

March 25, 2018



## Godly leaders seek platforms not stages

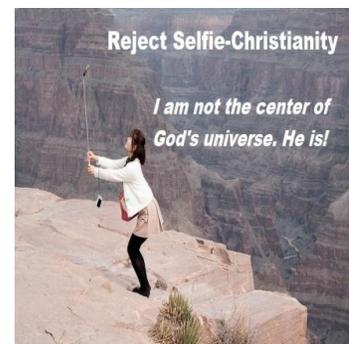
### The best promotion is never self-promotion!

- **Proverbs 25:6-7** *Don't work yourself into the spotlight; don't push your way into the place of prominence. It's better to be promoted to a place of honor than face humiliation by being demoted.*
- **Matthew 23:12** *Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.*

We live in an online world of instant but fleeting fame. With the right 4-minute video going viral or a creative post, we can become an overnight sensation. We can develop a rising online addiction to the number of "views" or "likes" that gives us positive feelings of significance or importance.

We even see this as it relates to trips or vacations. People used to define the success or satisfaction of a trip based on the fond reflections and memories they carried as they came home. Now the definition of success or satisfaction can subtly be tied by the number of "likes" or "views" we get on the continual pictures we post during the trip. Was it a good vacation? Yeah, we had hundreds of likes on all our pictures!

Of course, no one wants to live his or her life anonymously. No one's ultimate goal is to be unappreciated, unacknowledged, or unnoticed. There are God-designed elements in us for significance and a shared life, but they must ultimately be rooted in Christ. We must be careful that our sense of significance doesn't get tied to our culture's definitions.



## A Platform or a Stage

People that genuinely begin to follow Jesus based on His amazing love and sacrifice often start out with Christ-centered intentions to make Him known. But these Christ-centered intentions in us can get hijacked along the way with just an ounce of success or admiration taken the wrong direction.

I have been thinking about the difference between the idea of a platform or a stage. A platform in its most Godly sense is a place of influence to communicate the goodness of God to others. It may be our talents, a job, our network of family and relationships, organizations we belong to, responsibilities we carry, or anything that gives us influence with people. Platforms are good and important if they are used to make admirers and followers of Jesus not admirers and followers of ourselves.

**Platforms can bring out the best in you, or they can bring out the beast in you. The beast will try to hijack your platform and make it your stage.**

A stage, on the other hand, can be more about acquiring the admiration of others and making followers of ourselves. A stage is about self-promotion rather than Christ-exaltation. Self-promotion was the root of Satan's original sin (Is 14:12-15). He has been tempting mankind with it ever since.

C.S. Lewis expressed it well in *The Great Divorce*; "Every poet and musician and artist, but for grace, is drawn away from the love of the thing he tells, to the love of telling till, down in Deep Hell, they cannot be interested in God at all but only in what they say about him."

### Self-focus is Spiritually Dangerous

Anytime we become overly self-focused, it leads to dangerous ground. A couple of years ago my wife and I were taking a boat tour on the riverwalk in San Antonio, TX, when our guide told us something that was very culturally revealing; "Twelve people had to be rescued from the river this summer because they walked into the river while staring at their phones." Another revealing statistic I recently came across was from research released by Carnegie Mellon University, a [report](#) at the end of 2016 indicating that 127 people had died in the past few years taking selfies.

Using God-given platforms correctly and avoiding their becoming a self-promotional stage can be evaluated by the acid test for loving God which is demonstrated by genuinely caring about and loving others. We all know His great love for us as seen in *John 3:16*, but our love in return must be linked to the evidence of walking in God's love (*1 John 3:16*). "We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us, and we ought to

lay down our lives for the brethren.” If we try to live in John 3:16 and don't follow it to 1 John 3:16, we will tend to turn God's precious love for us into self-focused narcissism.

## Warning bells and reminders to operate on platforms and not seek stages

- **Constantly check your motives before God.**

**1 Corinthians 10:31** *Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*

**2 Corinthians 5:9** *Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.*

In God's way of thinking, *why* you do what you do matters more than *what* you do. We want to do God's will for the right reasons. The best motive is to help others glorify God above our own desire to be recognized or applauded.

**Philippians 2:4-5** *Don't be concerned only about your own interests but also be concerned about the interests of others. (5) Have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.*

- **Quit trying to promote your brand on every aspect of life.** Be careful if you find yourself subtly thinking of creative ways to promote your life, teachings, ideas, material, or opinions.
- **Watch out for the drive to be admired.** You enjoy the "likes" and your emotions rise and fall based on how many you get. If you continually check out your social media or your website to see how many followers or responses you get, it may be an indication of a drive to be admired rather than for God to be glorified.
- **Be careful and crucify any motive that identifies your particular area of service as an extension of you yourself.** My church, my ministry, or my area.
- **Beware if you have no real relationships in which you desire others' successes ahead of your own.** Do you walk in any kind of family/team relationships that Jesus described in His Last Supper teaching (John 13-17)? Jesus described a selfless life, serving God and others He joins us with. He prayed 3 times in John 17 that we would walk in the same type of relationships with our brothers and sisters that the Godhead walks in. When you look at the revelation of how the Godhead operated while Jesus walked on the earth, you see a continuing desire 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).

Let's make sure that at the center of any platform God gives us we are living for the glory of God which is revealed by promoting Jesus and laying down our lives for others.

- **John 15:12-13** *"This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. (13) Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends."*
- **1 John 4:7-11** *Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. (8) The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love... (11) Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.*

Check it out and sign up



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