

DO YOU WISH TO BE GREAT

“Do you wish to be great? Then begin by being. Do you desire to construct a vast and lofty fabric? Think first about the foundations of humility. The higher your structure is to be, the deeper must be its foundation.”

- Saint Augustine

Most likely in the view of the life and instruction of Christ, Saint Augustine is referring to the spiritual certainty that to be first (before God), we must be willing to be last; to lead, we must serve; and to live, we must die. In all these circumstances is the basic humility that comes through the realization that each of us, though a person, is merely the “created” of God...and not the creator.

In the inspirational movie, *Rudy*, a young man learns the definition of struggle in his attempt to realize his dream of playing football for Notre Dame. At one very low point (of this struggle), he confides in a priest; and the priest tell his that in all his years and study of priesthood, there is one thing he has learned: “that there is a God – and that he (the priest) is not it.”

Our natural inclination as humans is to be a god; we want to be control and sometimes fool ourselves into believing that we are in control. This belief is a myth and, taken as a possibility, can become a futile pursuit. Depending on the circumstances and intensity of the person, this pursuit may cause untold damage, hurt and heartache while adding more frustration to the person...and those around him.

Control (or the pursuit) can be an addiction or obsession; and with this “open-ended” intensity, can render the person to all sundry of “devices” and schemes while reducing others (or devaluing) others to virtual nothingness. An example of such intensity – even a disorder – is called a **sociopath**. The sociopath is “driven” to such extremes that the world (or everyone else) essentially is reduced to a “door mate” – or to something of insignificance or importance. Here is a just few of the behaviors of the sociopath:

- **Manipulative and Conning:** They never recognize the rights of others and see their self-serving behaviors as permissible. They appear to be charming, yet are covertly hostile and domineering, seeing their victim as merely an instrument to be used. They may dominate and humiliate their victims.

- **Grandiose Sense of Self:** Feels entitled to certain things as "their right."
- **Pathological Lying:** Has no problem lying coolly and easily and it is almost impossible for them to be truthful on a consistent basis. Can create, and get caught up in, a complex belief about their powers and abilities. Extremely convincing and even able to pass lie detector tests.
- **Lack of Remorse, Shame or Guilt:** A deep seated rage, which is split off and repressed, is at their core. Does not see others around them as people, but only as targets and opportunities. Instead of friends, they have victims and accomplices who end up as victims. **The end always justifies the means and they let nothing stand in their way.**
- **Shallow Emotions:** When they show what seems to be warmth, joy, love and compassion it is more feigned than experienced and serves an ulterior motive. Outraged by insignificant matters, yet remaining unmoved and cold by what would upset a normal person. Since they are not genuine, neither are their promises.

Other symptoms and degrees (or depth) of the disorder exist; but for the purpose of describing some behaviors, this list/description above should underscore that a sociopath is hardly in position to accept a realistic Biblical view of their position relative to God. On the contrary, they exalt themselves to that of God (or a god) that is supposedly above reproach or excuse...for their behaviors and actions.

Clearly a disorder is a serious matter; and I doubt that Saint Augustine had such subject matter in mind when he offered the quote (and the context) above. **Most likely the message was aimed at those who are "mentally-framed" in the moral attributes of man against the amoral God who is infallible and pre-eminent.**

Although I have taken liberties – to differentiate in both the basis and direction of his message – the intention is to identify extreme behaviors that preempt or prevent such a possible position of "created" versus creator. **Somewhere between the extremes is a whole host of folks who have varying levels of pride and arrogance – which may limit or obfuscate the realization of the created; but a disorder is an entirely different matter.** To a

degree, the former chooses to deny God's position while the later is so mentally sick that they couldn't embrace God if they wanted to...

In other writings (see the Web page, "Pondering Proverbs"), I have written about the Mind & Heart – and the brokenness that must occur in the believer's life (or soul) that they may grow in faith...and be changed for the better. **As a man thinks, so he is – say's the scriptures from Ecclesiastes.** Brokenness begins when the pilgrim (of human passing through this earth) realizes his own depravity or wanton sin – in view of God's perfection...and salvation in Christ. Whether through a deluge or a slow drizzle, brokenness will teardown the soul of a man that the Spirit of God may do a work and more...

Only when the *servant of Christ* is dying to himself, can God shine through as the mind and heart are changed for the better; and only when he denies himself, can God be glorified in his life. Jesus told his disciples, **"if you want to be first, be last;** if you want to lead; than follow..." He also said, "if anyone wants to live, he must deny himself, take up his cross and follow me."

You of sound mind (though not yet like Christ); what is your decision today...what about tomorrow...and then...?