

A Journey to Self Discovery



A Journey to Self-Discovery

There cannot be deep knowledge of God without deep knowledge of one's self. Jesus said, "Love others as well as you love yourself." John Calvin adds, "Without knowledge of self, there is no knowledge of God. Our wisdom, insofar as it ought to be deemed true and solid wisdom, consists almost entirely of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves. But as these are connected by many ties, it is not easy to determine which of the two precedes and gives birth to the other." This study will better equip us in our journey to becoming our True Self. The Three great enemies to becoming our True Self will be addressed—Narcissism, Shame, and Anger. The two great tasks of life—knowing God and knowing yourself converge into a single adventure as we are drawn into the arms of our living God through this study. Let the Journey begin!

Narcissism – Enemy of the True-Self – PART III.

Highland Colony Men's Roundtable
www.MensTable.com

Narcissism – Coming To A Church Near You!

March 14, 2019

Bible Verses: Matthew 7:15; John 10:10; Matthew 23

Music: Parody of the Modern Church Service
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dryvcvDaL7g>

Video: Jo Saxton: Calling Versus Narcissism
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s630ftAALqY>

Resources:

Book: *The Gift of Being Yourself – The Sacred Call of Self-Discovery* by David G. Benner.

Book: *Real Men Have Feelings Too* by Gary Oliver.

Book: *How to Kill a Narcissist* by JH Simon.

Book: *The Soul of Shame* by Curt Thompson, M.D.

Narcissism – Wolves in Sheep's Clothing – PART III – Matthew 7:15, John 10:10, Matthew 23

Matthew 7:15 - "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves."

John 10:10 - "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."

Peter Steinki, a prolific author and church ministry consultant, has worked with hundreds of churches and pastors in the last 40 years. He once worked with **65 pastors who had affairs** and found that narcissism lay at the root of most of those failures. These pastors' need for others to value them and their need to feel important led them to sexualize their desires. Their narcissistic tendencies led them to **moral failure**.

The trappings and pressures of "successful" ministry coupled with little accountability/authenticity, and today's megachurch celebrity-pastor culture are a breeding ground for narcissism. In the past two decades it seems that annually some well-known pastor commits adultery or fails in some public moral way, often rooted in narcissistic tendencies. Unfortunately, **narcissists often exude qualities we laud: self-confidence, a magnetic personality, strong platform skills and the ability to motivate others.** Narcissism is deadly. Perhaps that's one reason the Bible often speaks against pride and for humility.

The narcissistic pastor lives with an inflated sense of self-importance and an insatiable drive to be liked and to be at the center of attention. The enemy will capitalize on these traits and tempt him to compromise his morals and values. A narcissistic pastor will create a false self to cover his fear of humiliation. Exposure of the real self is anathema to him. Steinki says that a narcissistic pastor's drive to avoid disclosure often results in these kinds of behaviors:



- Rage if he experiences shame, for shame exposes his true self.
- An inordinate need for praise in order to feel important.
- The feeling of entitlement to special treatment.
- The immense need for continual feedback of how important he is.
- The feeling of superiority and its reinforcement from others.

- Strong reaction to rejection and disapproval, sometimes with intense rage.
- The lack of the capacity to mourn, a defense against depression.
- Calculating and conniving behavior to "maintain" supplies of continuous adulation.
- An impaired capacity for commitment.
- No capacity for self-focus or self-examination.

Let Us Prey: The Plague of Narcissist Pastors and What We Can Do About It

Dr. Darrell Puls, Dr. Glenn Ball (Cascade Books, 2017)

An excerpt from Dr. Puls' recent article on the American Association of Christian Counselor's website:

It is impossible to describe the emotional and spiritual devastation caused by narcissistic rage laser-focused on destroying you. It happened to me as an Associate Pastor under a Senior Pastor I would later learn fit the diagnosis of Narcissistic Personality Disorder (Covert). After 20 minutes of having my every foible and weakness machine-gunned at me and leaving me in a state of unresponsive shock, he wanted a hug before he walked out of my office! Shortly after I was cut off from every ministry I loved and found myself persona non-grata with the other pastors. I resigned in utter despair.

I eventually recovered through the grace-full help of Christian therapist and psychiatrist friends. I returned to my true calling of Peacemaker and my practice of intervening in faith-community conflicts. I had noted over the years that a large percentage of these conflicts were "different"—the pastor was not only involved but was at the center as instigator and choreographer. Now knowing what to look for, I realized that most of these "different" conflicts had an NPD pastor at the center.

My colleague in Canada, Dr. Glenn Ball, had similar experiences. The question that haunted us was, how many are there? What percentage of active, ordained pastors meet the diagnostic criteria for NPD in its overt and covert forms? We determined to answer that question. We did, and we opened Pandora's proverbial box. Glenn obtained permission to test his entire Canadian denomination's active and retired pastors. We embedded a validated NPD test instrument into a larger survey that also sought demographic information and piety practices. We speculated that there would be varying correlations between the strength and type of NPD with Bible study, prayer, sermon preparation, and other practices, as well as age and gender.

After 15 months we had a 30% completed response rate. We questioned our numbers but were stunned after the numbers were validated: **31.2 % of the active ordained pastors in this national study scored in the diagnostic range for NPDP, with 26% in the overt category and 5.2% covert/shy.** Follow-up studies are in the beginning stages, but we are confident in our findings.

There were **384,000± Christian churches in the U.S. in 2012, 65% reported serious internal conflict in the last 5 years**, and, if our percentages hold up, approximately **120,000 had malignant narcissist pastors.** We do not know how many conflicts had malignant narcissist pastors at their center. Jesus warned us about wolves dressed as shepherds coming into the Church to "kill and destroy" (John 10:10). They're here! The enemy has successfully infiltrated the Christian churches of North America. We have been inundated with heartbreaking stories of people singled out for destruction by narcissistic pastors. We have walked alongside them through the dismal places and will continue to help them find sunlight, health, and high ground.

The damage these pastors do is incalculable. In one case, over the course of his career a toxic narcissist pastor recruited, groomed, and then attacked and drove out 21 associates. Only two are still in ministry in some form. In other situations, the congregation fractures and splinters until it can no longer function, and the pastor moves on to victimize yet another. The church building of one of these congregations is now a bed and breakfast. Those who remain face a daunting task: heal their wounds, usually without any guidance or outside help, and try to move into the future. In many cases, they blame themselves and each other, and never recover. Others put on a brave face in the attempt to attract new members, but somehow the remaining toxicity seeps out and drives them away.

Enneagram – Take the Assessment <https://www.wepss.com/>

- The Enneagram is one of the most useful tools for understanding personality styles at work, in relationships, and for self-awareness. The WEPSS is a standardized, reliable, and valid Enneagram inventory, the only one published by a major psychological test company and reviewed in Buros's Mental Measurements Yearbook, a respected authority in the testing field. The WEPSS can be purchased for single use and in multiple copies by individuals, consultants, and workshop presenters. Results and interpretation are immediately accessible online and via email. The test is currently available in English, Spanish, and Danish for this online version (**Click on Flags At Top!**), and in English and Chinese in the hardcopy version.

ACTION: Journal This!

1. Can you recognize narcissism in others?
2. Can you recognize your own narcissistic tendencies?
3. What is the antidote for Narcissism?

Bible Verses – The Message

1 Now Jesus turned to address his disciples, along with the crowd that had gathered with them. 2 "The religion scholars and Pharisees are competent teachers in God's Law. 3 You won't go wrong in following their teachings on Moses. But be careful about following them. They talk a good line, but they don't live it. They don't take it into their hearts and live it out in their behavior. It's all spit-and-polish veneer. 4 "Instead of giving you God's Law as food and drink by which you can banquet on God, they package it in bundles of rules, loading you down like pack animals. They seem to take pleasure in watching you stagger under these loads, and wouldn't think of lifting a finger to help 5 Their lives are perpetual fashion shows, embroidered prayer shawls one day and flowery prayers the next. 6 They love to sit at the head table at church dinners, basking in the most prominent positions, 7 preening in the radiance of public flattery, receiving honorary degrees, and getting called 'Doctor' and 'Reverend.' 8 "Don't let people do that to you, put you on a pedestal like that. You all have a single Teacher, and you are all classmates. 9 Don't set people up as experts over your life, letting them tell you what to do. Save that authority for God; let him tell you what to do. No one else should carry the title of 'Father'; you have only one Father, and he's in heaven. 10 And don't let people maneuver you into taking charge of them. There is only one Life-Leader for you and them - Christ. 11 "Do you want to stand out? Then step down. Be a servant. 12 If you puff yourself up, you'll get the wind knocked out of you. But if you're content to simply be yourself, your life will count for plenty. 13 "I've had it with you! You're hopeless, you religion scholars, you Pharisees! Frauds! Your lives are roadblocks to God's kingdom. You refuse to enter, and won't let anyone else in either. 15 "You're hopeless, you religion scholars and Pharisees! Frauds! You go halfway around the world to make a convert, but once you get him you make him into a replica of yourselves, double-damned. 16 "You're hopeless! What arrogant stupidity! You say, 'If someone makes a promise with his fingers crossed, that's nothing; but if he swears with his hand on the Bible, that's serious.' 17 What ignorance! Does the leather on the Bible carry more weight than the skin on your hands? 18 And what about this piece of trivia: 'If you shake hands on a promise, that's nothing; but if you raise your hand that God is your witness, that's serious'? 19 What ridiculous hairsplitting! What difference does it make whether you shake hands or raise hands 20 A promise is a promise. What difference does it make if you make your promise inside or outside a house of worship? A promise is a promise. God is present, watching and holding you to account regardless. 21 22 23 "You're hopeless, you religion scholars and Pharisees! Frauds! You keep meticulous account books, tithing on every nickel and dime you get, but on the meat of God's Law, things like fairness and compassion and commitment - the absolute basics! - you carelessly take it or leave it. Careful bookkeeping is commendable, but the basics are required. 24 Do you have any idea how silly you look, writing a life story that's wrong from start to finish, nitpicking over commas and semicolons? 25 "You're hopeless, you religion scholars and Pharisees! Frauds! You burnish the surface of your cups and bowls so they sparkle in the sun, while the insides are maggoty with your greed and gluttony. 26 Stupid Pharisee! Scour the insides, and then the gleaming surface will mean something. 27 "You're hopeless, you religion scholars and Pharisees! Frauds! You're like manicured grave plots, grass clipped and the flowers bright, but six feet down it's all rotting bones and worm-eaten flesh. 28 People look at you and think you're saints, but beneath the skin you're total frauds. 29 "You're hopeless, you religion scholars and Pharisees! Frauds! You build granite tombs for your prophets and marble monuments for your saints. 30 And you say that if you had lived in the days of your ancestors, no blood would have been on your hands. 31 You protest too much! You're cut from the same cloth as those murderers, 32 and daily add to the death count. 33 "Snakes! Reptilian sneaks! Do you think you can worm your way out of this? Never have to pay the piper? 34 It's on account of people like you that I send prophets and wise guides and scholars generation after generation - and generation after generation you treat them like dirt, greeting them with lynch mobs, hounding them with abuse. 35 "You can't squirm out of this: Every drop of righteous blood ever spilled on this earth, beginning with the blood of that good man Abel right down to the blood of Zechariah, Barachiah's son, whom you murdered at his prayers, is on your head. 36 All this, I'm telling you, is coming down on you, on your generation 37 "Jerusalem! Jerusalem! Murderer of prophets! Killer of the ones who brought you God's news! How often I've ached to embrace your children, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you wouldn't let me. 38 And now you're so desolate, nothing but a ghost town 39 What is there left to say? Only this: I'm out of here soon. The next time you see me you'll say, 'Oh, God has blessed him! He's come, bringing God's rule!'"

Roane Hunter, Sr., LPC, CSAT, CCSAS

LIFEWORCS Counseling

Email: rhunter@lifeworksms.com

Webpage: www.lifeworksms.com

A Journey to Self Discovery



A Journey to Self Discovery

There cannot be deep knowledge of God without deep knowledge of one's self. Jesus said, "Love others as well as you love yourself." John Calvin adds, *"Without knowledge of self, there is no knowledge of God. Our wisdom, insofar as it ought to be deemed true and solid wisdom, consists almost entirely of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves. But as these are connected by many ties, it is not easy to determine which of the two precedes and gives birth to the other."* This study will better equip us in our journey to becoming our True Self. The Three great enemies to becoming our True Self will be addressed—Narcissism, Shame, and Anger. The two great tasks of life—knowing God and knowing yourself converge into a single adventure as we are drawn into the arms of our living God through this study. Let the Journey begin!

Narcissism – Enemy to the True Self – PART III

Zephaniah 3:17; Romans 12:3; James 4:10

Romans 5:12 – born sinful. This means that we are born with only sinful tendencies and no ability to be "good" or righteous on our own. What we call "human nature" the Bible calls "the flesh" (Galatians 5:19-21). Part of our sinful nature is a total focus on self. This focus, also called "egocentrism," is how babies see and experience the world. Narcissism is like egocentrism in that the adult still relates to the world like an infant, a perspective that impedes personal growth and relationships.

Narcissism → Unhealed Wounders

1. The trappings and pressures of “successful” ministry coupled with little accountability/authenticity, and today’s megachurch celebrity-pastor culture are a breeding ground for narcissism.



Matthew 7:15 - “Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.”

John 10:10 – “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.”

10 Character Traits of the Wolf

A narcissistic pastor's drive to avoid disclosure often results in these kinds of behaviors:

1. Rage if he experiences shame, for shame exposes his true self.
2. An inordinate need for praise in order to feel important.
3. The feeling of entitlement to special treatment.
4. The immense need for continual feedback of how important he is.
5. The feeling of superiority and its reinforcement from others.
6. Strong reaction to rejection/disapproval coupled with intense rage.
7. The lack of the capacity to mourn, a defense against depression.
8. Calculating and conniving behavior to “maintain” supplies of continuous adulation.
9. An impaired capacity for commitment.
10. No capacity for self-focus or self-examination.

Enneagram – Take the Assessment

<https://www.wepss.com/>

- **Welcome!**
- The Enneagram is one of the most useful tools for understanding personality styles at work, in relationships, and for self-awareness. The WEPSS is a standardized, reliable, and valid Enneagram inventory, the only one published by a major psychological test company and reviewed in Buros's Mental Measurements Yearbook, a respected authority in the testing field.

The WEPSS can be purchased for single use and in multiple copies by individuals, consultants, and workshop presenters. Results and interpretation are immediately accessible online and via email. The test is currently available in English, Spanish, and Danish for this online version (**Click on Flags At Top!**), and in English and Chinese in the hardcopy version.

- [Purchase the WEPSS](#)

ACTION: Journal This!

1. Can you recognize narcissism in others?
 2. Can you recognize your own narcissistic tendencies?
 3. What is the antidote for Narcissism?
- 