to a given product, the more likely you will buy. Social media invites everyone to participate in narcissistic behavior: your profile is your way of telling the world about you, giving you the opportunity to post what you think and what is going on in your life. We need look no further than the increased popularity of the "selfie": "Narcissus" can now show the world everywhere he goes, everyone with whom he meets, and it is without a doubt because his face is always there.

Truly the "pride of life" is manifest today in narcissistic behavior (1 John 2:15-17); the easiest thing for us to do is to go with the flow of our world and our culture and become ever more enveloped in narcissism. But is narcissism ideal? Should we be excessively in love with ourselves?

The world is filled with arrogance and pride, but it would not be so among those who made up the Kingdom of God (Matthew 20:25-28, 23:12, 1 John 2:15-17). Jesus Himself should be the model and pattern for those who would follow Him. He spent His life in service to others, even unto death (1 Peter 2:18-25, 1 John 2:1-6, 3:16-18, 4:7-21).

We ought to recognize the vanity and futility of narcissism. We are not God; we all fall short. We cannot think of ourselves more highly than we ought, but remain humble and seek to find ways to serve others and to consider their interests and needs (Romans 12:3, Philippians 2:1-11).

Narcissus proves to be a good warning to us: life cannot revolve around how awesome I think that I am. Instead, we should seek to serve others for God's glory, and find ourselves far more satisfied than we ever could while wallowing in self-absorption. Let us resist narcissism and instead serve God in Christ!

*- by Ethan R. Longhenry (edited for length)*

---

## ***10 Reasons for Bible Study***

1. The Bible yields food for the soul. It has the milk necessary for the spiritual growth of the babe, and meat to sustain the older, mature Christian (1 Peter 2:1-2; Hebrews 5:12-14).
2. A knowledge of the truth, and obedience to it, is necessary to be made free from sin (John 8:31-32; 1 Peter 1:22).
3. The Bible reveals God's view of man. It enables the student to see himself as God sees him, for the Bible is God's mirror of the soul (James 1:22-25).
4. A working knowledge of the Bible arms one against the difficulties and hardships of life. It has a message to cover every condition and problem. It can be used in every emergency from the cradle to the grave (Romans 15:4).
5. The knowledgeable Christian is able to comfort and edify the discouraged and brokenhearted (Colossians 4:6; 1 Thessalonians 4:14).

6. The Scriptures contain all good works that are pleasing to God and give all things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3).
7. One must study the Bible to have the approval of God, to be a ready workman, and to handle correctly the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15; 1 Peter 3:15).
8. A knowledge of the Bible is the only safeguard against fatal error (Acts 17:11; 1 John 4:1).
9. The Scriptures are able to build us up and to give us a home in Heaven (Acts 20:32; 2 Timothy 3:15).
10. The Bible will be our standard of judgment in the last day (John 12:48; Revelation 20:12).

**- by David J. Riggs**

---

### ***Forgiveness (4<sup>th</sup> in a series)***

Under instructions to forgive others *"just as God in Christ also hath forgiven you"* (Eph. 4:32), we have observed that God is 1) willing to forgive, 2) anxious to forgive, but 3) He forgives only when we have met His conditions of forgiveness, including repentance. We continue our study with some additional and important points about God's forgiveness.

It is clear that when God forgives it is an absolute and total form of forgiveness. To often men never really get over something. Past wrongs and offenses remain an issue and are allowed to fester like an open wound. People are heard to say things like, "I'll never forget what he did to me." But, thankfully, God is not that way, and we need to imitate Him. The Psalmist wrote (103:8-12): *"The Lord is merciful and gracious . . . He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us."* We should be extremely grateful for His absolute forgiveness, and we should treat others the same way.

Furthermore, God's forgiveness is permanent. Once forgiven, He never calls up our past sins again. The Hebrew writer quoted the promise made by the prophet Jeremiah: *"This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more."* (Hebrews 10:16-17). Too often we will tentatively 'forgive' someone who wrongs us, but are quick to dredge up these old sins if that same person ever crosses us again. It is not that way with God, and it cannot be so with us.

***(continued next week)***

**- by Greg Gwin**