

This week, Andy presents the second installment of this ten part sermon series "Power Verses For Transformation". Paul's letter to the Philippians tells us to "Look not to your interests only, but also the interests of others as well." (Phil. 2:4) Andy points out that even as evidenced in nature, our own human society has a "pecking order". Those who are perceived to be more dominant are allowed more freedom to do what they want than those perceived to be less dominant. In the animal world, this "pecking order" is controlled by instinct. As people, we are not controlled by instinct. We should govern ourselves by a higher standard than that.

Our modern world seems to be consumed with a preoccupation with "self". You see it on television, hear it on the radio, and read it in the books and magazines. You are taught to promote yourself. Self-preoccupation encourages you to climb to the top of the ladder at all costs, and those costs can be grave. Centering on your "self" first results in disintegrating families and marriages, in superficial relationships, and ultimately, in frustration and despair in your life. God has designed men and women to need each other. You are created to fellowship with others. Proverbs 28:25 says that "Selfishness only causes trouble ..." What can you do?

Andy says that there are three antidotes to the problem of self-centeredness. The first antidote is to purposely build strong relationships with other people. The great command to "love your neighbor as you love yourself" helps you to refocus your attention from your "self" and onto someone else. This shift in focus requires CONSCIOUS effort. Likewise, the second antidote to self-centeredness requires PURPOSEFULLY choosing a new course of action. You can stop only TAKING by beginning to GIVE. Ephesians 2:10 says that you were designed to spend your life HELPING others. Being preoccupied with "self" is CONTRARY to what God planned for you. The worlds' idea of "getting ahead" will only cause you to be "hollow" inside. Involving yourself with other people by helping to meet their needs is the only thing that will fill your OWN need to be significant. Jesus says that you have to lose your own life in order to find His life for you. The third antidote to self-centeredness is to practice "self-denial". Jesus had this attitude himself and He modeled it for you. Practice self-denial by putting the needs of others before your own. You do not practice self-denial by devaluing yourself or your own worth. You practice self-denial by valuing God's plan for you MORE than your own plans. You were created with a purpose in mind. God made you for a unique job that ONLY YOU can do well. Self-centeredness will prevent you from having your eyes open to see your role in God's plans. Will you apply the "antidotes" to the slow poison of self-centeredness?