

The Pride of Imaginary Self-Sufficiency

Intro: The most dangerous sins are often not visible. Imagined self-sufficiency quietly steals our heart and smothers us like Co2. James is rebuking an attitude of presumptuousness that is forgetful of God (Jer. 2:32)

What are the errors of imaginary self-sufficiency?

- 1 – It fails to keep God at the center of our plans: (vs. 13)
 - A. There is nothing wrong with planning or business for profit (Gen. 41:48-49; Pr. 6:6-8; Luke 19:11-27)
 - B. The future tenses imply a self-assured attitude about their business.
 - C. Who is at the center of your plans, dreams and aspirations?
2. It fails to take into account our ignorance and frailty: (vs. 14)
 - A. Our ignorance: *Only God knows and can assure the future* (Ps. 139:4, 16; Isa. 46:9-11)
 - B. Our frailty: *We need the perspective of eternity against our brevity* (Lk. 12:16ff)
3. It fails to acknowledge the Lord's will as most essential: (vs. 15)
 - A. Desiring to know and do the Lord's will is a habitual mark of genuine faith (Ps. 40:8; James 1:22)
 - B. "If the Lord wills" is not a mindless formula to repeat but the practice of submitting our plans to be shaped by God's Word and providential will.
 - C. It is seeking "His kingdom and righteousness" first: (Mt. 6:33)
4. It fails to take into account the deep sinfulness of presumption: (vv. 16-17)
 - A. Presumptuous living is boasting and this arrogant boasting is evil.
 - B. To know that we ought to acknowledge God and yet not do it is sin.

Developing a conscious and relentless dependence upon God:

1. Apply Romans 11:36 to everything you do.
2. Consciously and prayerfully submit your plans and decisions to God with a kingdom first mindset.

FROM TRIPP MINISTRIES

Psalm 27: Caught in the Middle

"Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord."

Self-sovereignty is the dream of every sinner. It's hard for us to trust ourselves to the wisdom, power, and control of another. We want to write our own dramas and we want to be the central character of the story. But the spiritual reality of the universe is that we are not the authors of our own story. Our story is a part of a larger story that is written by the Lord. In this story we are never on center stage. That is a position to be occupied by the Lord alone.

So, when you recognize you are caught in the middle of something, you are recognizing something that is profoundly important. Let me detail how practically important this insight is.

1. It means you were meant to live for something bigger than you. You are not in control. Your story is not ultimate. You have been created to be part of something that is larger than your wants, your needs, and your feelings. You are connected to something that is bigger than your relationships, your situations, and the locations that you move in everyday. You are waiting because God said you are a part of His kingdom. God, whose timing is always perfect, works according to His wise plan and at the right moment. But as you wait, He is doing something in and for you. He is crafting you into the person His grace alone enables you to be.

2. It means you were created to be dependent. The independent, this-is-my-life-and-this-is-what-I-will-do-with-it view of life is a delusion. That thought that you have everything you need to be what you are supposed to be, and to do what you are supposed to do is a fantasy as well. Each of us is dependent on God for our physical life. We all know that we do not control the many, many things around us that must work in order for our lives to work. We all know that our life doesn't work according to our plan. We couldn't write the story of today and accurately predict what we will face. Contrary to what we often think and how we often act, we all live a life of reliance on God.

3. It means that the things you need most you cannot provide for yourself. God has controlled the forces of nature, and the events of human history in order to give me the one thing I desperately need and could never earn, deserve, or achieve; new birth. Without the intervention of His powerful heart and His transforming grace, I would be a dead man walking. But He has given me life and He is now working to change me into what, if left to myself, I could never be. I wait because His grace is still at work. I wait because He is not done and I am not yet complete.

4. It means the final chapter of your story has been written, but has not yet unfolded. There are more places God has written for me. There are more characters to appear in my story. There are circumstances that He has designed for me to encounter. There are moments of blessing and times of difficulty that have already been written into my story by the One who is not only in control, but who is wise, gracious, kind, and good. He already knows the exact path He will cause me to walk and how that path will result in His glory and my good. I could never write an autobiography that would accomplish what the story He has written for me already has and will accomplish.

5. It means that the one you are waiting for is trustworthy. I know that there are times when waiting is painful. I know there are times when it seems as if it is impossible to wait. But you and I must remind ourselves that we wait, not because irrational and impersonal forces function as obstructions and interferences in our lives. No, we wait because the world is carefully administered by the One Person who is ultimate in power, ultimate in authority, and ultimate in wisdom, while at the very same time being ultimate in love. You are being asked to wait by One you can trust.

6. It means that in those moments when you are "caught" you can rest. Don't give way to panic. Don't give into doubt because this is not what you would have planned. Don't allow yourself to play out all of the "what ifs" and "if only's" in your mind. You are waiting because there is a plan. You are waiting because your life is under the control of One who is wise and good. You can rest, not because you know what is happening, but because you know the One who is in control of what is happening to you right now. You can rest because you know He has made you a part of something wonderful, and He knows what He is doing in you is good, even though at this moment it feels as if you have been caught in the middle.