

## "... BUT ENOUGH ABOUT ME ..."

Canadian übercomic Martin Short's zany smash, *Fame Becomes Me*, is rocking Broadway audiences with his insane mix of impersonations, his alter-egos like Jiminy Glick and Ed Grimley, and his impromptu ribbing of unsuspecting celebrities in the audience. Short's show was originally titled *Martin Short: If I'd Saved, I Wouldn't Be Here*.

### *EGO Undressed*

In his book, *A RESILIENT LIFE*, Gordon MacDonald writes, "The ego exists in the interior life. It is the centerpiece of the self, and it has an entrepreneurial passion to expand itself, even at the expense of others .... Ego is part of the creative handiwork of God in the making of humanity, but the ego is affected by a spiritual virus ever since evil infected the world. From that point on ego has been both a problem and an asset."

The Bible says God created humanity to resemble Him. Adam, Eve and our planet were, at first, sinless and pristine. **Their "Earth-birth" announcement is in Genesis 1:26-31 (NIV p. 1).**

**DISCUSS: What is ego, and what was it designed to do?**

With Earth as their own, unspoiled, private preserve, Adam and Eve, ironically discontent, blew it for all of us. But would you and I have handled it any better? **Let's see The Unraveling in Genesis 3:1-7, 21-24 (NIV p. 2).**

**DISCUSS: Are you and I prone to inflate our importance? When are we most likely to do so?**

**Untamed ego produces narcissistic pride, about which God comments in Isaiah 2:11-12 (NIV p. 511).**

### *EGO At Large*

Arrogance thrives when we stiff-arm God in favor of our wishful self-sufficiency, or futile attempts to impress Him by being "religious." One Sabbath Jesus' broomstick-spined critics were criticizing His every word and move. **We look in on them in Luke 14:1, 7-11 (NIV p. 777).**

**The now-fallen angel Lucifer, aka Satan, has his pride-slide from being "heaven's morning star" to being hell-bound documented in Isaiah 14:12-15 (NIV p. 520).**

Binging on pride is addressed in the book of Proverbs. There King Solomon warns that too much of “It’s all about me” results in disgrace (11:2, 29:23), quarrels (13:10) and destruction (16:18).

**DISCUSS: Where’s the line between a healthy and unhealthy self-importance? How do *you* rein in ego-creep?**

### ***Humble, And Proud Of It***

MacDonald continues: “Resilient people understand that ego has an insatiable desire for enlargement. Left undisciplined, it becomes addicted to expansion. The interior side builds a false view of self until there is *hubris*, a Greek term describing a person so full of himself that he loses touch with reality. The exterior side adorns the ego with every symbol of glamour, power and notoriety ....”

**DISCUSS: Are high achievers destined to (or deserving of) super-sized egos?**

Each of us craves control, at least over our own lives, but God’s antidote for pride is not poor-me masochism. It’s pure HUMILITY.

**DISCUSS: We can let God humble us, or we can pro-actively cultivate a humble heart. What’s your experience?**

**David’s path to humility is in Psalm 8:1-9 (NIV p. 403).**

God is all-knowing, all-powerful, everywhere-present, without beginning or end, and His love never ever ceases. When we think of His Son Jesus, we think “humility.” On the other hand, who *wants* to be humble when a dab of faked unselfishness can work wonders! But check out some amazing perks of being genuinely humble:

- It’s a spiritual hearing aid, helping us recognize God’s voice.
- It makes our prayers more honest, reminds us of our utter reliance on God, and sabotages our attempts to take God’s place.
- It confirms that we’re totally unworthy of God’s love, but not worthless. Why else would our Creator die for you and me?
- It’s God’s boot camp prior to promotion to higher service.
- God saves (Psalm 18:27), sustains (Psalm 147:6) and gives grace to the humble (Proverbs 3:30).

***“Got Real?”***

Humility comes from a realistic, Bible-based self-assessment, leaving us seeing others as having great worth to God, and ourselves as their servants. Our best role model is Jesus. How'd you like to be Creator of the Universe (even more important than Donald Trump *thinks* he is!), get assigned to swap heaven for a teenage virgin's womb in a smelly barn, then catch three years of abuse while merely offering to usher in heaven on earth, then jeered by a blood-thirsty mob that demanded His cruel crucifixion? This is the thanks the Son of God got for His trouble. **And here's how He dealt with it: Philippians 2:1-11 (The Message p. 435).**

**This inside look at Christ's selflessness lends meaning to His words in Matthew 6:1-6 (The Message p. 19).**

Jesus had twelve. How many do you have to confide in, to exchange wise counsel with as you roller-coaster through life? Your 4-6-man inner circle is a safe-house for accountability and encouragement. Why, even uninvited criticism can be a gift in disguise!

In 1783 Charles Simeon was skewered by a fellow minister who called his sermon "sloppy." Here's Simeon's grace-filled response: "What an inestimable blessing it is to have a faithful friend! ... he is the most valuable friend who will draw us most from self-seeking, self-pleasing and self-dependence, and help us to restore to God the authority we have robbed him of."

### ***Who's Top Gun In Your Life?***

Should having an A-List resumé be cause for pride? **Paul answers in 2 Corinthians 10:15-18 and 11:16-12:10 (The Message p. 401) and Galatians 2:19-21 (The Message p. 411).**

Add Jesus' "two greatest commandments" to E-G-O, and you have the life God desires for you. (Matthew 22:36-40):

**EGO = Elevate God & Others**

**Jesus' warm-up act, John "The Baptist," modeled this acronym, as seen in John 3:22-30 (The Message p. 198).**

The last verse of Sinatra's swan song sums up Frank's worldview:

*For what is a man, what has he got?  
If not himself, then he has naught.  
To say the things he truly feels;  
And not the words of one who kneels.  
The record shows I took the blows -*

## *And did it my way!*

How does living “My Way” match up with what Jesus said:

- "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." (Luke 22:42)
- If you try to keep your life for yourself, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake and for the sake of the Good News, you will find true life. (Mark 8:35)
- "... if anyone has a desire to become great among you, let him be your servant; And whoever has a desire to be first among you, let him take the lowest place:" (Matthew 20:25-27)
- And John the Baptist said of Jesus, "He must increase, but I must decrease." (John 3:30)

Elevating God begins with letting Him *be* God in *your* life by telling Him, in your own words, "Dear God, enough about me. You've done the heavy lifting of loving this sinner, of pursuing me to this very moment, of offering me total, permanent forgiveness of my sins. I see that all You ask of me is that, by faith, I trust in You and in Your Son's death on the cross where He took my place, serving my death sentence for my sin. I give you my trust You right now. Thank You for accepting me into Your family, and for sending Your Holy Spirit to live in me until You and I meet in person! This is GREAT! Amen!"

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