

Alone

Neil Girard

One of the strangest delusions upon many current Americans is that they believe they have the ability to “make it” alone, that by their own self-effort and determination they can, even must, “pull themselves up by their own bootstraps” and thus turn their life into a “success.” This philosophy, birthed just over a century ago to usher in an age of consumerism and “proven” to be a functional way of life in the opulent 1950s, has undergone many minor variations in various “pop psychology” best-sellers and experienced multiple revisions and restatements on many fronts (including with the “church”) but these core elements have remained virtually untouched. This philosophy – practiced either in abandonment, moderation or partial rejection of various aspects – remains the underlying structure upon which the whole of the American economy rests, depends and functions.

The first generation of Americans to subscribe, en masse, to this philosophy were those who experienced the unprecedented boom after World War II as America became a super-power and, being the least devastated nation from that war, reaped the lion’s share of the benefits of rebuilding the world in the aftermath of the global conflict. One can easily categorize the post-WWII nation as having been handed over to the false god Mammon!

Prior to this massive wealth in the hands of so many (though it was truly only 5-10% of the world’s population), and as is true in every other culture still untouched by rampant wealth, individuals have relied on their *family* ties and connections to succeed and even to survive. Every culture on earth except these few generations of wealthy elitists looks to its natural-born relations for support, help, comfort and connectedness – especially in times of trouble. Thus many modern Americans, in blind belief that their unprecedented wealth and ease is a permanent condition, have abandoned their inter-connectedness with their families and pursued their individual, independent “careers” as if this were the way it has always been done by the whole human race. This foolish arrogance has produced generations of Americans who have no concern for others, not even their own children or family members, as they are so focused on their own lives that anyone else’s problems are nothing to them and really only an intrusion into their own “private lives.” This sickness and dysfunctionality is not seen as a sickness or dysfunctionality but is seen as normal and even beneficial but the spiritual reality is that souls are sold in the name of “careers.”

It is not to be assumed that this description applies to all – indeed the exceptions to this category are the shining examples of God’s nature reflected in His creation! But as Jesus said, “Because lawlessness [doing what is right in one’s own eyes] will abound, the love of many will grow cold.” (Mt. 24:12) He also promised that the truly righteous would shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their heavenly Father. (Mt. 13:43)

The folly of this individualistic philosophy is readily apparent. When God created man, He said, “It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.” (Gen. 2:18) Solomon expanded on this theme when he wrote, “Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, for he has no one to help him up. Again, if two lie down together, they will keep warm; but how can one be warm alone? Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken.” (Eccl. 4:9-12) This ancient wisdom has been rejected by the “your-own-bootstraps” philosophy and the real winner is the devil and the demonic.

Jesus said, “Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.” (Mt. 18:19-20) The devil and the demonic is quite delighted in isolating lone followers of Christ (although the Lord also allows and uses this isolation as a “wilderness” training time in the follower’s life) as this is one of his best opportunities to derail or destroy the follower’s life in Christ. Note well the devil’s assaults on Christ Himself while He was alone in the wilderness (Lk. 4:1) – His successful defeat of the devil’s trick questions opened the door to His fruitful ministry to the people.

There is another aspect of being alone that we ought to consider. Paul wrote that in the fullness of time *all* things would be gathered up in Christ. (Eph. 1:10) And John wrote that those who received the “mark of the beast” and worshiped the beast or his image would be tormented forever in the presence of God. (Rev. 14:9-11) And we are told that all those whose names are not found written in the Lamb’s Book of Life will be thrown into the eternal lake of fire that was created for the devil and his angels. (Rev. 20:15, Mt. 25:41)

Many strange doctrines have been concocted to explain “hell” – some have foolishly taught that the devil would rule in hell and that each person there would have a personal devil or demon to torment them throughout all eternity. This would be a perverse kind of “heaven” – a place of unrestrained evil and oppression – for the demonic and is fundamentally what the devil and the demonic are trying to establish on this earth in this time.

The holy, eternal and omnipresent nature of God suggests a very different reality for the eternal lake of fire. That is, in what time or place could God place those whose names were not found in the Book of Life where He would not be? His holiness cannot forever be in the same place as men’s evil – and if all things have been drawn up into the eternal which He *is*, there will remain no time or place where evil might remain. Yet those who are judged to be evil are sent to this eternal “place” called the lake of fire.

I would suggest to you that the lake of fire is not so much a place (though it may well be a place as well) as it is a condition – a condition of absolute and utter aloneness accomplished by simply rendering the soul incapable of sensing others or communicating with them in any way – not even with God. Thus the miser would be alone inside his own soul for all of eternity counting, recounting and counting again all the pennies he hoarded to himself as the faces of those whom he could have helped (but refused to) flash before his internal “eyes.” The politician would repeatedly rehearse his speeches and promises by which he deceived the people while the history of each nameless face plays itself out in his mind to show him what destruction and devastation his lies brought about. The “Christian” who came to know something of God’s way of righteousness but who was somehow turned from God’s holy commandment to hear His Son and obey Him could repeatedly relive the moments where he or she *almost* escaped this eternal judgment. (see 2 Pet. 2:21, Mk. 9:7, Heb. 12:25) And the “pastor” can tell himself again and again and again and again the sermons on “faithful attendance” and “tithing” by which he hoodwinked his congregation into following him at the expense of their following Christ and building up His kingdom. And no one (but God who will not answer them in any way) will hear their screams as they spend eternity locked up alone with the god they have really served all their lives – themselves!

This description of the nature of the lake of fire may be only speculations – no claims to special revelation are being made here. But this author would strongly recommend, even urge, every reader with tears to take every precaution to insure that he or she does not find out in bitter personal experience just how accurate these speculations might be.

The philosophy of individualism is a distortion of the fact that God creates unique individuals and individually gifts them as He wills (1 Cor. 12:11) so that he or she might display some particular aspect or quality of God. This philosophy of being alone is specifically designed to divert individuals away from the oneness that is found in the true corporate body of Christ and, in the end, will leave us absolutely and utterly alone for all of eternity. Let us therefore strive to love and serve Christ and the others in our life all the more diligently as time draws ever nearer to its ending point.

Let he who has ears hear.

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