

1. Navigating the Culture of Narcissism (Defined it is the pursuit of gratification from vanity or egotistic admiration of one's idealized self-image and attributes. The term originated from Greek mythology, where the young Narcissus fell in love with his own image reflected in a pool of water--after being rejected by a potential love interest. Narcissism is also considered a social or cultural problem.
Narcissistic personality disorder involves a pattern of self-centered, arrogant thinking and behavior, a lack of empathy and consideration for other people, and an excessive need for admiration. Others often describe people with NPD as cocky, manipulative, selfish, patronizing, and demanding. In its extreme it is a pathological disorder which affects only 1% of people, but strands of it obviously influence numerous more--sometimes in subtle ways, but not always--adversely affecting us in unhealthy ways creating a selfish, me-centered culture in which "the others" are often neglected. One common manifestation of it has blossomed in our social media age--the selfie--even to the point where people are taking dangerous and sometimes even fatal snaps of themselves. It is an all-about-me approach and culture--which is not to be found in the culture of God's kingdom)
2. (Ryan Duncan on Crosswalk blog identified some of what I call the) Seven Deadly Sins (of narcissism)
 - a. Impressed by own achievements
 - b. Profess love but do not practice it
 - c. Talk, but do not listen
 - d. Live in an echo chamber
 - e. Refuse to acknowledge mistakes
 - f. Tear others down
 - g. Ultimately put God second
3. (Biblically speaking some have identified Absalom as a narcissist--and while the Bible does not mention the term--there are warnings--the specific wording is) "Lovers of themselves" --2 Timothy 3:1-4 (**Let's just read it in the MSG**. This is the subversive way narcissism undermines and destroys healthy culture)
4. (It also affects our churches--the prime NT example is found in Corinth where all kinds of chaos was breaking out during worship--folks with spiritual gifts were competing with each other--all of it was driven by ego and performance. It was all me-centered, not God-centered. So Paul rebuked them) "Stop thinking like children"--1 Corinthians 14:20 (How often has this kind of selfish thinking hurt our churches? It is the reason why Paul said in another text to another church--as he was about to list specific spiritual gifts and how to serve one another through them)
5. "Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment."--Romans 12:3
6. (Instead we are to develop) The Attitude of Christ (which is the polar opposite of the me-first, selfish, narcissistic approach--from) Philippians 2:2-11
 - a. Don't try to impress; don't be selfish; be humble
 - b. Look out for the others--think of them as equals
 - c. Learn to submit to and obey God (by so doing we can demonstrate the alternative of the kingdom in our own way--as Christ did in his incredible way--that was this about--navigating our unhealthy culture by offering the healthy way of God. In this case it is not me-first--it is God first!
7. (One more textual reference--speaks for itself) "So the last will be first, and the first will be last."--Matthew 20:16