

Three Infections That Affect The Soul

by C.G. "Colly" Caldwell

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orgiven the tax collector. He could only see his brother as a pitiable sinner; at the best an immature, inept, less than sincere worshiper.

The selfish person has a hard time forgiving. This Pharisee certainly did not ask for forgiveness because he did not think he needed it. He made himself the judge of both the tax-collector (for bad) and himself (for good). Therefore, he received no forgiveness.

That says that selfishness only hurts self. Perhaps it is like the married man who took his wife to a quiet, romantic dinner on their fortieth wedding anniversary. Suddenly a genie appeared on the table and said: "For being such an exemplary married couple and for being faithful to each other for all this time, I grant you each a wish." The wife said, "I would like to travel around the world with my darling husband."

ABRACADABRA! — and two tickets on the luxury liner QM2 appeared in her hand. The selfish husband thought for a moment and said: "Sorry dear, but I cannot give up this opportunity. I wish to have a wife thirty years younger than me." **ABRACADABRA!** — the genie swished his wand, and the man became ninety-five years old!

Selfishness only hurts . . . self. I do not know how old this Pharisee was at the time. But while young people can be quite haughty, ambitious, and selfish, as I get older I understand that the passions grafted onto wounded pride and pursuit of selfish interests do not become easier to manage. It seems that in every age of life, there are new spiritual issues to overcome . . . at least, there is more pronounced vulnerability to certain types of sins in each decade of our existence. Perhaps this Pharisee's problem grew with age and that is all the more reason to control it early.

This week, I had a young lady come to my office and tell me of her teen past that involved drinking, immodesty, and promiscuity. There was no pride in what she had done or in her willingness to confess it. She seems to have truly repented and changed. I came to respect her and hope her life is turned around and her future secure in her faith in Christ. Humility is the ability to give up pride and regain human dignity — and respect by others.

Ego, Pride, and Selfishness are infectious and incestuous. They spawn one another and metastasize throughout our entire spiritual beings. Be careful.

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