

“The Seduction of Self-Focus”

Matthew 16:13-25; Philippians 2:3-8

East Berlin Community Church

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Introduction

- The “New Rules” in societal values
- The “New Rules” in evangelical circles
- America as the most narcissistic nation.
- Review of the schemes of Satan, our adversary

The Seduction of Self-Focus

A. Peter’s Misplaced Focus Matthew 16

1. God’s plan for Jesus’ life

- Matthew 16:21--*“From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised on the third day.”*

2. Peter’s plan for Jesus’ life

- Matthew 16:22 -- *“Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, ‘Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You.’”*

3. Jesus’ rebuke of Satan’s seduction of self-fulfillment

- Matthew 16:23 -- *“But He turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.’”*

a. Nothing is wrong with Peter’s PROFESSION OF FAITH

- Matthew 16:15-- *“He said to them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’”*
- Matthew 16:16-- *“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”*

b. Everything is wrong with Peter’s PLAN of self-fulfillment

B. Our Right-placed Foci

1. First Focus: Becoming a fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ

- Matthew 16:24-25-- *“Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it’”*

a. What’s involved in being a “fully devoted follower of Christ?”

1) Self-denial

2) Self-sacrifice

- Galatians 2:20-- *“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”*

3) Submission to the Will of God

- Romans 12:1-2 -- *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be*

conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

b. Bottom line: *"Not my will, but Thine be done"*

2. Second focus: Benefiting others around us.

a. We are not to be self-focused, but other-focused.

- *Philippians 2:3-4-- "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look not only for his own interests, but also for the interest of others."*

b. We are to emulate Jesus' mindset.

- *Philippians 2:5-8 -- "Who being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross."*

c. This pandemic has revealed our self-focus.

- *Romans 13:1-2, 5-7 -- "Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore, whoever resists the authorities resists the ordinances of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves... Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience sake. For because of this, you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes is due, custom to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor."*

3. What happens when our foci is right?

a. We find LIFE or self-fulfillment.

b. We experience JOY

BOTTOM LINE: To follow the rule of Christ rather than the "new rules of self-fulfillment and self-direction", it will mean...

- **HARD** Choices
- **DAILY** Choices