

ON BEING FIRST, OR,  
STRIVING FOR PLACES OF PROMINENCE.

Matt. 23:11,12

1. The disciples desire to be great. Matt. 18:1-4

Mark 9:33-35

2. Man's love for authority and recognition.

1. The ambitious request of the mother of James and John. Matt. 20:20,21

2. This all happened before the disciples had crucified their urge for power.

3. THE MARKS OF THE Pharisee and their egocentric desire to be recognized above others.

1. Matthew 23:5-10;

1. This Scriptural teaching is diametrically opposed to the philosophies of the world.

2. Jesus very forcibly warns us against aspiring to leadership.

3. He is exhorting us that proper motivation and direction be given to the expenditure of our energies.

4. In our egocentric mad rush to be first we over-look some things:

1. We become oblivious to the damage we inflict on others. Romans 12:3

1. We throw mud on our neighbor's door step in an effort to make our own step look cleaner.

2. In an effort to make himself look big the Pharisee tried to make all others look much smaller. Luke 18:9-14

2. We are never aware of the damage we inflict on ourselves in our mad rush to be first.

1. We have reversed Jesus' order of Matt. 6:33

2. Because of this reversal and in our maniacal rush to be first we suffer rough going, mental weariness and some times disease.

5. Are you a leader? was the question on the application blank from the college.

1. The girl's heart sank within her but being a conscientious girl she gave her answer, "NO!"

1. A study of applications revealed that the college would have 1452 "leaders". Because we would like at least one "follower" you are accepted.

2. No trouble to find "head"cooks but hard to find dishwashers. Head carpenters easy but

hard to find nail drivers.





6. Many "Ugly Idols." For a good example we turn to the parable of the Pharisee and the publican.
7. The "Ugly Idol" is Self. If a man wants <sup>to</sup> know himself he must have a standard of self-measurement.
1. The Pharisee took as his standard man rather than God. *2 Cor. 10:12*
    1. He looked downward, choosing the publican as his standard.
    2. By that standard the Pharisee towered aloft!
    3. By that standard he judged himself accepted with God
    4. In fact, the Pharisee seemed to feel that God was really obligated to him on the basis of the good things he had done.
  2. The Pharisee no doubt told the truth about his outer life but he did not know the truth about his inner life. Why? His standard was wrong:
    1. By that standard the Pharisee created God in his own image and then prayed to his creator
    2. By that standard the Pharisee drew a circle in which he himself was both center and circumference: This shut God out.
  8. In the citadel of the believer's heart there are two occupants and two places of occupancy.
    1. There is the Self and the Lord Jesus Christ.
    2. There is the throne room and the cross room.
      1. If Self is on the throne, the Lord Jesus is on the cross.
      2. If Self is on the cross, the Lord Jesus is on the throne.
  9. Whatever else it may be or may not be, Self is a diabolical hypocrite. WHY? Let me suggest:
    1. Self on the throne will permit a professed believer to do anything.
    2. Self on the throne will permit a professed believer to go anywhere.
    3. Self on the throne will permit a professed believer to suffer many things if only it can retain its sovereignty.
    4. An Ugly Idol, the dearest idol SELF when it is on the throne will not allow God to touch it.

