Egocentricity

The ego is the part of the psyche that is concerned with the outside world. It is constantly pulling us away from God and toward prideful behavior and the need to show superiority. Some will even say that it stands for Edging God Out.

In order to be connected to God, we must let go of our ego. In order to live righteously (do what is right in God's eyes) we must let go of our ego. In order to experience true joy and contentment (not superficial happiness that can come and go minute-by-minute depending on outside circumstances and often on material possessions) we must let go of our ego.

From as far back as biblical times and the era of ancient philosophers, the ego has been written about and analyzed. In biblical times, when people displayed egocentric behavior, they invariably ended up facing some dire consequences (floods, famines, plagues, etc.) The Bible is replete with wisdom about the pitfalls of pride, reflecting what happens when we allow our egos to control our thinking and our behavior.

"Though the Lord is great, He cares for the humble, but He

keeps His distance from the proud." Ps. 138:6

"For the Lord delights in His people; He crowns the humble with victory." Ps. 149:4

"The path of the virtuous leads away from evil; whoever follows that path is safe. Pride goes before destruction, and haughtiness before a fall. Better to live humbly with the poor than to share plunder with the proud." Prov. 16: 17-19

The tower of Babel, described in Genesis 11, is a prime example of how the ego takes control and how God reacts to such behavior. The Bible tells us that there was a time when everyone spoke one language and could therefore understand one another. In Gen. 11:4 we are told that the people said, "let's build a great city with a tower that reaches to the skies--a monument to our greatness!" Verse 11:7 tells us that God showed his disdain for this egotistical project by proceeding to give them different languages so they could not understand one another.

Do we not create monuments to ourselves today? Think about it for a moment. To create a monument often takes time, energy, money, and lots of attention. Do we not give much of that to the "goods" we pursue in our lives today? How much time do we spend with our electronic "stuff" verses the time we spend with the One who enabled us to have that "stuff?" How about a car or a home in which we take so much pride? How important is it to us? How much time does that then leave us for God?

Wisdom, that comes with experience, tells us that real joy, patience, peace, good health, and feelings of safety and security come from being God-centered rather than ego-centered. God is powerful and He is patient. However, His patience will wear out eventually if we continue to ignore the wonderful blessings He bestows upon us, in spite of our egocentric behavior.

Take heed. Observe what is happening in your life. See if there may be a connection between behavior and consequences. See if you are displaying any egocentric behavior. Such behavior can sometimes be quite subtle. You may have to really get honest with yourself and push that ego out of the way, while you take a deep look inside!

If you discover you need to work on some egocentric behavior begin with prayer. Be honest with God (He knows the truth already), and open up to Him with a broken and contrite heart. If you sincerely mean it, let Him know you are ready to repent (remember this includes changing some behaviors). Ask Him to forgive your past and help you to move on as the new you, the you who is a child of God and who reflects the light of Jesus.

(For action steps please return to the section on Avoiding the Perils of Sin in the **GRASP** section of the course.)