

The Narcissistic Personality of the End Time

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After God called us—think back when God called each one of us—there were two reasons that many of us came into the Church, particularly in the '50s, '60s and '70s. Because, if you remember, it was the height of the Cold War; the Church taught at the time that Christ was going to come in 1972. And many of us came into the Church to avoid the Tribulation. We did not want to suffer through the Tribulation—God's wrath on mankind. And I can remember... And I brought this book along; it's The Book of Revelation—Unveiled at Last! Maybe some of you remember that. This is the 1959 edition. You probably can't maybe see it on the DVD, but these are Basil Wolverton drawings about people just scared to death because of what's going on and the bombs falling and all of that. Many of us saw these pictures and read about the Tribulation and we didn't want to go through that. One of the reasons to come into the Church was to avoid the Tribulation.

A second one was that we wanted to have eternal life because none of us want to die. And we thought if Christ came in '72, that hey, just the twinkling of an eye, never have to die, never have to suffer like that, and suffer through death. So, we had those two motivations coming into the Church.

Now, behind that—avoiding the Tribulation and having eternal life—what was behind that? What was the motivation behind that? What it was was love of the self, self-love. And it's only natural to love the self enough to avoid pain, to avoid suffering, to avoid death.

However, when we came into the Church, we learned something else and it fits in perfectly with Les's sermonette. We didn't talk about this at all, but let's go to Matthew chapter 22 and see what we learned as a principle from God and from Christ and see that we begin, hopefully, to change our thinking, to change our motivations. Matthew 22, we'll begin in verse 35. And this is a situation where the religious leaders of the day prompted a lawyer, and this is not a lawyer in the sense we think of today, but an expert of the law, of the Jewish law. And it says:

Matthew 22:35. *Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him [Christ] a question, [testing] him, and saying,*
36) *Master, which is the great commandment in the law?*
37) *[Christ] said unto him, [You shall] love the Lord [your] God with all [your] heart, and with all [your] soul, ... (KJV)*

The King James says ["soul"]; the Greek means *all your life*.

Matthew 22:37b. *... and with all [your] mind.*

38) *This is the first and great commandment. (KJV)*

And then He added; the man didn't ask for a second commandment, but He said:

Matthew 22.39. *And the second is like unto it, [You shall] love [your neighbor] as [yourself].*

40) *On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. (KJV)*

So, Christ makes it clear that God wants us to love Him above all else, above everything—humans, possessions, our own life also. But He also wants us to love others as much as we love ourselves or to the same degree because the Greek word for “as” is Strong's number 5613 and it means *in that manner, even as, or even like*.

So, God is telling us, “I know you have self-love. I just want you to love your neighbor as much as you love yourselves.” Therefore, it's not wrong to love ourselves, but we have to love God above the way we love ourselves or the degree to which we love ourselves. And we have to love our neighbor in the same manner or as much as we love ourselves. So, some self-love is necessary. It motivates us to want eternal life. It motivates us to avoid the pain and suffering that sin brings.

And both of these commandments require one thing—that we get our mind off of ourselves. In the first commandment our mind is on God and in the second commandment our mind is on other people. Love and all the fruits of the holy spirit and all the characteristics of love that Les talked about in the sermonette, they are all out-going. They're not in-coming. They're out-going toward God and toward our fellow man.

Now, the problem is that sadly in these later days some have not gotten their minds off themselves. Some people in God's Church, and certainly in the world, love themselves first. And some people in God's Church, they love God, but when the chips are down they put themselves first in front of God. And some have allowed this self-love to rule them, to rule their thoughts, to rule their deeds, to motivate them—motivated by love of the self.

And all of us have known people who talk about themselves constantly. You start a conversation and what you're in is a monologue about their interests, their concerns, their fears, their worries, what they did, and they exhibit little interest or concern in the other person. It's all about them.

Now we shouldn't be surprised at this these days because it was prophesied to happen. Let's go to 2 Timothy 3. I think you know where we're going. Paul told Timothy what was going to happen in the end-days. This was inspired by God. We are in the end-days. And notice the defining characteristic of the end-days. 2 Timothy 3, we'll begin in verse 1.

2 Timothy 3:1. *This know also, ... (KJV)*

This is very plain.

2 Timothy 3:1b. ... that in the last days perilous times shall come.
2a) For men shall be lovers of their own selves, ... (KJV)

The defining characteristic of the last days.

The Phillips' Translation says:

2 Timothy 3:1. You must realize that in the last days the time will be full of danger.
2) Men will become utterly self-centered, ... (PHP)

The Moffatt Translation says:

2 Timothy 3:1. Mark this, there are hard times coming in the last days.
2) For men will be selfish, ... (MOF)

Now going on in verse 2, then Paul begins to define specifically some of the characteristics of self-love, of being utterly selfish. He says:

2 Timothy 3:2b. ... covetous, ... (KJV)

Well, that's taking for the self, wanting something for the self.

2 continued) ... boasters, ... (KJV)

Bragging about the self, elevating the self above others.

2 continued) ... proud, ... (KJV)

Having a haughty attitude toward other people.

2 continued) ... blasphemers, ... (KJV)

Meaning: Putting the self in front of God, not putting God first.

2 continued) ... disobedient to parents, ... (KJV)

Wanting one's own way as opposed to what their parents would like. Again, putting the self first.

2 continued) ... unthankful, ... (KJV)

Thinking: "I deserve more. I'm not thankful for what I have. I want more," again, about the self.

2 continued) ...unholy, (KJV)

Meaning: Not putting God first, but putting the self first.

3) Without natural affection, ... (KJV)

We're going to see that people who put themselves first don't have natural affection toward others.

3b) ... trucebreakers, ... (KJV)

"If it is to my benefit to break my word or to break an agreement, I will do it because I am putting myself first."

3 continued) ... false accusers, ... (KJV)

"If I can tell a lie to elevate myself or elevate my position, I will do so."

3 continued) ... incontinent, ... (KJV)

That means without self-control; not wanting to control the self because "I want what I want. I want my own pleasure so I will do whatever I feel like doing."

3 continued) ... fierce, ... (KJV)

Meaning: Angry, looking down on those who do not meet your expectations, again putting the self first. We will see that come into play later in the sermon.

3 continued) ... despisers of those that are good, (KJV)

Why? Because they aren't good and they despise those that aren't like them.

2 Timothy 3:4. *Traitors, ... (KJV)*

Again, willing to stab somebody in the back for self-gain.

4b) ... heady, ... (KJV)

"Puffed up," we would say.

4 continued) ... high-minded, ... (KJV)

Meaning: Thinking more of oneself than one should.

4 continued) ... lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; (KJV)

Meaning: Putting self-pleasure, self-gratification in front of God. Going on in verse 5:

5) Having a form of godliness, ... (KJV)

Paul is saying, "Hey, they're with you. They look godly." As Les was pointing out, they may say the words, but in actions, they deny loving God.

5b) ... but denying the power thereof: ... (KJV)

Meaning: Denying God's authority to rule over them.

And this [the characteristics described above] is the defining characteristic of the end-days.

Now the half-brother of Christ, Jude, amplified that and added to it. Let's go to Jude. We'll read verses 17 and 18, right before the book of Revelation. Jude verses 17 and 18, notice what he says. He comes at it from a little different direction. Jude says:

Jude 17. *But, beloved, remember [you] the words which were spoken before [by] the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; (KJV)*

He said, "I'm calling into remembrance what the apostles said previously." Verse 18:

Jude 18. *How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, ... (KJV)*

Now what do these mockers do?

Jude 18b. *... who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. (KJV)*

Meaning: Serving the self, putting the self first.

Then, the apostle Peter added more to it. Let's go to 2 Peter 2. Peter talks about this defining characteristic of self-love that will be prevalent in the end-times. 2 Peter 2, we'll read verses 9 and 10. He says:

2 Peter 2:9. *The Lord [knows] how to deliver the godly out of [trials or tests], and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: (KJV)*

Now who are the unjust? He tells us in verse 10.

2 Peter 2:10. *But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, ... (KJV)*

They don't want God's way. They want their own way.

10b) and [they] despise government.... (KJV)

Peter says, "These people don't want anybody telling them what to do." They're not willing to humble themselves and come under any kind of government. He says:

10 continued) ... Presumptuous are they, self-willed, ... (KJV)

Wanting their own way.

Now, this applies to all people at the end-time, in the Church and out of the Church. It is a characteristic of society in the end days.

We have to look no further than the U.S. Congress. Do you realize that of congressmen who have been there more than two terms, 90% of them are millionaires now? And a very small fraction came into Congress millionaires, but now they're millionaires. Now how did that happen on congressional pay? Looking out for the self, serving the self, insider trading on information and all of that, putting all their effort into getting re-elected so they can continue to serve themselves.

Dorothy and I were walking in downtown Victoria two or three years ago. And they have souvenir shops and there were T-shirts in the window. The focus T-shirt of the day was on a mannequin and it said, "It's all about me!" on the T-shirt. Since that time, we've seen people walking around with the T-shirt. "It's all about my feelings, my concerns, my desires, my interests, my problems and my drama. It's all about me."

Now, with that in mind.... And we're still introducing the subject here. We haven't got to the subject yet. With that in mind, let me read the following news article. It's from the Orlando Sentinel. It was dated May 25 of this year written by Jeff Kunerth. And the title of the article is "Disgraced Pastors Who Repent Face A Long Road Back." He's talking about some recent events in Florida with protestant pastors.

Orlando, FL — In a letter read to the congregation at Discovery Church, David Loveless [He was the pastor.] admitted adultery, deceit, sinfulness, selfishness, broken trust and "a violation of [Pastor Lovelace is saying,] everything I knew to be true and right." "I am broken beyond description," he [says].

The article goes on:

Loveless resigned last month from the Orlando, FL, church he founded 29 years ago. And like many fallen preachers before him, now begins a restoration process and, it won't be easy, say experts. Ron Johnson, who has counseled more than 20 ministers in crisis, [he] said restoration takes at least two years. But many fallen ministers are unable [This is key—unable] or unwilling to do the work necessary to achieve true spiritual restoration. [This counselor says.]

Going on in the article:

“There is a lack of humility,” said Johnson, senior pastor of the One Church in Longwood, FL. “Most of these guys get into sexual sin not because they had runaway lust. Most have runaway pride”—[putting the self first].

Going on, this counselor says:

“One of the major problems is that many cannot humble themselves in a three-stage process that involves repentance, reconciliation, and restoration,” Johnson said. The process takes them back to where they began, before they built their congregations into mega-churches, wrote books, spoke at conferences. Before all the love and adoration of those who filled the pews and the collection plates.

They don’t want to go back before those days. Going on with the article, Johnson says:

“Their drug of choice has been the adulation they receive from people, their adoring fans” [these pastors] said Johnson, who counseled Sam Hinn after the Sanford, FL minister admitted an affair.

“It can be difficult for them taking advice,” said Gary R. Pickering, a Bushnell, FL based mental-health counselor and Presbyterian pastor. “It’s hard for pastors to see through the fog and take the blinders off of their own behavior.”

They can’t see it because of pride. Going on:

This is especially true of pastors elevated by the adoration, love, and applause from their congregations. In some ways in some churches, the Sunday service is like a rock concert.

I’m sure we’ve all seen that occasionally on TV.

... Sunday service is like a rock concert and the pastor is the rock star. They are celebrities as much as ministers.

It’s what some counselors call the ‘ecclesiastical ego.’ Have we ever seen that? “And others call it the ‘God complex’.” “The God Complex is hard to give up,” says Jeff Cinquemani, a pastoral counselor with the Florida Hospital Seventh-day Adventist Church. “I don’t want to give up that part of me that was fun—that was great for my ego.” Notice this! “I don’t want restrictions put on me.”

Nobody’s going to tell me what to do, even God. Going on with the article:

“For some ministers, feeling they have been chosen by God, feeds the same kind of narcissism found in athletes, celebrities and politicians who act as if rules were

made for everybody but them. In their eyes they can do no wrong because every mistake they make is someone else's fault."

That's key.

"... every mistake they make is someone else's fault," said Vicki O'Grady, a Maitland mental-health counselor.

I'm going to stop reading the article a minute because it reminds me of Jeremiah chapter 5. Let's go back there and this is all by way of introduction. Jeremiah 5, we're going to begin in verse 1 through verse 3 and then jump to verse 9. Jeremiah chapter 5, describing the conditions that existed in his time and they relate direct to today, Jeremiah 5:1.

Jeremiah 5:1. *Run [you] to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if [you] can find a man, if there be any that [executes] judgment, that [seeks] the truth; ... (KJV)*

And He says, "If you find it":

Jeremiah 5:1b. *...I will pardon it. [God says.]
2) And though they say, The LORD [lives]; surely they swear falsely. (KJV)*

Just like Les was pointing out. He says, "They say one thing, but if it's not followed up with actions, it's meaningless. But they say, "the LORD lives," but they themselves don't live it—what they say. Verse 3:

Jeremiah 5:3. *O LORD, are not [Your] eyes upon the truth? (KJV)*

Well, of course, God knows. And then it goes on to say, "Look:"

5b) ... [You have] stricken them, but they have not grieved; [You have] consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction: ... (KJV)

Just like in this article, these counselors say these ministers don't want to be corrected. They don't want to receive rebuke. Going on in Jeremiah now:

5 continued) ... they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return. (KJV)

Meaning: To turn around or to repent. Verse 9:

Jeremiah 5:9. *Shall I not visit for these things? [says] the LORD: and shall not my [life] be avenged on such a nation as this? (KJV)*

Absolutely true then; absolutely true today!

It reminds me that you can use as a reference Proverbs 15:10. We won't turn there, but it says "Correction is grievous to him that forsakes the way." If you get off the track, you don't want to receive correction. And it goes on to say that "He that hates reproof will die." And Jeremiah 5 relative to this article reminds me of what Solomon said in the first chapter of Ecclesiastes. He says, "The thing that has been is the thing that shall be." And he says, "The thing that is done today shall be done tomorrow." And he said, "There's nothing new under the sun." It happened in Jerusalem back then; it is happening today.

Now, going on with the article—almost finished with that—it says:

"A narcissist won't be able to see anything they are doing as wrong. "But with pastors," O'Grady said, "narcissism goes along with self-applied forgiveness: 'If God forgives us, we can justify anything.'"

You know—once saved, always saved. "Once I give myself to God, then if I sin and I ask God for forgiveness, He's going to forgive me. So, therefore I can do anything I want." That's what they think, O'Grady is pointing out.

"Too many fallen pastors want to slap on a fresh coat of paint, remodel a room or replace the flooring when they need to be thinking of building a house from scratch that might take the rest of their life to finish," Johnson said.

Human nature does not want to admit it is wrong. Human nature does not want to change. And in and out of the Church, all of us have seen, have interacted with men and women who fit this description—who love themselves first. And, as we're going to see, no one is immune. I don't care what your race is, what your economic standing is, man, woman—makes no difference. And it is a problem, a big problem in the Greater Church of God today.

So, as we look at this prophesied affliction, ask yourself the question—you be the judge if there have been or there are today ministers, brethren, family members in the Church, who have this affliction, as well as co-workers out in the world, neighbors who are lovers of themselves first?

So the title of the sermon is:

The Narcissistic Personality of the End Time

We're going to talk about narcissism as it relates to Paul's prophecy in 2 Timothy 3 and as it relates to the conditions in the world and, especially conditions in the Church today.

So, the first point we want to make is this end time condition that Paul prophesied about is so prevalent in western society that psychologist and psychiatrists have labeled it as a recognized mental disorder.

Narcissism is a recognized mental disorder today. It has been so for several decades. Today people who have undue self-love are called “narcissistic.” And it is a scourge of modern society. You can see it, as the article pointed out, in athletes, politicians, celebrities, entertainers, people on the job, all around us today.

Now, where does the word “narcissism” or “narcissistic” come from? Where did it originate? It’s always interesting to go back and look. It originated in Greece. Now let me read from Webster’s College Dictionary under “narcissism.” It says (quote, this is the definition.), “*undue dwelling on one’s own self or attainments, self-love.*”

Then in the dictionary, I have it as an interesting side-light for many words where it delves into the origin of the word. And this what Webster’s says about the origin of “narcissism.”

“Narcissus from Greek mythology was an unusually beautiful young man. The nymph ...

And we would say today, “the fairy,” the girl with wings and all of that.

The nymph Echo loved him, but was rebuffed and wasted away. To punish Narcissus for his indifference, the gods made him fall in love with his own image, which he saw reflected in a fountain. He sat admiring himself day after day and finally pined away and was transformed into the flower that we call narcissus. From the youth Narcissus, we also get the word for self-love, narcissism.

That’s where the word comes from, self-love. And you can imagine (this is mythology, of course, but) this guy looking at his image in the fountain thinking how wonderful he was. Forgot to eat, forgot to sustain himself and he eventually just wasted away. So, God is telling us that narcissism is the defining characteristic in the end-day.

Now, let me read from an article under this first point about it being a recognized mental disorder, let me read an article from the Washington Times dated November 1 of last year.

Washington: “Often undiagnosed and misunderstood, narcissistic personality disorder is a pathology that needs to be taken seriously.”

God’s people need to take it seriously. Going on, now what they describe is what most of us think of as narcissistic behavior.

Most of us understand what it means to behave narcissistically. We have a picture in our mind of a young, pretty girl who enjoys looking at herself in the mirror, wearing designer clothes, and having her nails done. The male equivalent also wears nice clothes, works out religiously at the local gym, and spends more time in front of the mirror getting ready to go out than his girlfriend does.

And, if we're honest with ourselves, maybe we can remember back where sometime we looked at ourselves in the mirror and thought certain thoughts. It happens all the time. We see kids do it all the time. See it on TV all the time. Going on:

These individuals are often young adults or teenagers with no responsibilities beyond school and a part-time job that pays for all of their clothes and make-up.

Now the article talks about the change that occurs with most of us as we transition from this stage into adulthood.

Over time, their responsibilities change, and they begin to experience life and work. They quickly outgrow their egotistical, narcissistic behavior. Their cognitive skills ...

Cognitive means their reasoning skills or their thinking skills.

Their cognitive skills mature and they realize what is most important in life: friends and family.

Now remember, this is a worldly article not talking about God. What they realize is most important in life is friends and family.

Their preoccupation with their looks dwindles, and building and creating healthy interpersonal relationships become their focus and goal.

In other words, at some point, they start getting their mind off themselves. And the article goes on:

Unfortunately, not all of these individuals outgrow their childish narcissistic tendencies or mature cognitively [in the way they think, the way they reason]. This lack/absence of neurological maturity often results in individuals who develop narcissistic personality disorder (NPD).

And for the sake of time, I'll refer to narcissistic personality disorder as NPD. Going on:

Many NPD individuals suffer from depression, thoughts of suicide, repeated ...

This is important.

... repeated failed relationship issues, and trouble at work or [at] school. The majority of individuals with NPD in our society will never be officially diagnosed with the disease. Therefore, learning to identify the traits and characteristics of individuals with NPD can help us protect our families and ourselves.

I could not agree more with that. People have suffered and suffered under those with NPD and we need to be aware of it. Going on in the article, it says:

Now the DSM-IV is the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, version 4*. It was created by psychologists and psychiatrists to define in written form mental disorders of all types. The government uses it; insurance companies use it; health providers use it to diagnose and help them diagnose mental disorders. The DSM-IV defines narcissistic personality disorder (NPD) as this:

... an all-pervasive pattern of grandiosity (in fantasy or behavior), need for admiration or adulation, and lack of empathy, ...

Meaning: concern for others.

... usually beginning by early adulthood and present in various contexts, such as family life and work.

Although NPD is predominantly associated more with men, anyone of any economic background, race, or sex can be affected by NPD. Mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, co-workers, and bosses. No one is immune to this disorder.

Now this is important.

NPD is a disease of the mind outside of the normal pathology of society, and serious education is necessary.

This documented mental disorder that we've just read about, it is serious. If this is not a fulfillment of prophecy, I don't know what is. Paul said this almost 2,000 years ago. He said, "In the end days narcissism is going to be a problem—love of the self." And now, it's an officially diagnosed mental disorder that is very serious.

So, the first point that we make is: It is so prevalent in western society it is a diagnosed mental disorder.

Point number two: What are the characteristics of NPD?

We've just read a little bit of them, but, as we go through these, see if you recognize these characteristics in yourself—recognize them in myself—or people you have known over the years, in or out of the Church, in families, co-workers or so on. Remember: "In the last days, perilous times shall come because men shall be lovers of their own selves."

The first characteristic is that narcissists believe they are unique and better than others.

They are unique. Nobody is like them and they are actually better than others. They are firmly convinced that they are special and they act accordingly. They feel self-important. They expect constant praise and constant admiration and because of that

they feel entitled. They demand automatic and full compliance in their unreasonable expectations that they be favorably treated or treated in a priority way.

I'll give you an example of a man I knew in the Church back in the 1960s. He had this disorder. When he would travel with his family, or by himself, when he would travel, he would walk into an airport and you see the ticket counters and the long lines. He would walk directly around the lines, not get at the end of the line. He would walk directly to the front of the line and demand that they pay attention to him and handle his needs. He would bypass everybody. And if they didn't, he would throw a hissy fit. And his poor family is sitting there all embarrassed and he is demanding special treatment because he feels that he is unique and he deserves this special treatment.

They demand the best in clothes, the best in accommodations, the best in transportation and so on and so forth. They tend to exaggerate their accomplishments or their talents or their skills or their personality traits without commensurate evidence. It doesn't make any difference. They demand to be recognized as superior. And I might add they do so to the point of lying about it, exaggerating. And they expect others to always go along with their program or their plan. It's like a boss who demands total compliance by all the employees.

So, the first point is: They believe they are unique and they are better and they are special.

The second is that narcissists feel that they are above the law and can do no wrong.

Above the law and can do no wrong. They behave arrogantly and haughtily. And they believe they can do no wrong because they're always right. They have such a self-assessment that they believe they are always right. And if you don't agree with them, then you are wrong. And any problems that they face are always somebody else's fault. Not their fault. They're very good at blaming other people when things go wrong. They are immune to the law because they feel they are above the law. Therefore, the law does not apply to them.

It reminds me of an evangelist here, I don't know, fifteen years ago caught in a compromising situation. And he said, "God makes allowances for me because of what I do for the work. Therefore, God's Law does not apply to me. God winks at what I'm doing because he knows how important I am."

So, the second is: Narcissists feel they are above the law.

The third is narcissists express a disdain for those that they feel are inferior to them, which is most other people.

In business, you can see it in that management is up here; the working slob is down here. Don't question us. Don't make any suggestions. Just do what we tell you because we know better.

I don't know if you remember Leona Helmsley. This goes back into the '70s or '80s. She was called "The Queen of Mean." She was quite a celebrity. She seduced a man who was a real estate magnate in New York City. He owned a series of hotels. She seduced him. He divorced his wife. He married her. He elevated her to the position of president of this series of hotels. One was called, I think, The Helmsley Palace. And she ran it with a rod of iron. Nobody met her expectations. She would fire people on a whim. She demanded absolute obedience. And at one point she was quoted as saying, "Only the little people pay taxes." That was her downfall because they began looking into her tax payments and, eventually, she went to prison because of not paying her taxes, trying to defraud the government.

But you see the point is that a narcissist looks down on other people because those other people are not at their level.

We've seen it in the Church. The ministry is up here; everybody else is down here. The folks down here don't have a sane thought in their head. If they've never graduated from Ambassador College, they can't have any good ideas. But we up here know it all. There was a scourge in the Church that a certain class began to look down on other Christians, brothers and sisters in the Church. It's sad.

Now, a narcissist, who looks down on people, they often go into a rage when they're frustrated, when they're contradicted, or they're confronted by people about a law, a view, a pronouncement, what they said. They go into a rage when they're frustrated or confronted by people because they consider these people inferior to them. "How dare you question me! How dare you talk about me! How dare you think that you have knowledge to the level that I do or intelligence to the level that I do!" And if they can't be admired, they want to be feared. Again, it sets them above other people. They attempt to intimidate. They attempt to bully people.

And I might add, because they cannot do any wrong in their view, they can't be reasoned with. The first step in solving a problem is to admit you have a problem. Well, a narcissist will not admit they have a problem. Therefore, they are very difficult to work with. They can't be reasoned with.

So, the third is: Narcissists express disdain for those they feel are inferior.

The fourth is that narcissists are devoid of empathy, care and concern for others.

Now, on the surface they can appear as tough-minded or unemotional. We've seen bosses; we've had bosses that are that way, but the fact is they are unable or unwilling to identify with or acknowledge or accept the feelings of others, the needs of others, the preferences of others, the priorities of others, the choices of others. They do not have

any consideration for that because those people are beneath them and because of their pride and selfishness, it's all about them. Therefore, they do not consider others they consider beneath them—devoid of empathy.

The fifth is that narcissists are extremely jealous and envious of others.

They are constantly feeling hurt or rejected by others that they are jealous or envious about. They feel others are out to get them. Because they feel others are out to get them or they are jealous, they seek to hurt those or destroy those who are the objects of their envy and jealousy.

For example a narcissist comes into a job situation and is at a certain level. What the narcissist does is then look at the top dog, the president, the boss. And he looks at everybody in between him and the top dog and he becomes envious of them and jealous of them and he goes after them in an attempt to destroy them because of jealousy. I've been on the receiving end of that a few years ago. So, they are jealous and envious of others.

The sixth characteristic is that narcissists manipulate and take advantage of others for their own benefit.

This is one of the scourges of narcissism. It affects so many people in the church, in families, in the job situations. In their view, people are objects to be manipulated for their own advantage. People are tools to be used, not loved—tools to be used. And they routinely take advantage of others. They are takers and not givers. They view people as a means to an end. They don't love people for the sake of loving them as human beings, as potential children of God in God's family. No, they are there to be manipulated and taken advantage of. That was the sixth.

The seventh and last is that narcissists have trouble keeping healthy relationships.

Wonder why! After everything we've talked about, I wonder why they have trouble with relationships! They leave a trail of conflict and disagreement and hurt feelings behind them. And they look around and they don't see it. It's always somebody else's fault.

I might add that a narcissist can be like a poison to a congregation in a church. It only takes one to come in and start spreading that poison. And Satan knows that and he uses narcissists, provokes people to narcissistic behavior in an effort to divide a church or divide a congregation. And it will happen if the brethren allow it. The key is whether or not the brethren allow it. We've had experiences with that. People have come in attempting to divide and conquer or get their own way and the brethren just don't allow it, don't listen, don't pay attention. And eventually they leave and go on to greener pastures somewhere else.

But if you look at these seven characteristics, doesn't it sound like somebody you'd really like to be around? You'd really like to have a good friendship with or marry or work for?

The characteristics that I've just read are from the Mayo Clinic outlining narcissistic personality disorder and from the Psychology Today Diagnostic Dictionary. These are recognized characteristics of NPD.

Now, the question is for us: Have we seen these characteristics in people? Out in the world? In the Church? Ministers even in the Church? In our own families? Well, of course we have. And I'll say this: many leaders of the Church of God, past and present, are afflicted with this mental disorder. Think about it. I'm not going to go into details, but think about it. Ministers, leaders in the Church of God, past and present, are affected with this disorder. Just watch and just look.

The third point we want to make is...

We've covered the characteristics. We've covered the fact that it's a recognized mental disorder.

So, the third, the logical question is: What is the cure?

What is the antidote for NPD? If we have somebody with NPD in our family or in the Church or in the workplace, what do we do?

Now, I'm going to continue in that Washington Times article of November first of last year. I purposely didn't read the last sentence. It goes on to say, it concludes the article by saying:

Many researchers and victims of individuals with NPD do not believe individuals with NPD can be treated or cured.

Health professionals say "Narcissistic personality disorder cannot be treated and cannot be cured." Now that is an amazing statement. Because when you think about it, there are medicines available, treatments available for schizophrenia, medicines and treatments available for bi-polar disorder, for depression, for manic behavior. And for most all mental conditions, there is a treatment. There is medication for almost all mental diseases except narcissism. Now think about that. Why is that? The answer is simple.

Narcissism is a spiritual problem. And the medical profession cannot treat spiritual problems.

When you think about the characteristics of narcissism in the second point that we made, does it remind you of somebody? Does it remind you of a singular being, a singular individual? These are characteristics of a human mind, but they should remind

us of the mind of a spirit being because I'm here to tell you that narcissism is the mind of Satan. Narcissism is Satan's mind in a human being and it cannot be treated by traditional methods.

Let's go to Isaiah 14. Let's look at this... We've read this many times before, but look at it from the view of a narcissist. Look at it from the viewpoint of somebody who puts themselves first. Isaiah 14, we're going to read verses 12 through 14.

Isaiah 14:12. *How [are you] fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! [How are you] cut down to the ground, which [did] weaken the nations! (KJV)*

Now notice this. Look at what's in his heart. We are told what's in Satan's heart. Verse 13:

Isaiah 14:13. *For [you have] said in [your] heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north. (KJV)*

"I deserve this. I'm better. I'm special. I'm unique. And everyone else, God, Christ, the angels, are beneath me." Verse 14:

Isaiah 14:14. *I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; ... (KJV)*

The Revised Standard Version says:

Isaiah 14:14b. *... I will make myself like the most High. (RSV)*

"Because I deserve it. I'm better. I'm special."

Now this came out in Satan's confrontation with Christ. Let's go to Matthew 4 and we'll break into the context. Remember Christ fasted forty days and forty nights because He knew this confrontation was coming and He prepared Himself. We're at a crossroads here. Christ potentially could have failed, but He prepared Himself. He was filled with God's spirit. Notice this in verse 8, Matthew 4:8.

Matthew 4:8. *[And], the devil [took] him up [to] an exceeding high mountain, and [showed] him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; (KJV)*

Remember he is the god of this world?

Matthew 4:9. *And [he said] unto him, All these things will I give [You], if [You will] fall down and worship me. (KJV)*

"It's all about me. I am better than you are. I deserve your worship." Verse 10:

Matthew 4:10. *[Christ said], Get [away from here], Satan: [because] it is written, [You shall] worship the Lord [your] God, and him only [shall you] serve. (KJV)*

You need to put God first. And Satan didn't want any part of that. He put himself first. And he wanted God and Christ to bow down and worship him. That's the key to narcissism. It is a spiritual problem.

Now, although there is no physical solution to narcissism, there is indeed a spiritual solution. There is a solution, no doubt. Remember in Luke 18, Christ said, "The things that are impossible with men (certainly the medical profession) are possible with God." What is impossible for a man to do is possible for God to do. It is a spiritual problem that demands a spiritual solution.

There have been many in the Church with NPD—leaders, heads, ministers, brethren. Some were and are tares, clouds without water. Meaning: they were never converted. But some, however, have had God's holy spirit. There is one difference because a narcissist will not allow God's spirit to lead them. A narcissist puts himself or herself first instead of humbling themselves and saying, "God I want Your spirit to lead me."

Let's go to Romans 8 and see that. Romans 8, we'll begin in verse 5. The key you see—it's not just enough to have God's spirit. We have to allow God's spirit by humbling ourselves to lead us. Romans 8:5.

Romans 8:5. *For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit [they mind] the things of the Spirit. (KJV)*

Foundational principle. Verse 6:

Romans 8:6. *For to be carnally minded ... (KJV)*

That means fleshly minded.

Romans 8:6b. *... is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. (KJV)*

And you see with a narcissist, one does not have peace. You can't have peace with somebody who doesn't consider other people, who wants their own way, who demands that they be worshipped, who demands that their view is the only view. Verse 7:

Romans 8:7. *Because the carnal mind is enmity against God [or the enemy of God]: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.
8) So then [because of that] they that are in the flesh cannot please God. (KJV)*

And you see a narcissist is totally carnal, totally selfish and self-focused. They're not willing to totally—and I emphasize the word "totally"—come under God's law. I'm not talking about keeping the Sabbath. I'm not necessarily talking about tithing. What I'm talking about is that they will not humble themselves, humble the self before God, get

down on their knees and humble themselves and say, “God whatever you want, that’s what I will do.” They’re also not willing to humble themselves in front of their neighbor and say, ‘Okay, let’s do it your way. I love you. We’ll just do what you want.’ They’re not willing to do that.

Going on in verse 9:

Romans 8:9. *But [you] are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God [dwells] in you.... (KJV)*

We need God’s spirit to dwell in us, but that is not enough as we will see.

Romans 8:9b. *Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. (KJV)*

Meaning: Christ’s. Verse 13, here’s the key.

Romans 8:13. *For if [you] live after the flesh, [you] shall die: but if [you] through the Spirit do ... (KJV)*

“Kill;” the King James says, “mortify.”

Romans 8:13b. *... [you] do [kill] the deeds of the body, [you] shall live. 14) For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. (KJV)*

It’s not just enough to have it; we have to be led by the spirit of God. And when we allow the holy spirit to lead us, guess what happens? We start exhibiting Christ-like behavior. We bear the fruits of God’s spirit. We start doing the things Christ did when He walked this earth. But narcissists will not allow God’s spirit to lead them because they put themselves first.

Now, let’s go to Micah 6 and verse 8 and just see what God requires. We’re going to see that this is the opposite of narcissism. Micah 6:8, toward the end of the Old Testament. It says:

Micah 6:8. *He [has shown you], O man, what is good; and what the LORD [requires] of [you], ... (KJV)*

What is it? What does the LORD require of you?

8b) ... to do justly, ... (KJV)

That means to be fair, not put yourself first.

8) continued) ... to love mercy, ... (KJV)

Meaning: To show forgiveness and reach out to others.

8) continued) ... and to walk humbly with [your] God? (KJV)

All three of these are the opposite of narcissism.

Let's go to the New Testament, Philippians 2 and verse 3. I'll read it out of the New King James. Philippians 2:3, out of the New King James, again showing that these verses tell us what somebody who is led by God's spirit needs to be doing, which is the opposite of narcissistic behavior. Philippians 2:3.

Philippians 2:3. Let nothing ... (NKJV)

It says "nothing"—not one thing.

3b) ... be done through selfish ambition or conceit, ... (NKJV)

A narcissist is selfish. A narcissist is conceited. Let nothing be done through that!

3 continued) ... but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. (NKJV)

And yet a narcissist looks down on others because they're inferior. So these words are the opposite of narcissism.

Let's go to one more scripture here in this point, Romans 12:1. Romans 12:1, something a narcissist will not do. Paul uses the word "beseech," which means "I'm crying out to you. I'm begging you."

Romans 12:1. I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that [you] present your bodies a living sacrifice, ... (KJV)

For the service of God and the service of our fellowman, the service of our brothers and sisters in the Church.

Romans 12:1b. ... living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service [or job]. (KJV)

Again, the opposite of narcissism.

So, what is the antidote for narcissism? It's to be led by the spirit of God, which means getting the mind off the self and onto God and onto His children and onto one's neighbors.

And we know that, if you think about it. People are happiest when they're making other people fulfilled and happy. Mates know that. When they make their mate's heart sing

they're happiest. When I see Dorothy breaking out in song, I may not be the cause of it, but it just fills your heart with joy. It just does! She's happy. I love that.

And moms and dads and grandparents, they love seeing their kids happy and content and peaceful. Kathleen's in the back there with a grandkid in her lap. It just looks so good! We just love that because our mind is on somebody else.

And a minister—the greatest joy a minister can have is seeing those he serves become like Jesus Christ, fulfilling their potential as children of God.

So, you see the solution to narcissism is to allow the holy spirit to lead us; then, exhibit the fruits of that spirit, all of which are outgoing, all of which are totally opposite to narcissism.

The fourth and final point (this is where the rubber meets the road) is how do you deal with someone who has NPD?

What do you do? How do you deal with them?

It might be a family member, a boss, a co-worker, a brother or sister in the Church or even a minister. Remember the syndromes that we've already talked about.

- They can do nothing wrong.
- They're above the law.
- It's everybody else's fault.
- They're special; they act accordingly.
- They need constant praise, constant admiration.
- They express disdain for those they feel are inferior.
- They fail to recognize other people's needs and emotions and feelings.
- They expect everybody to go along with their ideas and their plans.
- If they can't get that, they attempt to instill fear and intimidate others.
- They take advantage of others.
- They view people as objects to be manipulated for their own purpose and, as a result, they don't get along with people very well.

So, what do you do when you have somebody like that in a Church or in a family, or in the workplace?

Well, the first thing you do—the Bible is very clear. Let's go to Galatians 6 and verse 1. It tells us what we have to do. We have an obligation. You try to get them to see themselves, to see the problem. Galatians 6:1, it says:

Galatians 6:1. Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ... (KJV)

Or a sin; if a man exhibits the characteristics of NPD ...

Galatians 6:1b. ... [you] which are spiritual, restore such [a] one in the spirit of meekness [the opposite of NPD]; considering [yourself], lest [you] be tempted [or tested too]. (KJV)

But as we pointed out, in most cases if you do that with somebody with NPD, in most cases, it will not work. Remember the Washington Times article that said many researchers and victims of individuals with NPD do not believe it can be treated or cured. And the reason they say that is because of the very characteristics of NPD. Somebody with NPD doesn't believe they've done anything wrong. They don't see it. They won't admit it. It's always the other person's fault. So when you go to them in the spirit of Galatians 6:1, you try to get them to see that they do have a fault; they do have a problem and it's affecting others. But unless they allow God's holy spirit to lead them, they will not change. It will not happen.

So, if that's the case and in my experience in dealing with people with NPD, I'm hard pressed to find one that I could say made a turn around. That's not to say it won't happen as things get tougher toward the end, but I have not seen it yet. I haven't seen it.

So there is one solution. What do you do? You go to them. They don't listen. What on earth do you do? There is one word—"distance." You have to put distance between yourself and the one with NPD. Think of another word—"boundaries." You have to erect boundaries with people with NPD so they don't come crashing through your gate and start affecting you.

Now, let's look at a few scriptures where principles apply. Les was talking about the scripture regarding faith and he applied it to love. We'll do the same thing here. Let's go to Proverbs 22 and we'll read verses 24 and 25. This is talking about someone who has an anger problem, but it equally applies to someone with NPD. Proverbs 22:24, it says:

Proverbs 22:24. *Make no friendship with an angry man; ... (KJV)*

Keep your distance! Don't be friends.

Proverbs 22:24b. ... *and with a furious man [you shall] not go: (KJV)*

Now why is told in verse 25.

Proverbs 22:25. *Lest [you] learn his ways, and [it is] a snare to [your life]. (KJV)*

That principle applies to somebody with NPD. If you don't distance yourself, if you don't set up boundaries, you're going to be just like them. You're going to be influenced by them.

Let's go to the New Testament, Romans 16:17. Paul is talking about how you have to take note of certain people and you have to take certain action. Romans 16:17, he says:

Romans 16:17. *Now I beseech you, brethren, [he says,] mark them ... (KJV)*

The Greek means just *to take note of, to be aware of.*

17b) ... mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine [or the teaching] which [you] have learned; ... (KJV)

And he said guess what?

17 continued) ... avoid them. (KJV)

Stay away from them. Put distance between you and them. And the same is true for somebody with NPD.

Now, let's go to Titus 3:10. The subject here is somebody who is a heretic. And by their actions, a narcissist is a heretic in the sense that by their actions they do not exhibit the fruits of God's spirit. Titus 3:10.

Titus 3:10. *A man that is [a heretic] after the first and second admonition reject; (KJV)*

Plain and simple—reject. The Greek for “reject” means *to beg off or to avoid.* Just avoid them, beg off, don't associate.

Now let's go back to where we started, 2 Timothy 3:1, the scripture that we started with in closing out this fourth and last point of “What do you do with somebody with NPD?” 2 Timothy 3:1.

2 Timothy 3:1. *This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. 2) For men shall be lovers of their own selves, ... (KJV)*

Look at verse 5:

2 Timothy 3:5. *Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. (KJV)*

It couldn't be more simple. If you go to them once, twice, they will not listen, they will not allow God's spirit to lead them, they will not repent and turn around; then guess who has to turn around? We have to turn around. Not just ministers but all of us. Somebody that exhibits narcissism the only solution is to turn around and walk away; put boundaries and put distance between you and the individual. Now, that necessitates putting distance and establishing boundaries between yourself and even some family members, from some workers on the job, from certain brethren in the

Church, from certain ministers, or, if they are a leader of a group that exhibits NPD, from the whole group in the sense of the teachings that they have, put distance.

Now the fact is ... Often we talk about this in counseling that the only person I can control is me. I can't control anybody else. The only person you can control is you. You cannot control them. You cannot control a narcissist. The only way a narcissist can change is to allow themselves to be led by the spirit of God assuming they have the spirit of God. And if they don't... And you can't control them. You can't make them bend to your will. The only thing you can do is establish distance between you and them.

Remember God is the only one that can change a narcissist. We can't. And people have spent untold amounts of time and energy and money trying to change a narcissist. And I'm here to tell you that it does not work unless they have God's spirit and they humble themselves and allow God's spirit to lead them.

So, concluding now. Why spend time at services talking about a psychological, a psychiatric disorder, a mental disorder? The reason is the defining characteristic of the Church at the end time. "Men will be lovers of their own selves," and, as a result of that, "perilous times will come." It's prophesied and it's happening right before our very eyes. This is another proof of the Bible.

If you look at the greater Church of God today and you look at what people write and what people say, it is filled with narcissism. We need to be aware of it. It was prophesied. We absolutely need to know that it exists. We need to know how to respond to it and, above all, we need to make sure that we never ever fall into that syndrome from Satan because it is, indeed, the mind of Satan. So, let's determine to be led by the spirit of God. Not by Satan and the spirit of narcissism.