

This is the first in a series of articles addressing common “irritating challenges” we face throughout our adult life, particularly during our young adult years. The articles will address boredom, low self-esteem, loneliness, and stagnation, to name but a few; and they will explore how to get a handle on these issues, debunk their perceived myths, and demonstrate how the Christian life is not subject to their irritation. Indeed most, if not all, of these challenges do not have power on their own. Whenever we



fall under the influence of one, it is not its power that conquers us, but rather our weakness that makes us succumb to it.

Let us start today with the usual feeling of boredom that we encounter once in awhile. To be specific, “usual” is used here to differentiate from boredom resulting from clinical depression, which requires professional medical treatment. The few available definitions of boredom make it clear that boredom arises not from a lack of things to do, which seems to be a common misconception, but rather from the inability to latch onto any specific activity. Therefore, it is not simply what to do, but specifically what to do with sustainable interest. Delving more into the subject, we find that boredom may

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be categorized into three general types: 1. When we are prevented from engaging in something (e.g. studying, starting a new project); 2. When we are forced to engage in some unwanted activity (e.g. aimlessly flipping TV channels, compulsive eating or shopping); or 3. When we are simply unable, for no apparent reason, to maintain engagement in any activity or spectacle. The conclusion is that without stimulus, focus, or purpose the individual is confronted with nothingness. Consider the famous quote from William Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*: “Out, out, brief candle! Life’s but a walking shadow, a poor player That struts and frets his hour upon the stage And then is heard no more. It is a tale Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, Signifying nothing.” Being confronted with nothingness is a sure prescription for everlasting boredom in a sea of darkness. In contrast, the light emanating from the purpose driven Christian life naturally

dissolves the darkness of boredom.

So, what’s the purpose of the Christian life? It is simply to glorify His name. There are many passages in the Bible pointing to this fact. David said: “*Let my soul live, and it shall praise You*” (Psalms 119:175) and also “*Praise the Lord from the heavens; Praise Him in the heights!*” (Psalms 148:1). Jesus prayed: “*I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.*” (John 17:4) Paul followed with: “*For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.*” (1 Corinthians 6:20) and also: “*Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*” (1 Corinthians 10:31) For further discussion of this topic, refer to “Decision Time” published in *Mighty Arrows*, December 2007, Volume 8, number 2 - www.suscpts.org/mightyarrows/publications.

On the surface, and before personally experiencing being alive for the glory of His name, this statement may tempt the audacious novice to wonder: If God only cares about the glorification of His name, doesn't this imply that God is somewhat self-centered? Interestingly, this question is nonsensical. Here is the logic behind it. If God were self-centered, then it follows that there is something else besides or outside of God that He doesn't acknowledge. At this point, two mutually exclusive thoughts are possible: Something else is either true or untrue. Let us consider the first possibility; namely that the something else is true. If that something is true, then it is of God, since He is the truth. "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.'" (John 14:6) Note that Jesus doesn't say He is "part" of the truth, but rather He is the truth. Since that something else is of

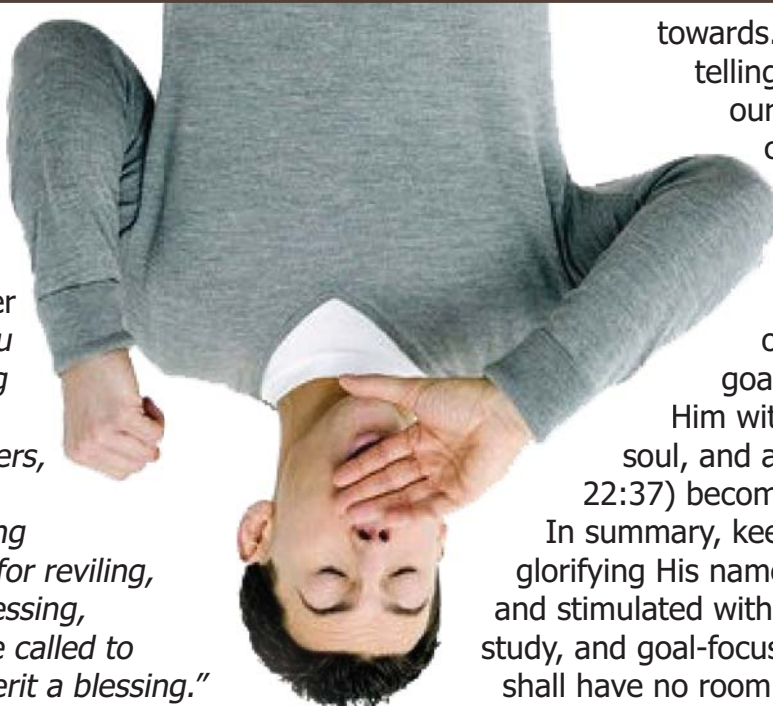
God, then it negates the self-centeredness issue. That is to say, God's self is infinite and there is nothing outside of Him. The second possibility is more straightforward: If that something else is untrue, why bother in the first place? Why waste our time, energy, and resources pursuing that which is untrue? Therefore, it is illogical to describe God as self-centered. Here is the icing on the cake of truth: By His grace you and I have been born from Him, through His Son and by the Holy Spirit to become Christians. That is to say: He is in you and you are in Him. *"And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me."* (John 17:22-23) Such unity, of Him and you, takes away any sense of loneliness.

Therefore, glorifying His name is the mission

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of our life. Once we are clear on the mission, we should look for a strategy and goals to fulfill our mission. The Bible provides the strategy, for example when Peter says: *"Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing."* (1 Peter 3:8-9) Self-examination is part of our strategy and a goal to work



towards. Be it self-control, telling the truth, maintaining our resources in optimal condition, turning each encounter into a loving communication, asking, seeking, knocking, etc... they ought all to be SMART goals. Therefore, loving Him with all our heart, all our soul, and all our mind (Matthew 22:37) becomes our stimulus.

In summary, keeping the mission of glorifying His name constantly in sight and stimulated with love, Bible reading and study, and goal-focused activities, boredom shall have no room to stay.