

# Pride

By George Otis Jr.

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## Lecture I

This series is sort of like going to the dentist. We're going to be talking about one of your favorite subjects...pride...and we're going to start this evening by discussing the origins of pride. Kind of presenting sort of a cosmic scenario, looking at some things that took place in the heavenly many, many years ago and from that point looking at how pride was passed on to the human race. We want to look at some of the pitfalls of pride, particularly as it would concern spiritual leadership. We want to talk about what humility is and what humility is not. And we will look also at, if we have enough time, some very specific new movements that have risen up in society in recent years that are promoting what sounds innocent enough as the human potential. It's the whole human potential movement both in religious garb and also in various secular forms such as EST and others. We want to talk about selfism, the concept of selfism. What it is. Selfism is idolatry. We want to talk about the bondage of pride and the weight of pride. And then the difference between Christian love and self-love as it's taught and propagated by such people as Robert Schuller.

I came in this evening. I came in downstairs and was looking for everybody down there in the lecture room downstairs and I couldn't find anybody. So finally I thought, "Well gee, they surely don't want to come to a series on pride." Then when I was told you were all upstairs in the nursery, I thought, "Well, that's wonderful." You're just all coming in here placing yourself in a setting that's very appropriate for a series and I just wanted to say that if any of you are particularly struggling with pride that maybe you'd like to come up and sit in this green chair here for awhile and face the audience this evening. It might help.

The Lord has many, many interesting ways of dealing with us when we don't think we need to be dealt with. Have you ever discovered that in your own lives? That's what we call Grace...God giving us something we don't deserve. Some of the things that God offers to us or extends to us, we're not always all that excited about but what we want to do during the course of the next few sessions is to try to look at some of these things that God extends to us to help us develop in our Christian walk as real blessings. Now I see a lot of new faces tonight and most of you I don't know. Some of you I do. I was thinking this evening that maybe we could start with a little quiz that would help us find out whether or not we're proud but I think we'll dispense with that and get right down to it. We usually have about ten sessions to go over a series like this and we're kind of compacted here...only maybe about a total of four and a half or no, we can go longer than that, at least six hours together and during that time we've got to cover a lot of ground. I would think that this is probably a series that will touch each and every one of us at some point in our lives. There might be some of you here who would like to stand up and share with us the fact that you have no problem whatsoever with pride in your life but I can

assure you that there will come a time in your life, perhaps in your later years, when you will experience the temptation to pride.

The thing about pride that I've noticed, I think it's the most insidious of all sins. It creeps into our heart without us even noticing it. Alexander Solzhenitsyn, I think, put it as well as anybody when he said, "Pride grows in the human heart like lard grows on a pig." which means that it grows very deep and it grows very fast. C. S. Lewis stated that it was his opinion that "the utmost evil is pride. Unchastity, anger, greed, drunkenness and all that are mere fleabites in comparison. It was through pride that the devil became the devil. Pride leads to every other vice. It is the complete anti-God state of mind." Now, I am going to ask you to use a little bit of imagination this evening but mixed in with that I'd like you to grab your Bibles...while I grab mine...and turn to a couple of scripture passages. The first is in Ezekiel, the 28th chapter. You might just want to mark that with your finger or a piece of paper. The second is the 14th chapter of the book of Isaiah. We don't have a great deal of information about what things were like in heaven when Lucifer, who became Satan, was still a resident there. But there are-the Bible affords us a couple of brief glimpses into heaven during those days and describes a little bit about what went on and those are the two passages I'd like to read right now. Against that backdrop we are going to then just put down our notepads and our pens and take an in depth look at what went on.

Isaiah 14:12-14: How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which did weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also in the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most high.

Ezekiel 28:11-19 Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffic; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more.

Ok. That's about as much as we have in terms of description of the events that took place in heaven both prior to, during, and after the great rebellion of the second most powerful being in heaven whose name was Lucifer, who was the covering cherub. Who God Himself said, I have appointed thee to be the cherub that covers. He, whom God Himself, describes as a beautiful, perfect being. Now, I believe that the origins of pride in the universe probably came about according to a scenario that was probably very similar to the one that I'm going to give you now. Sometimes when we think about Satan or Lucifer we're tempted to think that he's this great antagonist of God and that he has always been separate from God; that he has always been God's enemy; that he's always been evil. Yet, when we go back to the very beginning of the story, we need to remind ourselves that it was God Himself, the High and Holy One who inhabits eternity, who created Lucifer. God created the being that we now realize and acknowledge as Satan. After God had created Lucifer, sometime later and no one really knows for sure how long it was, Lucifer took a good look at himself.

I don't know exactly what heaven was like then, if it's like the heaven that's described in the book of Revelation, but it certainly was a marvelous place. We are told that there are these incredible pools of water there. Bodies of water. It was perhaps in one of these reflecting pools, somewhere in heaven, that one day Lucifer saw himself as he was standing there. He beheld his own beauty. Nothing wrong in that. All he was doing was recognizing an attribute. He was acknowledging a fact. He was extraordinary in his creation. When God Himself says that you are beautiful and that you are perfect, you probably got something going for you. When Lucifer saw himself, he began to recognize for what he was. There was no sin there; there was no pride there, yet. The problem enters when Lucifer thinks to himself, I am beautiful, without considering how he became so.

When Lucifer says to himself, I am beautiful, without considering how he became so. And Lucifer begins to think that his beauty and his attractiveness is the result of his own doing; that he is somehow responsible for what he is and Lucifer begins to think of himself separately from God. He forgets about the fact that God has created him and thinks instead only about his beautiful existence. This self-awareness becomes a preoccupation with Lucifer. He is constantly thinking about himself and about the fact that he's beautiful. He's enamored with himself and he ponders for the first time, the legitimacy of God receiving all of the praise, all of the allegiance and all of the attention in heaven; 100 percent of it. And Lucifer asks, 'Is not my own beauty and my own brightness and my own radiance worthy of some recognition?' I am terribly beautiful. And he looks at himself, Lucifer does, in comparison to the rest of heaven's hosts and he answers his own question in the affirmative. Yes, in comparison to the rest of heaven's hosts, I deserve some kind of unique recognition, some kind of unique, special attention. I am exceedingly bright. I am terribly beautiful. I am not like the others. I am special.

He doesn't consider the fact, at this point, that his uniqueness, the fact, his uniqueness of form and powerful estate or position in heaven, has been given to him by God. He doesn't consider where what he is and what he has come from, only about what he is and what he has. Lucifer begins to covet the praise that the angels offer to God and he no longer

recognizes God as the source of his existence but as a rival for glory. He reminds himself how worthy he is of worship and attention and begins to chafe at what he perceives as the injustice of God's monopoly on praise and attention in heaven. This self-pity now becomes a preoccupation. It starts with self-awareness, a preoccupation with self-awareness and it moves to self-pity. Until suddenly, a luscious, exhilarating thought enters his mind and he thinks to himself; I will be like the most high; I myself will command the attention of heaven. The fact that his rival happens to be, for the attention of heaven, happens to be the Great Creator God and he a mere creature, is now nothing but a blur in the deep recesses of his mind. The truth of the past, that he was a created being, the truth of his relationship, his prior relationship with God, is all swallowed up in Lucifer's heady plans for the future.

We know by implication that Satan, or Lucifer at that time, somewhere about this time or period, carried his mutinous plan to the angelic hosts in heaven and presented it to them. He argued, no doubt, that their subservience to God's requirement of undivided attention and obedience was, in reality, bondage. God, he said, was merely seeking the exaltation of Himself, at your expense. Satan came along and promised liberty to the heavenly hosts and his high position, his high rank in heaven, likely gave credibility to his deception. It wasn't just anybody who was speaking to them, this was Lucifer; the anointed one; the covering cherub; second in command in all of heaven; reasoning with the angelic hosts. Saying, asking them to begin, maybe for the first time, to think separate thoughts; to think apart from God; to think about themselves. And to consider the fact that God's requirements of them were perhaps a form of bondage. He, as second in command, was offering, if they would give him their allegiance, to liberate them from the bondage of God, from being subservient to God. We have to realize that as Satan presented the angels with his arguments that he used certain tools of persuasion that God could not use. Namely, deception. God could not use deception, Lucifer did. Since there had been no prior sin in heaven then Satan's, or Lucifer's, deception which was created through pride produced some real questions in their minds.

Think about it. They have no record of sin. They have no experience with sin and here is the number two ranking being in heaven presenting them with these questions. Powerful. At least one third of the hosts of heaven followed Lucifer in that deception - they agreed with his arguments. A side point that should be made here - we need to remember - is that Satan, or Lucifer, had no tempter. The potential for evil and wrong is inherent in true freedom.

You bet the angels had free will, they were moral beings, just like we are. Now there was, of course, a great controversy in heaven at this particular time, as the one who would be called "the father of lies" began to earn his reputation. God Himself was deeply, deeply grieved over what was going on because He loved Lucifer and He loved those heavenly beings that were being turned or swayed by Lucifer's deceitful arguments. He was even more concerned with restoring the serenity of heaven that had been breeched.

In light of the circumstances, God's decision to deport or to kick out, rather than to destroy, these rebels and their leader, was a very, very wise move. Had God immediately

blotted Satan from existence, had God totally destroyed Lucifer, from that moment on all the rest of creation would have served God out of fear rather than out of love. What's more the influence of the deceiver, his arguments, would not have been fully destroyed. They would have lingered in heaven's courts. Nor would the spirit of the rebellion have been utterly eradicated. Only the perpetrator but not the spirit. God Himself was so wise that He recognized this. He had all the power and all the authority in the universe and He could have destroyed all of those rebellious angels and Lucifer and then created others to take their place. But the other angels that were not destroyed had listened, had heard, had been exposed to Lucifer's arguments and Lucifer would have introduced a "bad taste", if you will, into heaven.

There would be that undercurrent of wondering whether or not perhaps that he was right. Here he told us that God was demanding all of our attention and all of our obedience, just so that He might be exalted and the first time somebody questions God's monopoly on attention, He obliterates them. Maybe Lucifer was right. And as the other angels watched God destroy them, from that moment on, their obedience to God would have been partially, at least, out of fear, not out of love. Not because God was so wonderful that they chose to give Him their attention, their obedience and praise and, of course, that would be the only basis that God would ever accept attention and praise and worship from a free will being. God, instead of destroying Lucifer and those angels, He deported them. He patched up the peace of heaven, the serenity. He kicked them out, He didn't destroy them but He kicked them out to earth. And God, at that point, began to devise a fantastic plan that would reveal once and for all to the entire universe what the true heart of God was really like and would reveal once and for all to the entire universe and to every moral being in it, the deception of Satan, or Lucifer's arguments.

In John 3, we read these words, "For this purpose, the Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil." God, Jesus' true victory over Satan's deceptive claims, was an act of utter, selfless humiliation and submission. The works and the arguments of the devil were totally destroyed by God living out just the opposite when He didn't have to - out of love. Of-course, Calvary was the capstone of God's revelation, reversing graphically, Lucifer's false charges of pride. We read instead that Jesus, the Son of God, emptied Himself. He didn't think it was robbery to be equal with God but He put aside all that He was entitled to, in front of all the angels of heaven. He left their presence to go to earth; to become a servant to wash our feet; and to die for our sin, after identifying with it, of a broken heart.

John 14:30, Jesus said, "...for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." In other words, when Lucifer confronted the person of Jesus Christ that sinless man in perfect obedience to the Father, in perfect selflessness, the servant of all. When Jesus came to this earth, He unleashed a tidal wave of humility and Lucifer came to attack Jesus to prove to all these angels that his arguments were valid. And Jesus said, when Lucifer came to confront me, to find a foothold in my life that he could use to validate his arguments, he found nothing in me. Because Jesus laid aside his reputation, he became nothing. You see Jesus' victory was not just His death on the cross, it was His life, as well.

The history of this, Satan's terrible experiment, was to be a perpetual safeguard to all holy beings to prevent them from like deception. Humility will always prove her accusers wrong through acts of love.

I remember a good friend of mine; my best friend's father, who is probably the humblest individual I've ever met in my life. The meekest, the most gentle, the most self-effacing, humble man I've ever met in my life. He was appointed in one particular church to be Sunday school superintendent. There was a woman in that church who coveted his position who was a Sunday school teacher. One day she came up to him and she just laid into him and told him what she thought of him and about the job that he was doing; that it was pretty second rate and that he had a lot to learn about being a Sunday school superintendent and that he was a pretty poor one. After this whole thing was over, he simply looked at her and said, "You know, you're wrong. I'm much worse than all that." It was the end of the discussion.

The end of the debate, the end of the matter, the end of the great discussion between Lucifer and Jehovah God, will end this way. "And then shall that wicked one be revealed whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming." Here's Lucifer, enamored with his physical beauty and his physical brightness, will be destroyed by the moral brightness and beauty of almighty God.

When Lucifer was kicked out of heaven to this earth, he worked very hard in spreading his poison of pride to the human race. Genesis 3:4-5, we read, "And the serpent said to the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." And he went on to say, to argue, to persuade, to reason with Adam and Eve, if you know good and evil for yourself then you can make your own independent decisions. You see God only wants to keep you dependent for His own sake. He doesn't want you to have the knowledge of good and evil because if you have that then you can make your own decisions about what's right and wrong and about how you're going to live your own lives. In preventing you from having that knowledge what God is in effect trying to do is to hold you in bondage. Free yourself from his bondage. Be sovereign. When you eat of that fruit, you yourselves will be as gods. Sound familiar? Same old argument that he used on the angels in heaven. Same one.

Robert Ringer is a best-selling author who has written a number books including this one entitled, "Looking Out for Number One." He has also written another book entitled "Winning Through Intimidation." Benign, humble little titles. This book here, "Looking Out for Number One", is dedicated to the hope that somewhere in our universe there exists a civilization whose inhabitants possess sole dominion over their own lives. Carl Frederick, who is one of the leaders in the EST movement. How many of you have heard of EST before? It's a self-improvement, I won't say a self-improvement movement but I guess that's what it is. EST stands for Erhardt Seminar Training and its founder, the founder of this program or this therapy is a man by the name of Werner Erhardt who believes that he is the reincarnation of Jesus Christ. He tells his audiences that they

wouldn't believe the feelings that he has inside of himself. It's very, very powerful. I'll share a little bit about EST with you later, tomorrow night or the following night when we get a chance. Carl Frederick is one of the top ranking officers in the EST movement. You pay \$375.00 to go through his initial training that is quite an incredible process. Carl Frederick has written a book, he is an EST graduate, entitled "Playing the Game the New Way" and he makes this statement in his book, "You are the supreme being." Reality is a reflection of your notions, totally, perfectly. In my view, the sole purpose of life is to acknowledge that you are the source, then choose to be what you know you are and it will all flow from there."

The famous psychologist, theoretician, Carl Rogers put it this way, "I am the one who chooses and I am the one who determines the value of an experience for me." Jean Paul Sartre, the French existentialist and philosopher put it this way, "If I have discarded God the Father, there has to be someone to invent values and value is nothing less, nothing else, than the meaning that you chose."

Ayn Rand in her book, "The Virtue of Selfishness", makes this statement "The virtue of pride can best be described by the term, moral ambitiousness. It means that one must earn the right to hold oneself as one's own highest value by achieving one's own moral perfection. Everything that man needs has to be discovered by his own mind and produced by his own effort." Ludwick Verbach who had such a profound impact on people like Karl Marx and Lenin, humanist, the German humanist, put it this way, " But that which in religion ranks first, namely God, is as I have shown in truth and reality something second. For God is merely the projected essence of man. What therefore ranks second in religion, namely man, that must be proclaimed and recognized as the first. Man's God is man. That this is the highest law of ethics. This is the turning point of history." And he was right. Robert Ringer in his book, Looking Out for Number One, continues in his introduction to encourage his readers to "first, clear your mind and allow your intellect to take control as you read and most important, think of yourself, number one, as a unique individual." So the formula of these philosophers; the formula of these self-promoters is to first deify yourself, declare yourself God, declare yourself to be sovereign and then choose, make choices about what you want, and then win at life. Does that formula sound familiar? "Ye shall be as Gods." "I will exalt myself above the stars in heaven. I will be like the most high."

So the poison was passed to the human race. We have today and it's crept into Christian circles too, in various forms, a prostitution of a truth. A prostitution of a teaching that in its proper bonds is a good thing. It's called the self-love theory. Want to know what self-love is all about? Robert Schuller's written a book all about it entitled, "Self Love, the Dynamic Force of Success." I'll be sharing a few things from this book with you probably a little later this evening. Basically, what Schuller states in his theory of self-love is, and I'm going to give you some direct quotes here, which come from this book. "#1. Self-love is, or should be the basic will in human life." You might want to think about that for a minute. "#2. Self-love is a crowning sense of self-worth." Not too bad until he goes on to say, "it is an abiding faith in yourself. It produces self-reliance, self-confidence." Think about that. It goes on to say, "furthermore, you are on the road to emotional, mental and

spiritual health when you discover that what you really want more than anything else in life is to be able to know and appreciate yourself, through self-love."

There is some ad copy, advertisement copy, in the magazine, Psychology Today, that appeared not too long ago that read something like this, "I love me. I'm not conceited. I'm just a good friend to myself and I like to do whatever makes me feel good. We live by a certain philosophy. We try to make our dreams come true today instead of waiting for tomorrow. But before you can do good things for yourself, you have to know yourself. You need self-knowledge before you can have self-satisfaction. Think about it." And the ad ends. Think about it. Think about it. Robert Ringer says, "looking out for number one is the conscious, rational effort to spend as much time as possible doing those things which will bring you the greatest amount of pleasure." And when you boil it all down, I think that's what everyone's main objective in life really is. To feel good. We sometimes lose sight of the fact that our primary objective is really to be as happy as possible and that all other objectives, great and small, are only a means to that end.

Remember Jesus said, a good tree cannot produce corrupt fruit; neither can a corrupt tree produce good fruit. Now, so what is self-love? How does it work? I mean, shoot, we're ugly, we're not successful, we're depressed. We come up and we see a book staring at us from the book rack, "Self Love, the Dynamic Force of Success", and we say to ourselves, "Boy, we need to read that book." So we pick up the book and we start reading through it and we think, "Oh hey, man, Robert Schuller, pastor of the first drive-in, walk-in church and author of the million-plus best seller, "Move Ahead With Possibility Thinking." This is written by a Christian, a pastor, a minister. Hey, this is good stuff."

All right, for those of you who are struggling with self-love, in your effort of-course to feel good which we all want to do, Dr. Schuller offers ten tips to lift your spirits. So for those of you who need your spirits lifted let me offer you a few of those tips.

First tip, now I'm going to skip over a few because we don't have all that much time tonight. The first tip, if you want to feel good, lift your spirits, is to join a status building club that commands respect in the community. That will help to lift your spirits and help you to feel good.

The third tip is to buy new clothes. Of-course, you need to come up with the money or shoplift. The example that Dr. Schuller uses in showing how new clothes can lift your spirits and help you to really love yourself is the difference that a quarter of a million dollars in diamond necklaces purchased by the showman Florence Ziegfield for his Las Vegas showgirls made in their morale. They were kind of depressed so he bought two hundred and fifty thousand dollars worth of necklaces for them and, boy, did it lift their spirits. In this same section, Dr. Schuller and I quote said, "I borrowed a friend's new Cadillac the other day and driving down the street of shining store windows, I saw myself in that beautiful car mirrored in the windows. I was really impressed. I looked and felt like a big shot."

There's a Greek myth about a young man by the name of Narcissus who one day was riding his horse out through the forest and he came upon this reflecting pool. He got off his horse and looked down at the pool and he saw his face there - mirrored in the window. And he looked and he felt like a big shot. He was really impressed. For the rest of his life he became enamored with himself. This is where we get the word, narcissism. There's been a number of books that have been written about that subject. One was by a University of Rochester professor by the name of Christopher Lash called "The Culture of Narcissism - American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations." Talks about the kind of damage these kinds of attitudes can do to a human being, to a human psyche, to a human personality. Let me give you a few more of these tips.

Tip number 6 to lift your spirits, "Get to know important people. It will do wonders for your self-respect if you earn the friendship of an important person." I heard Jesus say one time, or ask, "Will I do?"

Tip number seven, "Climb the social ladder. Strive to rise to a higher position in life. You promote your self-respect when are promoted to a higher position." Jesus gave a parable one day, a story. He said, when you are invited to a wedding feast, don't go up and sit at the head table right off the bat. Go and find the least table in one of the back rooms and sit there. It's very embarrassing when you come and take a seat at the head table and somebody comes and taps you on the back as says, excuse me but this seat was reserved for Mr. So and So could you go and find another place. On the other hand, when you are sitting in the back of the rooms with the common folk and somebody comes and says the master of the feast has requested your presence at the head table. Oh, really? A different story isn't it.

The eighth tip, if your spirits are sagging, is to "Stand up. Straight and tall." And the ninth tip is to be what Dr. Schuller calls "a constructive nonconformist. The pride of leadership comes to those who dare to be different." We are going to be talking about the pride of leadership, probably tomorrow night. "The pride of leadership comes to those who dare to be different. It inspires nonconformity and leaves you with an "I" consciousness." Schuller goes on to give us his "ten steps" to a strong self-love and his material is very similar to that found in Norman Vincent Peale's very famous book entitled The Power of Positive Thinking. It's selfish character shines through even in the chapter titles. "How to Create Your Own Happiness." "Expect the Best and Get It." That's a phrase, by the way, which they use in EST.

Norman Vincent Peale's emphasis, according to psychologist Paul Batts, on faith in the self, "reduces God to a useful servant of the individual in his quest for personal goals" as exhibited in another chapter title, "How to Draw Upon That Higher Power." Batts goes on to say, "The over-riding message and basis for its popularity (the book) is Peale's Christian rationalization of self-realization." Very, very close to what the secular world calls Rogerian Self-Love Therapy named after its founder, theoretician Carl Rogers. He has devised what he calls reflective or client-centered therapy. What you do in this therapy is you take the patient and you make him the center of everything. You ask certain questions and you take the answers and bounce the answers right back off the

client or patient. Everything revolves around he or she. It recreates the conditions of the myth of Narcissus. I mean after all, who else is there to fall in love with? Robert Hendon in his book, *The Age of Sensation*, which is a psychoanalytic exploration of several college age young people in the late sixties and early nineteen seventies, made this interesting observation, "This culture" in the United States (the youth culture in America). "This culture is marked by a self- interest and an egocentrism that increasingly reduce all relations to the question, "What am I getting out of it?" Society's fascination with self-aggrandizement makes many young people judge all relationships in terms of winning and losing points. The scale of value against which both sexes now tend to measure everything is solitary gratification." It's a very important term that we want to discuss. Solitary gratification.

Let me just make a few preliminary remarks about solitary gratification. Solitary gratification is the ultimate in Robert Ringer's advice. Everything has strings attached and you never give anything unless there is some benefit to be derived from it. That, by the way, is a direct quote from Robert Ringer. We look at each relationship in terms of what we are going to get out of it. Forget what the other person is getting out of it or not getting out of it, that doesn't matter. What matters is what does this relationship do for me. If it does something for me I keep it. When it ceases to do anything for me, I release it. There are all kinds of couples today who are living together on that basis. As long as that other person is producing something for me; as long as they're meeting some need in me; as long as I am getting some gratification out of it, I'll continue it. But the moment that I'm no longer getting any benefit out of it regardless of how the other person feels - bye, bye, I'll see you later. That's solitary gratification. Not mutual gratification anymore, solitary gratification. What am I going to get out of it? What's the benefit to me?

We now have today a psychology for a consumer society. The advertising and philosophy behind it is not only aimed at selling things but at selling lifestyles as well. Again, based on solitary gratification. Based on a selfish mentality. So we turn on TV, there's some woman putting shampoo all over her hair and then the next instant - you know they never show them, very rarely do they show them putting in the curlers and doing the drying and all of that. They're just shampooing and then the next thing they're doing is flipping their hair around. "Hey, Brand X cost a little more but I'm worth it." There are a lot of commercials out right now with that very slogan - I'm worth it.

And then there's the Geritol commercials and here's some real wholesome looking family and some young girl saying - I thought I had to be old to take Geritol but now I realize you don't have to be old if young people start taking Geritol the people who make Geritol will make lots more money - so let's all take Geritol. That's really the philosophy behind it but now you see this very healthy looking young lady with her husband sitting there probably in front of her. She's got her hands on his shoulder maybe some kids there too. "I try to exercise regularly, eat a balanced diet and of course take Geritol. I take good care of myself because I'm important." Not my family but I'm important. Of-course, to my family - that's why the family's sitting there in the picture - it's not quite so blatant that way.

Then of-course there are all of those perfume commercials. There's - what's her name? I forget her name; you know plays on Charlie's Angels. Telling you how to be naughty, how not to be too much of a woman. But then of-course there's the perfume - if you buy this special perfume and put it on, you won't smell like anyone else because, as they tell you, there's nobody else like you. Now that's profound isn't it? Why is it? I know, Michelle's dad, Larry, ...this guy can tell you exactly what kind of perfume you are wearing. He walks by everybody in church - hello, Mrs. So & So, you're wearing White Shoulders, Mrs. So & So, you're wearing Aviance and your wearing Mist. How come if there's nobody else like you every woman who wears that perfume smells the same. But somehow we realize - I mean it's like dresses. I mean, no two girls want to show up at the same party in the same dresses do they? Horror of horrors. Neither do we want to show up at the same event wearing the same perfume. Of-course we're going to smell the same and the makers of this perfume know darn well that's going to happen but they are appealing to your self-interest and they come and they say, hey listen "there's nobody else like you, when you put on this perfume it will have that special fragrance" - especially when you put it on to cover up the fact that you haven't bathed in three days.

Then, of course, we see all kinds of men and women gear jamming their way straight up in automobiles - I don't know how they do that - or around curves or whatever - there's this one woman just jamming through the gears in a 280-Z or something like that and in the background all these voices in the background singing "For the woman who is so contemporary she doesn't have time to marry." All you have to do to develop a whole pagan mentality is watch commercials today and you'll be well indoctrinated in the virtues of living for yourself. Less blatant but the same message - oh, I should say - I forgot all about this. In a subtle way all the hamburger makers are into this thing too today - I mean that really hurts me.

Any YWAMmer whose spent a lot of time serving on a foreign field knows how much McDonald's means. I came back out of the Soviet Union on my first trip, I'd been arrested there, and hassled, interrogated and all kinds of things. Drove all the way out in this old beat-up VW Van and we finally broke down, thank God, in front of McDonalds in Munich, Germany. But what are they saying to us today? "You deserve a break today." or "Have it your way." Now, I have to admit I like that. I appreciate somebody telling me that I don't have to purchase a ready packaged hamburger with all that corruption on it but still even in fast-food advertisements today the whole psychology of the advertising is to self-interest. It's selfish - through and through. Today there are those who are teaching and there are a lot of "Christians" who have developed seminar series and all kinds of books and tapes and programs to develop our creative potential. Don't we all want to do that? Don't we all know that down deep inside of us is this massive, untapped of creative potential and if we will just give so and so \$10.00 they are going to show us how we can pull all this creativity up. What will we...there will be no stopping us.

Paul Batts in his book, "Psychology is Religion", comments on this whole creative potential business, he says, "Today, in the secular world creativity is simply a gift from the self, to the self. It has degenerated into a synonym for any form of personal pleasure without reference to others. Within the narcissist logic of selfism being creative does not

mean doing anything of genuine significance. In fact, a good case could be made for the net negative contribution to social, spiritual and religious life by training in creativity and self-actualization. Many people today have such high opinions (adequate, ample, self-love) such high opinions of their creative potential that they prefer welfare to work available at humble jobs. That is jobs below their self-defined level of work. Creativity programs have become schools for inordinate pride."

Now, when God talks about creativity; when the Bible talks about creativity; when the Bible talks about creative ministry; how does it differ from our thoughts and our conversations about creative ministry? What comes to your mind when you think about creative ministry? Let me put a few things on the board and see if this is what you had in mind. Just join the YWAM creative ministry's team. Is that what you had in mind?

Oh, no, not me, I wasn't thinking that. I'll bet nine out of ten of you were. It's what I would think of. If somebody said they have a creative ministry's team the first thing that would come to my mind are those types of things. When you and I think about creativity our emphasis is on technique and methodology, approach. The way, the means, the how to. God's emphasis on creativity is not on approach or technique but on result. One result. How can we tell if our ministry is truly creative? If it produces change. God's emphasis on creativity, the key word with God when He's talking about creativity is change, result. If you have a truly creative ministry then the net effect of that ministry will be the changed lives of those who are exposed to your ministry - whatever technique or approach you're using. You want to be really creative. You want to develop your creative potential. The best advice I can give you is to die to everything that you are and allow the Lord Jesus to stand up in you; allow the Holy Spirit to blossom forth in your life and help you share under the power and the anointing of the Holy Ghost and then see what happens in your life and in your ministry. Here we are fooling around with puppets when we have access to the power source of the universe. Now, I suppose the Holy Ghost can work through puppets, I'm not into that.. Or drama, or singing, or any of those other things except maybe Halloween shows. There are some youth leaders whose idea of the Great Commission is a Halloween show. That's a tragedy.

There's a book written number of years ago entitled, "The Kingdom of Self", it had a neat castle on the cover, by Earl Jabay and he remarked at the beginning of his book, "The war is on this issue. Who is number one? Is it I? Or is it Thou? I think it is I." We have developed several words in the English language to describe the resultant condition. You might want to jot these down so that you will remember them. The first word is pride. I'm going to define these words for you also briefly. Pride. What is pride? Pride is an exaggerated opinion of one's self with associate behavior. That can be either thinking more of yourself or thinking less of yourself - than you really are. The second word to describe this condition (Who is number one? I think it is I.) is the word, selfishness. Overly concerned with one's own welfare and a lack of concern with others. The third word is arrogance. Overbearing. Do you know what overbearing means? It means someone who won't let you forget that they're around. An unwarranted sense of self-importance. The fourth word is conceit. An exaggerated opinion of one's self. Strained expression. Strained expression, not just in words or in countenance, in movement, in

anything. Not normal expression but strained. A conceited person, when you can walk like this, why walk like this when you can walk like this? Strained expression. Why brush your hair like this, when you can brush it like this? Why blink your eyes like that, when you can blink them like that. It's the person who comes in and sits down behind their desk in the office with ski glasses on. You know what I mean?

Gee, I remember when I was going to high school and I'm sure it's no different today. I used to hate to go into the restroom and it wasn't for the reasons that you might think. There lined up in front of the mirror would be about sixteen jocks all with their metal combs out, just fluffing their hair back. I mean how many times do the same hairs need to be combed? Strained expression. The fifth word to describe this condition is egotism. Constant, excessive reference to one's self: to be self-centered. Constant, excessive reference to one's self: to be self-centered. There's another word. This word comes out of the Bible. It's the word, vanity. There are two definitions for this word and I think it's very suggestive. The first definition is emptiness, worthlessness, futility. You find this word again and again and again in Ecclesiastes where the preacher says, All is vanity, all is empty, I've tried this, I've tried that, I've experienced that and it's empty; it's futile; it's vain. The second and similar definition of vanity, that which is apparently genuine but lacks substance. Basically, an outward manifestation of something deeper: an outward manifestation of an inner excessive desire for admiration. So, you walk into a restaurant and see some woman come in with eighteen bracelets on her arm and false eyelashes out to here - that's vanity. But, it's an outward manifestation of something deeper and inner desire for recognition and attention.

But what it all adds up, it looks like a person like that thinks they're everything but in reality, they think they're nothing. The word vanity is derived from the Latin word, vanus, and from the old Norse word, vanta, which means to have too little of; to be deficient; and it's tied to the word, want. There are so many people in the world today who are vain. I remember one night; I was in a hotel-dining room ballroom in Moscow, the city of Moscow. If you ever want to eat in peace, don't ever eat in a Moscow hotel room, or ballroom. They always have entertainment and the Russians have this penchant for volume; the music is better when it is listened to louder; the drink is better when it is stronger. They have a real emphasis on proof and decibels in the Soviet Union and they mix the two. This one night, I was really beat, I was really tired and the last thing I wanted to do was listen to a loud, blasted band. They just - it looks like a Rolling Stone's concert - it's ludicrous - they have this stuff, this amplification just piled up on this platform. It makes your food just jump up and vibrate on the plate; your silverware is rattling across the table.

There was a woman in this particular group, this singing group, was a lead singer. Boy, did she think she was hot stuff - it was just incredible. You know, one of those kind that just swallows the microphone? The tone of voice, the expression on her face, the clothes she was wearing - everything about her exuded pride and vanity and she appeared almost magnetic. Something about her almost forced you to watch - you know your head just kept turning and looking at this idiotic spectacle. Finally, in the middle, at the height of one of these numbers, here's this woman swallowing the microphone and going through

these gyrations and all of a sudden the power went out in the whole place and suddenly, she's moving around but there's no sound coming out. I'll tell you something, you want to look at something really silly, turn on one of these TV dance programs and turn the sound off. You really begin to realize how ridiculous human beings can get and the kind of things they can do. I really like watching people dance in those programs. I mean some are double-jointed. Somehow they can get themselves going like this, doing all of these things. I mean it is really funny. If you are ever depressed you don't need to pick up Schuller's book, just go and turn on one of those programs and turn the sound off. Every once in awhile - it's not just women who do this sort of thing - you'll find some - I saw some man come in a store I was in some time ago - the guy must have been 107 or something - really, he was up there. But his philosophy must have been, "Youth is an attitude of the heart" and here this old guy, comes in wearing a shirt open all the way to his navel, wearing one of those heavy, gold medallions - swaggering around - I mean the medallion was so heavy it was pulling this old man over! As crazy as these people look and as ridiculous as they look, this external vanity is really only an expression, a symptom of a sign of internal emptiness.

When we succumb, ourselves, to the intoxicating poison of pride that has been passed on to our generation by Satan then we too can begin to have delusions of exalting ourselves above the stars of God. And we attempt to assume various roles and characteristics and attributes that are equivalent to those that God possesses. Satan says to us, "Be sovereign. You shall be as gods. You are gods. So live as though you were. Manifest the attributes of God." In Earl Gabbie's book, *The Kingdom of Self*, he mentions several and I've condensed it down a little bit. I think that there are four basic God-like characteristics or attributes that the selfish person will begin to manifest in their lives and I would like to share those with you as we bring this evening to a close. The first thing that we think to ourselves is that we are sovereign. Sovereign - I am the law. I decide what's right for me. I am the one who chooses (in the words of Carl Rogers); I am the one who determines the value of an experience for me; I am sovereign. I am the supreme being. Reality is a reflection of your notions, totally, perfectly. The sole purpose of life is to acknowledge that you're the source. If I've discarded God the Father, there has to be someone to invent values and value is nothing less or nothing else than the meaning that you choose. The virtue of pride can best be described as moral ambitiousness.

It means that one must earn the right to hold oneself as one's own highest value by achieving one's own moral perfection. Everything man needs has to be discovered by his own mind; produced in his own effort. Everything flows from me. I'm sovereign. I'm the law. I decide. How do we treat one another in this respect? I'll tell you an area in my own life that God needs to deal with to give you an example of what I'm talking about here. In this area, I am the law, I'm sovereign. One problem, one way that this can be manifested is in the area of tardiness, of being late all the time. Which I am. I have found all kinds of excuses and rationalizations for the fact that I am always late. One is that I am doing more work than other people are. I am doing all of these things in between this hour and hour and I mean, gosh, a normal person even wouldn't try to do half that much therefore it's okay that I am really late - because I am working hard. What I have said though is, "I am the law. I will be there when I decide to be there and if you have to wait for me, that's

too bad, because I'm sorry. My will, my law, my schedule is preeminent." And that is a manifestation of selfishness. There are many other ways, by the way, that this sovereignty business can be manifested. Jerry Rubin, remember Jerry Rubin, former head of the Yippies? How many of you remember Jerry Rubin? Oh, I feel old. Jerry Rubin was one of the rabble-rousers in the late sixties. Head of the yippies. Don't ask me who the yippies were.

Remember Richard Nixon? Whew! Lyndon Johnson? OK. He was a guy who was just crazy and radical. He was one of the "Chicago seven", real radical leader in the late 1960's. He used to be interviewed on all these news programs. There would be these interviewers, you know like "Meet the Press" or something like that. There would be all these members of the press, they'd come and sit in their seats and there would be the seat for the guest - Jerry Rubin would come in, take the chair, you know on TV and face all of his questioners. What he was saying was, "I'm sovereign. I'm the law right now. Focus on me. I do things my way. If you don't like it - tough. You don't like the way I do things - leave - tough." He made the statement in his book, *We are Everywhere*, I'm sure that perhaps you've heard this statement before, "I'll do it when I'm ready." I'm the law. I'm sovereign. I am like the Most High.

I couldn't go on any further without another bit of wisdom from Robert Ringer. "When you say someone is dishonest, what you really mean is that you and he differ in your definitions of honesty. This doesn't mean his moral standards are lower than yours, they're simply not the same. If that person thinks that your moral standards are lower than his, that's his problem. It's not your job to look out for him." What do you think your job is? Look out for number one. "Your only concern, therefore, is to make sure your head is on straight.

Your moral standards should be what you define them to be don't allow others to be so presumptuous as to set them for you." So, let's all set our own moral standards. Let's all set our own moral standards. We shall be as Gods. Nobody will tell me that I have to stop at a red light. Nobody's going to tell me I have to pay for that Snickers bar at the check out stand. Nobody's going to tell me that I have to drive 55 miles an hour between here and Seattle. Their moral standards are not higher than mine; they are just not the same.

What a world it would be if we really lived that way. What a world it would be. Talk about a mad, mad, mad world. Mad in more ways than one. The second thing that happens to us, the selfish person, when he takes on God-like characteristics, not only does he think he's sovereign, he also thinks that he is omniscient. Omniscient characteristic declares, 'I am truth, I am right.' Of-course I am truth and I am right because I know everything. I am all knowledge. I'm not only the sovereign law; I'm all knowledge. George McDonald, a great Christian writer, friend of C. S. Lewis, I think made an appropriate statement when he said, "There is no interpreter of right with stronger convictions than selfishness". The omniscient person is the unteachable person. "How can you have anything to teach me when I already know everything?" This was Richard Nixon's problem. I say that sadly, not simply. I'm right, I'm truth, I know

everything and you just don't understand why I did what I did. It's a paralyzing thing when we think that we are omniscient.

I want to talk tomorrow night about the paralysis of pride. It's something which I'm sure we have all experienced at one time or another in conversation or in circumstance. A horrible feeling. The third quality is that we see ourselves as, not only sovereign and omniscient; not only I am the law and I am truth and I am right. We see ourselves as a savior, I am a messiah. Many, many scientists see themselves in this light. They are saviors, they are messiahs. Scientists have come to offer us the solutions to all of our problems. They are going to save us from all of our diseases, from all of our problems, all of our anxieties with this or that discovery. News commentators are saviors and messiahs. I mean, where would we be without John Chancellor telling us what's right and what's wrong in El Salvador, I mean, I'd be lost without - and then of-course there is Jane Fonda. Where would we be without Jane, Fonda that is. We'd all be mixed up and deceived about the war in Vietnam if it wasn't for her. We'd all have our heads screwed on backwards with regard to what stance we should be taking about nuclear proliferation if it wasn't for Jane. We should be so grateful that this messiah has come into our midst.

Several years ago, I was witnessing to a young man who was a humanist. He wasn't your run-of-the-mill humanist either. He wrote for the humanist campus newspaper at UCLA and also for California State University at Northridge. We had many, many encounters and he heard the Gospel. He felt it was his duty to picket the largest Baptist church in our community every Sunday with a sign that read, "Let Man Live". He would march out in front of the church on the sidewalk with the sign, all by himself. "Let Man Live". Here are all these idiots sitting inside the church talking about dying to self. It's the last thing we need to do to wonderful self: let man live! Let him bring forth; let all his creative potential spring forth; why are you putting it all to death? What's the matter with you people? Let man live. He walked back and forth, Sunday after Sunday. He was the messiah; he was their savior. Full of arrogance and full of pride and not even knowing it.

Then we have some people today who are experts on religious deception. People who write books telling us to watch out for this doctrine and to watch out for that doctrine. Who spend their entire lives finding fault and finding flaws. Who set themselves up as our guardian messiahs and our saviors. They're going to save us from deception. What happens unfortunately so often is that when we spend a lifetime we base our ministry upon negativism, and upon criticism, upon finding fault that sometimes it gets away from us and we can't stop. Pretty soon we start finding fault with things that God doesn't find fault with. Pretty soon we see ourselves as the experts. There are people like that today within the church. For the self-proclaimed experts, the guardians of orthodoxy. If you don't agree with my list of accurate Christian doctrines then you're a heretic. You deviated and departed from the essence of truth. Messiahism - save the body of Christ from itself. A messiah, a savior, is someone who fancies themselves to have knowledge of what the dangers are and then they are willing to lead the way. They have a special plan of salvation if we will only, of course, but follow them. Then they can lead us out of our situation and our misery. The last thing that the selfish person, the last characteristic or attribute that they take on is omnipotence. I am all-powerful. There's nothing that I

can't do. Earl Jabay in his book describes this guy who came up with the idea that he would lock himself in the trunk of his car and if he could find a way out of that locked trunk that he could then do anything. Hours later he finally managed to find a way to crawl through the backseat, of course, destroying his car in the process. But he emerged, all powerful. Hey, get out of a locked trunk, you can do anything.

I remember several years ago watching a Jack Paar special. He was showing different things around the world in this special, some of them were really funny. One of the things they were going to have this Indian Swamee who was going to walk across this tank of water. They were sort of like, some of those programs today, You Asked For It and things like that; they'll take you and introduce you to some of these people. They introduced you to this swami. They showed him going into his spiritual preparation for this feat. He was adjusting his turban, just right, sitting down in his, it looked to me like an excruciating cross-legged position, going into this yoga business. You know, getting himself into a proper frame of mind to exercise his sovereignty over the loss of gravity and to become one with nature. You know, we're all molecules, that sort of thing. So then we see him in the midst of his preparations and then the camera takes you off to some other mini- episode they're doing in the course of this special - then you come back a little later in the program and he's now really deep into the trance - he's really deep into it - then it goes off to something else and the finally late in the program the big moment comes. He comes out of the trance and begins to walk up these stairs. There's this little platform and then there's this long, it's about, fifteen yard tank of water maybe ten, fifteen, feet deep. He's going to try and do what Jesus did. And there he is standing there; he takes off this outer robe. He's got this long, scraggly beard, this turban, you know, but he's into the whole conscious. The drum rolls and he takes a step and goes plunging down into the water and you see this soaking wet little scrawny rat of a guru crawling out of this tank of water. And I tell you I don't think I've laughed so hard in my entire life, it was the funniest thing I've ever seen. What he was saying is, hey, I'm omnipotent, I just have to understand myself, and pull out all this creative potential and make it one with the universe and...took a dive.

There are people who today, some Christians, they think that they are omnipotent, they think they can do anything, including defeat habit patterns in their lives. And they're having some kind of problem or there's some kind of bondage they've been a slave to. It starts out simple enough with a few wrong choices but they persist in that sin, they don't confess the sin, don't repent of it and the current of the river that they're in becomes stronger and stronger and stronger until they're in rapids, and they're still sitting in this flimsy little boat saying, 'hey, I can get out anytime I want.' Pretty soon they are flying over the Niagara Falls saying, hey, I'm in control. Omnipotence. The root of that attitude, of saying I don't need anybody, I'm in control, I can handle it, is selfishness. It's pride. Another aspect of omnipotence is who thinks that they're immortal, that they will last forever. Most of us realize that we are physically going die but somehow our personality, our memory, and our ministry and it has such importance that it will last forever. No one will forget us. And especially young people think this, high school and college students, they're going to live forever, they're never going to die, they're going to always have smooth skin. You find such incredible pride and arrogance in high schools today because

everybody's young and healthy and feeling good. They've got the world by the tail and they're going to live forever and nobody's going to come and tell them any different. Hey, I can put anything into my body that I want. I can drink a whole aquarium full of booze, I can shoot dope into my arms, and I can handle it because I'm going to live forever, I'm never going to die. The root of that is selfishness and pride. Thinking more of ourselves than we ought to think, forgetting that we are but dust, that we are fragile, that life is but a handbreadth, if that, of vapor, a dandelion that's blown in the wind. Jerry Rubin was so omnipotent that he learned to quote, "Love myself enough so that I do not need another to make me happy." And there are people like that today. Self-confident, cocksure, everything man needs has to be discovered by his own mind and produced by his own effort. And the lady who said that is dead. You think your sovereign. You think your omniscient. You know everything, you think you do. There are some students who come to schools like this and they don't have anything to learn. There's nothing that the staff or guest lecturers can teach them because they know everything. If that's your attitude, you're proud, you're arrogant, and you're selfish, because you are holding back from God. You're preventing God from doing the work he wants in your heart and your life. If Jesus Christ could empty Himself of everything He was and had surely we can do the same. Are you a savior? Are you going to show everybody else how to do it? The right way, a better way. The truth? Are you omnipotent?

We've talked tonight. We've gone over some examples that are exaggerated. But you think about all the little subtle areas, in your own heart and life, which might not be reflected in some of those attributes and characteristics. Am I proud? Do I want to be like the Most High? Do I want life and the world to revolve around me? Do I want and am I looking out for number one?

Only the Holy Spirit can reveal to us the hidden subtlety of motives in our hearts. We go to confess our sin before God. There are three kinds of sin. There are sins against God. There are sins against others. And then there are those hidden motive sins that are so hard to find and are so hard to spot. When you go three months without cracking your Bible, without having a single quiet time, you've hurt God. When you've gone to somebody, another member of the school, and told them to take a hike when they've come to ask if you're hurting, you've sinned against them. But what about that which is rooted in our hearts, those hidden motive things, those things that we cannot tell, we cannot see on our own strength. Remember David said, "Search my heart, O God, see if there be any wicked way in me." The heart is deceitful and desperately wicked and who can know it. We cannot see our own heart, we have to allow God the opportunity to search our hearts. It's only when we see our hearts from that elevated perspective. It's only when we get out of ourselves and look back down at ourselves through God's eyes that we see reality.

There are people who go through their whole, entire lives and never know who they really are. They go through their entire lives and never know who they really are. They go through their entire lives thinking they are somebody other than who they really are. In the 7th chapter of Matthew, there are a whole group of people who come before the judgement throne of Christ saying, "we've cast out devil's in your name, we've healed the sick in your name, we've done many wonderful works in your name." They were busy

religious activists, they were involved, they were doing things, they had ministries. They had their own concept and they're own opinions about who they were. And instead of receiving the commendation that they no doubt expected the Lord, in effect, picks up a bucket of ice water from behind the throne and threw it right in their face and says, "Depart from me, O workers of inequity, for I never knew you." They were not living their lives here on earth in reality; they were living in a fantasy world. When the ultimate judgement came, the ultimate reckoning came they didn't make it.

The scary thing about that passage is that it says, "many will come to me in that day and say, Lord, Lord". It's not talking about a little isolated minority, it says "many will come before the throne of God on judgement day" in that condition. Where are they coming from? They are not coming out of the bars and brothels of our community, there are people coming out our churches. People like you and me who didn't make it because they didn't know who they were. It behooves us at this point in our lives, while God has graciously given us life and breath, he's given us time and opportunity to press into him and say, "God show me who I really am." Now is the time to find out who we are. Now, not then. If you think that there will never come a day when you will stand before that throne. That's the most tragic mistake you will ever make." Your ministry, your busyness, your coming to this school doesn't guarantee you anything. It doesn't matter what I've done all my life. It matters who I am and who I am not. Those people who had done all those wonderful works, many wonderful works, in the name of the Lord. For God to cultivate the relationship for the one they thought they were serving and that was the grand error.

Relationship is the bottom line. We can never change the fact that reality dictates to us that we are creatures. We didn't make ourselves. And every hour of every day, every time I feel my heart beat, I realize I am not making my heart pump my blood through my body, every time I take a breath of air, I realize it's because God has provided that for me. Whether I acknowledge it, remember it, recognize it or not. It is God who is graciously allowing me to continue my existence. Minute by minute, hour by hour, day by day, week by week, year by year. I am a creature and as a creature I must seek my source. I must find out who I am by returning to my roots. By returning to the fountain head of all life. The God of the universe, who made me, who fashioned me and who has given me life.

Let us pray... God we live in such a rotten, sinful, corrupt society. People all around us, moving through life with inflated opinions of themselves, in the church and outside of the church. But Oh God, tonight it's not our desire, it's not our design or intention to look at them. It's our desire to focus in on ourselves and know who we are. God tonight we want to come before you. We want to cast ourselves prostrate before you and say, O God, reveal to us who we really are, break through all the insulation that we put around our hearts, all of the superficial opinions that we've created about ourselves. Deliver us Lord from inflamed appetites and habit patterns. Help us to cut through all of that Lord and come to the very core of our existence. God only you, you're the only being in this entire universe who has the power and the capability of revealing our hearts to us as you see them, as they really are and O God that must to be the starting place, the starting point for

anything that we are ever to become that's meaningful at all. God, pride is such an insidious thing that it creeps into our lives and into our hearts, so quietly and so subtly we need you to point it out, we need to be delivered from ourselves. Oh, Jesus we need to be like you. God show us the full meaning behind that magnificent paradox, "He that loses his life will find it but he that findeth his life will lose it." Holy spirit, I pray that you would speak to each one of our hearts tonight even as we go to bed and as we go through the day tomorrow God I pray that you would be communicating to us, that you will be revealing to us. We chose Lord to expose ourselves to your revelation and to your examinations. We don't fear you. We know that you love us and at this moment no matter what we've done with our lives, to this day, in this moment you love us. There is nothing we can do to make you stop loving us. You're willing our highest good right now and it's to you, good, only God, it's into your welcome arms that we cast ourselves. Not into the presence of a stern and cold and inexorable being but to you the God who art life. In Jesus name.