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Leadership Equipping Thoughts

A SPIRIT FILLED FAMILY
TOGETHER ON
GOD'S MISSION

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COAST 2 COAST

A FAMILY OF CHURCHES

False Success

Pride is older than the common cold and humans have always battled with it. Today with the advancement of easily accessible technology the drive for online presence and fame can become intermingled. Almost anyone with a Smartphone can become an overnight sensation. Reality shows, online social networks, and other staging formats can make people famous for being famous. It can become a craving for celebrity status.

Israel demanded, "Give us a king so we will be more like the surrounding nations" (1 Samuel 8:6). God gave His people what they wanted, even though it was against His will. He gave them a leader who looked like a celebrity. He was handsome and one of the tallest men around (9:2). He would have done well on social media.

Of course this celebrity leader didn't work out so well. God communicated something important for leaders during that time, "I don't look at outward appearance but at what is on the inside, the heart" (1 Sam 16:7). We need to value what is on the inside more than the outside. Leaders never want the motivation that caused the building of the Tower of Babel to get on the inside of them. *Genesis 11:4 Let us make a name for ourselves.*

Never Let Selfie Images Become Braggie Images!

Dietrich Bonhoeffer described this drive for outward acclaim and it's damaging effects on God's people in *Life Together*, "Every cult of personality that emphasizes the distinguished qualities, virtues, and talents of another person, even though these be of an altogether spiritual nature, is worldly and has no place in the Christian community; indeed, it poisons the Christian community. The desire we so often hear expressed today for 'episcopal figures,' 'priestly men,' 'authoritative personalities' **springs frequently enough from a spiritually sick need for the admiration of men, for the establishment of visible human authority, because the genuine authority of service appears to be so unimpressive."** Wow, he really hits the nail on the head!

Our drive to become successful through online projections and our selfie culture resulted in the Oxford Dictionary's 2013 word of the year to be "selfie." Selfie is an interesting phenomenon. It can be harmless fun and a good way to share life with others, or it can become a harmful preoccupation with self. No matter how great a picture you are taking of God's creation around you, like the Grand Canyon, etc., you

get to put yourself in the center of it. You become the center of God's creation.   Even some of the devices you take your selfies on can give a warning; Iphone, Ipad, Imac. "I" is at the center.

Famous among men or significant before God

Leaders never want their selfie images to become braggie images. We are not called to become famous but servants of our King. Our greatest concern shouldn't be what is on the outside but what is on the inside, a sincere heart towards God.

We don't want to subtly concede to the cultural drive towards popularity. "We have to have an online presence and brand if we are going to lead successfully. God has put stuff in us that people need." Be careful with that one. It is really the opposite attitude of John the Baptist, "I must decrease so that He will increase"(Jn 3:30). If leaders seek direction, make decisions, develop images, and define success in God by what makes them more well known they are heading for trouble**.**

Some use the argument that Jesus was somewhat of a celebrity in His day. In some respects He was definitely well known yet it wasn't because He promoted Himself. That was His Father's business. *John 8:54 Jesus said in answer, If I take glory for myself, my glory is nothing: it is my Father who gives me glory, of whom you say that he is your Go.*

For leaders the problem is not our self image but the sin nature. It is a problem of obsession with self. We want to become famous by increasing our online following or Sunday morning presence. Leaders can drum up projections of themselves and what they do to become popular.   Paul warned his spiritual son Timothy that this would be a pronounced trait in the last days, men would be "lovers of self" *2Tim 3:1-2*. Solomon could have been writing today about all the self-promotion when he said, *Proverbs 27:2 Don't brag about yourself-- let others praise you.* The Message Bible says it even more direct, *Don't call attention to yourself; let others do that for you.*

Recognize the warning bells

- **Your church or area of service is centered around your popularity.** Your brand is on every aspect of the church's life, and their online presence.
- **You find yourself constantly thinking of creative way to promote you teachings, ideas, material, or opinions.**
- **You have a drive to be admired.** You continually check out your social media or the church's web site to see how many followers or responses you get.
- **You think the ministry or church is an extension of you.** My church, my ministry.
- **You have no real relationships in which people know you, can challenge you, and you desire their success ahead of your own.**
- **You do not walk in the kind of team Jesus laid out at the Last Supper (John 13-17).** He prayed 3 times at the end that they would walk in the same unity as the Godhead who lived to glorify the Others (Mt 3:16-17, Jn 8:28, 54, 13:31-32, 14:10, 16: 13-15, 17:1-5, Heb 5:5-6, Phil 2:3-9, Rom 12:9-10, 1 Thes 5:11).