

Ministry in the “Me” Culture: Keeping the Faith in a World of Narcissism
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As we will see from Scripture, we can sum up the mindset and behavior of the days in which we live with words like “self,” “pride,” and “narcissism.” It is not arguable even among the secular establishment that our era is experiencing an epidemic of narcissism. Studies have shown this to be true, and I believe the reasons stem from three things (all intertwined): ***We are experiencing an age and epidemic of “self” or “narcissism” due to:***

1.) Shift in “_____ structure”:

- a. Premodern –
- b. Modern –
- c. Postmodern –

2.) Technology:

3.) _____ dynamic:

In 2 Timothy 3:1-5, **God says pride and self-centeredness will only increase as the age in which we live progresses—and this is in reference to the world *and* the church.** Every single characteristic of the “last days religionist” is rooted in pride, narcissism, and self-focus.

- 1. “Lovers of their own selves”:
- 2. “Covetous”:
- 3. “Boasters”:
- 4. “Proud”:
- 5. “Blasphemers”:
- 6. “Disobedient to parents”:
- 7. “Unthankful”:
- 8. “Unholy”:
- 9. “Without natural affection”:
- 10. “Trucebreakers”:

11. "False accusers":
12. "Incontinent":
13. "Fierce":
14. "Despisers of those who are good":
15. "Traitors":
16. "Heady":
17. "Highminded":
18. "Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God":

How do we minister within this context in which we find ourselves? The answers are simple but not simplistic. They are simple because they are clearly spelled out in Scripture; yet they are not simplistic because as fallible creatures in the "here-and-now," we tend to fall prey to the flow of the culture and the demands upon us to think "worldly-wise" rather than biblically.

How to Keep the Faith in a Culture of Narcissism?

1.) **Continual _____ with the Word/Person of God**

2.) _____ **discipleship** — Jesus makes it clear that *true discipleship is marked by three things* (Luke 14:25-33):

- **Jesus Is Our Priority in Life (vv. 26, 33)**
 - A. Priority Over _____ (v. 26a)
 - B. Priority Over _____ (v. 26b)
 - C. Priority Over _____ (v. 33)
- **We Are Completely Submitted to His Will (v. 27a)** — "Cross Bearing"
- **Obedience to Jesus Is Characteristic of Our Walk (v. 27b)**

3.) **Keep the _____ in Mind** — God's glory and faithfulness to Him is of paramount importance. This involves:

- a. Asking the right questions
- b. Measuring life and ministry according to the standard of Scripture rather than the pragmatic, man-centered approach to life and ministry
- c. Putting on the "mind of Christ"

We can't stem this. We can't change this. Scripture tells us it will be this way. We can only respond to it biblically for God's glory, and that is what God wants us to do with the time He has given.