Title: Defeating narcissism
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One of today's top enemies of discipleship and self-denial is called narcissism –

Definition: “excessive self-admiration and self-centredness”

A. Paul’s description of the last days

2 Timothy 3:1–5 (NRSV) 1 You must understand this, that in the last days distressing times will come. 2 For people will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 inhuman, implacable, slanderers, profligates, brutes, haters of good, 4 treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 holding to the outward form of godliness but denying its power. Avoid them!

Narcissism can manifest itself on 3 love levels:

Lovers of self
Lovers of money
Lovers of pleasure
  • An individualistic focus – the basis for greed
  • My freedom to make my own choices, whether right or wrong
  • relativism
  • Our demand is to be happy whatever it takes
  • love of pleasure, hedonism

“Looking good and feeling good had replaced being good and doing good.”

B. Augustine explains the 3 types selfish men:

• The one who seeks what he cannot obtain suffers torture
• The one who has got what is not desirable feels cheated
• The one who seeks what is not worth seeking is diseased
C. How does Jesus confront the narcissistic worldview?

**Luke 9:23–24 (NRSV)**  
Then he said to them all, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it.

- Changing our focus and changing our orientation (positioning)
- Focusing on who we are becoming
  - Denying yourselves
    - there is a higher cause
  - Take up your cross
    - obedience that is relevant for our season
  - Follow Jesus
    - staying connected to the divine timetable

D. How do we fight narcissism and disciple people in this culture?

**1 John 2:15–17 (NRSV)**  
Do not love the world or the things in the world. The love of the Father is not in those who love the world; for all that is in the world—the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, the pride in riches—comes not from the Father but from the world. And the world and its desire are passing away, but those who do the will of God live forever.

1. **Discipline:**
   - Love the right things (desire)
   - In the right order (divine order)
   - In the right way (divine methodology)

**1 Peter 5:8 (NRSV)**  
Discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour.

2. **Resist:**
   - Soberness
   - Watchfulness

**John 4:34 (NRSV)**  
Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work.”
3. Obedience

  • Find true rest in obedience

**Luke 18:29–30 (NKJV)** So He said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who shall not receive many times more in this present time, and in the age to come eternal life.”

E. Conclusion

“The focus on the eternal perspective”