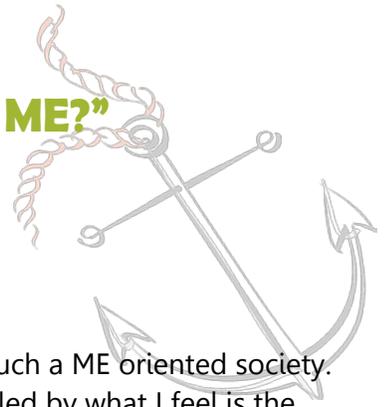




"SHOULD IT BE ABOUT ME?"

(Dennis L. Reed)



IT is a rather discouraging reality that we now live in what is very much a ME oriented society. Far too many of our words and actions indicate that we are controlled by what I feel is the best for ME. People honk their car horns to let others know that you need to get out of MY way. People do not hesitate to break in lines to insure that ME gets attention before others. Is it true that our society is becoming so obsessed with ME that the matter of considering others becomes absolutely secondary, or even much farther back down the line than that?

I am often confronted with this same attitude among brethren who seem to want almost everything in the local congregation to evolve around ME. There are brethren who insist on being part of a congregation where OUR children have other children their ages to socialize with. There are others who will not attend a congregation where there are not enough "young adult families" for "ME" to socialize with. We seem to be looking for what pleases ME more than what we can do for the Lord, and what we can do to seek and save the lost. Is the Lord's church rapidly becoming a "socializing" and "entertaining" organization like the denominations around us? Yes, I am seriously afraid that "we are drifting" in that exact direction. Just this past week I heard of an effort in a local church to do away with the Sunday evening worship service so that these individuals can meet in private homes to eat together and socialize, and supposedly to also have private Bible studies. I am greatly concerned that such occasions may be more directed to the social rather than the spiritual. We see worship services disappearing everywhere around us and gospel meetings also disappearing from the landscape. A great many brethren don't seem to be concerned that there is a possibility of having the Lord's church to grow much less informed and far less spiritual as a result of these changes.

What has happened to the spirit of serving and putting others before ME? What has happened to the priorities of the growth and advancement of the Lord's church being put before SELF? Have we forgotten about the need to deny self? "And he said unto all, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23). Are we possibly losing the desire to be servants one of another? "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself" (Galatians 6:2-3).

Please consider the words of Philippians 2: 2-6,

"make full my joy, that ye be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind; doing nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself; not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others. Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross."

I am persuaded that we had better look seriously into the mirror of God's Word and recognize that ME is by far NOT the most important thing in our lives! No, it is not about ME, it is about "seeking first the Kingdom of God"! It is also about spending our lives in the service of others! "Now we that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each one of us please his neighbor for that which is good, unto edifying. For Christ also pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell upon me" (Romans 15:1-3). Please think carefully about these sober reminders.

Editor's note:

One of the things that can help us defeat self-will and acquiring usefulness to God is to look at the wisdom given to a slave in Colossians 3:22-24.

"Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ" (emp. mine)

Adjusting our sights to focusing on the Lord and correcting our thinking of working for man to working *for the Lord* would enable even the slave to be more dedicated in his seemingly mundane service to man. It does matter how we look at things.



—Steven J. Wallace