

## THE ROOT PROBLEMS AND FOUR DIFFERENT KINDS OF PEOPLE

Opening Questions:

- Does what kind of a person I am matter?
- Is it possible to be blind in a way that is not physical?
- Does self-pride play a role in my life and is its influence good or bad, constructive or destructive?
- Does fear play a role in my life and is its influence good or bad, constructive or destructive?
- Does selfishness play a role in my life and is its influence good or bad, constructive or destructive?

The world – that is the people of the earth who create, participate in or ignore all the problems – needs a lot of help as we saw in the previous "the State of Humankind" chapter. However, "humankind" is made up of individuals. Individuals are collectively causing the problems, and every human being fits into one of four categories regarding their contributions to the problems. There are the leaders, the participators, the ignorers and the fighters.

The leaders get the lion's share of the blame, the participators a good percentage and the ignorers also share some responsibility for all evil in the world. The fighters actively work non-violently using truth against the evil that the other three types of people create, support or refuse to fight. Therefore, we have to ask ourselves, "how is MY state of being?" which will determine which category of person I am. *I cannot decide for or control anyone else, but I can choose for and control myself.* I can and should influence others.

As we saw previously, there is a tremendous amount of unnecessary pain and suffering that occurs each day due solely to the actions – in inactions - of other people.

Let us pause for a moment to bring this down to the personal level since we have been talking at a high, impersonal level. Am I the best person I could be? Am I causing conflict or pain in other people's lives? Am I neglecting people in my life? Am I treating all the people in my life the right way, and how do I know what the right way is? Am I genuinely living by love? If not, what is

the solution? Will politics or religion or economics solve those problems that I have? Will self-pride prevent me from admitting those problems?

So what are the root problems and how can we fix them first in ourselves and then in others? The following story will help you understand the difficulty in finding the solution.

There once was a man who was an engineer and whose work it was to investigate the engineering failure(s) that occurred that caused a massive loss of life. This fellow's job was to find out what structural engineering components failed. He liked his work except for the dead bodies he would encounter on his site investigations, which greatly disturbed him. So, being a creative engineer, he invented a helmet which had a feature that would filter out the un-pleasantries of the dead human bodies and body parts that were a regular part of his initial evaluations. With his invention, the man could now walk onto the site of the collapsed building, for example, and not see any evidence of human suffering or death.

Did you know a real helmet of this nature exists? And did you know that the vast majority of human beings have this helmet and use it all the time? *It is called the helmet of selfishness, and it has two primary power sources that make it work – self-pride and fear.* What this helmet does is mask the evidence of all the problems causing hardship, pain, anguish, and suffering. This helmet is most useful for the real situations that the wearer encounters every day, but it also works with the TV and internet.

What is the primary benefit that the wearer of the helmet appreciates about the helmet? The primary benefit is that the wearers *believe themselves to be free of responsibility to do anything about helping the people affected by the problems or of trying to fix the problems!* Of course, the helmet prevents a person from even knowing how to help others let alone wanting to.

Now would be a good time to pause and summarize what we have covered in this book up to this point.

So far we have established a few relevant facts. First, that it is reasonable for we human beings to be “spiritual” or “religious” since a designer clearly must exist to account for our bodies and lives on the earth, just like it is reasonable to conclude a designer exists to account for the existence of a computer. Furthermore, since we have metaphysical or spiritual aspects or components to our persons – our souls, minds, conscience, etc. – it is only reasonable to conclude that our “software” components had a designer/Programmer. Therefore, it is only reasonable that we be “spiritual” or “religious” because the physical realm cannot account for metaphysical realities like reasoning, forgiveness or love properly defined as selfless behavior motivated by compassion.

Second, we established that the human race has serious problems, and it does no one any good to deny those problems. The first step to solving any

problem is first to admit it exists! For example, a surgeon denying a cancerous tissue exists will not help the patient overcome the problem.

Finally, we took a brief look at human nature so we could understand ourselves better.

So, as we saw, the following terms and associated concepts describe well what is happening amongst human beings on a daily basis all over the earth for the past several thousand years – war, conflict, violence, slavery, abuse, neglect, suffering, pain, greed, wrongful competition, greed, etc. Yes, there are ebbs and flows to these things, but they continue to exist without any significant advances in solving them. And yes, good people are doing good things on the earth, but they are few and far between and don't significantly impact the overall state of humankind.

As I have already alluded to, I suggest that if one looks closely enough, one will see that three things are the cause of most of our problems: *Self-pride, fear, and selfishness.*

Remember, the Christians will say, “oh, well, of course, there are problems in the world, but sin is the real problem.” That is no different than the physician who is unable to treat the disease successfully because he is not willing to look closely enough to determine the specific cause but instead insists that "disease" is the problem. In this way, he convinces himself he can see and is good at his occupation, even while most of his patients die.

Before we address how Christianity is a “successful” failure, we need to address a fundamental aspect of human nature that will be at work in all people. We already addressed the “helmet of selfishness,” but let us take a closer look at the helmet as well as its two primary power sources. If we cannot fully appreciate our fundamental problem, we are not likely to see our need for the solution.

There are three aspects to our nature, or predispositions to our nature, which keep us in a cage of our own making. Stated another way, these three aspects of our nature cause us to do much wrong...self-pride and fear and selfishness. Here are some examples to help the reader understand the concept of being “bound” or in a metaphorical cage.

Examples from the physical realm: Asking a physically blind person to look at a sunset and appreciate its beauty is irrational - they can't do that. Asking a disabled person who cannot walk to please walk to the store and get some milk is silly - they can't do that.

An example from the metaphysical intellectual realm: To ask a normal seven-year-old child to read and understand Einstein's advanced works on the theory of relatively, is irrational - they can't do that.

An example from the metaphysical, moral realm: Asking a person - who is bound up in bitterness towards another person who they believe has wronged them – to forgive the offender immediately, is irrational - they are in a state of their choosing which will not allow them to do that.

An example from the metaphysical, spiritual realm: Asking a person to live by the teachings of Joshua of Nazareth when they have not placed their faith in

him is irrational – they can't do that. Oh, they can play a game in the intellectual realm and learn many things about “Jesus” in their mind, but they will not listen to him, nor believe him nor do what he says due to their lack of faith. Unlike the physical limitation examples above, in this case, the capacity can be chosen or rejected by our free will—we have a choice.

We, as human beings, have limitations. More importantly, we have aspects of our nature that cripple us or blind us or make us far less than what we were intended to be. The three elements of our usual human nature that bind us and blind us and seek to control us are self-pride, fear, and selfishness. These root problems have been mentioned and referred to previously, but now we will take a close look at them.

I challenge the reader to look at the conflict and human-caused wrongness in the world – including the conflict and wrongness that is occurring in your life with those you interact with or have relationships with – and find the cause of the conflict or wrongness. If you do this well, you will arrive - in the vast majority of the cases - at self-pride, and fear and selfishness as the causes of the wrongness or conflict or hurt.

If we cannot find a way to overcome those three things, we will be part of humanity's problem rather than part of the solution no matter how much our self-pride will spur us to object to the contrary. If self-pride or fear or selfishness bind us, then we are incapacitated and will be unable to find the freedom offered in this book. Said another way, if self-pride or fear or selfishness guide us, we are not good people as Joshua of Nazareth defines a good person. Ironically and sadly, self-pride will usually prevent us from admitting this simple truth!

What is self-pride? *Self-pride believes at the personal level, that I am more valuable, more important, more enlightened, more worthy, smarter or better than other people.* Self-pride causes a person to think that they have important things about life figured out better than most people, which results in an unwillingness to learn or consider new beliefs. Self-pride causes me to think that I deserve more good things than other people. Or that I am more worthy to get this thing – material thing, power, authority, etc. – than others.

Here are some examples of how people - who are making decisions or treating others based upon self-pride - think or express themselves.

- I am not going to listen to you because I believe I already have a better understanding of the topics you would like to discuss.
- You can't be part of this team/group because you are not worthy or don't have anything significantly valuable to contribute.
- I am just smarter than you – and have such-and-such a degree from college or university, or I scored this on this test, etc. - and thus you ought to believe what I say or do what I say.
- I've already looked into that, and I believe I have the answers, or the answers cannot be known, so I don't want to waste my time talking about that. (this could also be fear)

- Are you going to tell me you know more than that famous subject matter expert? Who are you? (Vicarious self-pride or fear.)
- We are just better than you and thus you ought to submit to us or do what we think is good and right.
- You ought to give us that (land, material things) because we deserve it for these reasons and you don't, and if you don't, we are justified in taking it from you forcefully.
- Why am I a leader-manager / executive / minister / senator / bishop / captain, etc. - because I deserve it and am more worthy than you.
- Why would I want to do that—that is beneath me.
- You want me to consider befriending that person? You must be kidding.
- You are going to hang out with or befriend that weirdo?
- You believe what about God? I have been through seminary, and thus I am better equipped to know what is true about God...
- The people elected me, and thus it proves I am more worthy than you to be a leader.
- I've got a bachelor's degree (or masters or doctorate) in that area so who are you to question my knowledge in that area?
- You didn't even attend college...what makes you think you can make a significant contribution to this discussion or work?
- Oh, I would never do or say that to someone...
- I am popular; you are not; thus you don't deserve the things I get due to my popularity.
- Don't you know that people with my skin color are better or just naturally more beautiful people?
- You have not been to college? Oh well, I guess you won't do much with your life.
- Our church is the largest, most successful church in the city, so we are receiving God's blessings more than others.
- My pastor graduated at the top of his class at Ivory Tower Seminary so you really ought to listen to him about God – I mean who are you to question him?
- Don't you know that I am from the United States, and we have the best nation on the planet?
- Oh, my child(ren) did this or that...they accomplished this or that...they are the president of this or that...they are a doctor or a lawyer... (women often express this vicarious self-pride, and the unstated thought often is, "because I am such a wonderful parent")
- Oh, I need to post that I went to the bathroom on Facebook because I am so important and all my "friends" need to know about all the important things I did today.

- Oh, that poor soul...he has so few material things.
- God has blessed us with all this money, and so we must be doing things right in his sight.
- That person (or those people) must be foolish to get themselves into that situation.
- I am too smart or clever to have got myself into that situation.
- I would never have let that happen to me.
- I would never have done that.
- I would never have gotten caught.
- What an idiot.
- What a fool.
- Those stupid people deserve what they got.

Of course, there are clever ways to soften or sugar coat the above utterances, but that cleverness or political correctness does not change the fact, no matter how “humbly” those things might be stated or thought.

What is fear?

*It is a perception that something I value or want or need is at risk of being lost, damaged or destroyed.*

Here are some examples of how people who are making decisions based on fear think or express themselves.

- I can't leave him – I know he mistreats me, but I am afraid of the unknown—at least I know where I stand here.'
- But if I give that away, I might not have enough...
- I can't walk away from that job...I might end up on the street...
- I am not going to make that decision because I am afraid I might lose this or that...
- If I say that true thing, then I am afraid people will not like me any more...
- I can't believe that because I am afraid I will be rejected from the comfortable social circles I am part of...
- I can't do (or say that, or believe that) because these people whose approval I value will no longer accept me...
- But if I don't treat that person this way, I am afraid I will not get what I want from them... (also selfishness)
- I'm not going to give up control of those people because I am afraid I will be worthless without it... (also self-pride)
- If I change in that way, I don't know what my life will be like, and I am afraid of change or what it might bring...

- I simply do not want to consider that because I fear what it might mean...
- I'm just not going to go there...
- I am not generous because I must save up for retirement or else I won't have adequate funds for the last years of my life.
- There is no way I am going to believe that, because if I believe that, that means all these people I love, or respect are wrong, and I can't face that possibility and what that would mean.
- I need the material security that my parents provide so I can't believe or do that even though it is right because they will punish or reject me...
- Jesus can't mean that...that would mean I need to....
- I am afraid to change because I don't know what that will mean for the way I want to live my life.
- All those people can't be wrong...I am afraid to consider that possibility and its implications.
- I'm afraid if I don't look like that, I will not be attractive to others.
- Jesus can't mean that...that would mean these people I esteem would be wrong, and that would mean...
- If I don't please that person, they will reject me and then what?
- If I don't get that job, I'll be out on the street.
- There is just no way I will consider that.
- I can't stop working primarily for money to work for Joshua; I might end up homeless or worse...

I would suggest that the most important fear that causes much human conflict and motivates much selfishness is fear of death. When people believe that they are going to die, fear usually grips them, and that fear unleashes their dark nature which causes them to do many wrong, evil and harmful things to others to preserve their life in this world. If you think about it, greed is often fear-of-death motivated. The thinking is, "I need this to pad my life so my risk of dying is diminished" or other such similar thinking.

So, the question becomes what if there was a cure for fear of death? *How many fear motivated wrong things that humans do to each other would go away?* What if people believed that there was a cure for death, could appropriate that cure, and thus be free of the fear of death as something influencing their life and life decisions? An essential aspect of this book is to reveal that Cure.

What is selfishness?

*It believes that my wants are more important than others...or stated another way, I am not going to take actions that cause me to lose something I consider valuable...my decisions are going to be based on what I gain or get out of it.*

Here are some examples of how people who are making decisions or treating others based on selfishness think or express themselves.

- I know you think that is a good idea, but what do I get out of it?
- If there is nothing in it for me/us, then it just doesn't make sense to pursue it...
- Why should I give that away, are you crazy?
- If I don't take care of myself, who will?
- I need my personal space, for that is only good and right and you ought to respect that.
- I only have one life to live, and I am going to live it to its fullest and that means having fun and spending money on myself.
- Hey, we deserve this...
- That seems like the right thing to do; look at what we lose if we don't do that...
- I have to look after number one...
- I just have to do what it takes in order to get what I want...I cannot be concerned about its impact on others...
- I deserve some personal time...that other person is going to have to take care of themselves...
- I know it seems selfish, but if you really look at it, it is for the greater good...
- I worked hard for that and so I have no obligation to share it with others...
- It's a dog-eat-dog world – you need to take care of yourself...
- Sometimes, we just have to take care of ourselves and trust God to take care of the other person...
- Don't call me selfish – I am just living out survival of the fittest...
- At the end of the day, if I don't take care of myself, no one else will...
- It all depends upon your perspective...maybe taking from others is what will be best for them in the end...
- If I try and help people, I may not have enough for me...
- People don't want help, so why try?
- Who am I to do anything?" Translation...I need an excuse not to take any risks that might negatively impact my relatively comfortable life...
- I can't make a difference..." Translation...I need an excuse not to take any risks that might negatively impact my relatively comfortable life...
- Let the experts handle that..." Translation...I need an excuse not to take any risks that might negatively impact my relatively comfortable life...
- It's not my fault that that is happening to people... Translation—I don't care about anyone else me myself.



- I just don't have time. Translation – I am too busy trying to earn money for myself or doing things that please me.
- Who defines what is wrong anyway. Translation – I don't care what happens to anyone but me.

These examples are merely a small sampling of statements and justifications thought and uttered billions – perhaps trillions - of times each day in various forms by the people of the earth. Maybe you have made comments like these or have thought them? *Perhaps you believe you are somehow exempt from accountability even though you operate each day with those three spiritual problems being the primary factors in your decisions, thus driving your behavior and creating your lifestyle?*

Some would argue that hatred is a root problem. Here are some synonyms of hate: extreme dislike, disgust, animosity, hostility or aversion.

Hatred is almost always caused by a combination of fear and/or self-pride and/or selfishness. Let's use an example to test this theory out. Racism is a frequent cause of hatred. What is racism? It is when one person wrongly makes stereotypical judgments and has some level of animosity about another based on their "race" which is often manifest by the color of their skin. What causes the animosity? Fear and self-pride cause it—fear says, "I don't trust 'those people' because they are different than me"; or, "I heard this about them"; self-pride says, "I am better than those people because of reasons X, Y and Z..."

So, when a personal interaction occurs between the two people - person A is the victim and person B is the racist - and the stereotype is perceived to be validated by some behavior by person A, the racist person B makes the judgment ("I knew those people were stupid" for example) and some self-pride based manifestation is communicated by person B to person A ("You are a @&#\* just like the rest of your kind..." for example), at which point things often can escalate into hatred manifest by harmful behavior or violence. The root problem is that the "racist's" heart is already bad – ruled by self-pride - and it's looking to justify the hatred that racism brings.

Selfishness can also quickly turn to hatred for another person. If someone tries to take something from us that we believe is rightfully ours, we will soon move into a mode of hating that person. So, hatred is just a more extreme expression of fear or self-pride or selfishness. Or stated another way, hatred's foundation is offended self-pride or fear moving to a high emotional state and perception of animosity. When dislike turns to hate, it starts to dominate one's soul/emotions and thus makes a person more prone to uncontrollable wrong, immoral or harmful behavior. Self-pride and fear and selfishness are the root problems that can produce the often outwardly destructive cancer that is hatred.

The simple truth is, if the three root problems regularly influence your thoughts and decisions, then you are in one of the first three categories of human beings – you are leader, participator or ignorer of the evil in the world.

Of course, it is possible to be in several groups depending upon the specific wrong (or evil). In other words, I could be a leader in one wrong thing, a participator in a different wrong thing, and an ignorer in yet another or several or many other wrong things. To put it simply, I am – each of us is - either part of the problem or part of the solution. *Being part of the problem or part of the answer is a direction thing, not a perfection thing.* In other words, my daily actions will be either fighting against the evil and wrongness in the world, or my daily activities will not. If I am passive in my words and behavior, I am part of the problem no matter what I claim to believe.

*We are either overcoming the root problems and thus caring about what is true and right, or we are not. We are either actively working against that which is false and wrong, or we are not.* It is a conscious life direction involving a daily evaluation and decision process.

Remember the problem is first individual and then collective. The solution is not collective; first, it is individual. If I cannot overcome fear and self-pride and selfishness, then I can never effectively fight against the collective manifestation of those things or the individual manifestations I encounter. Instead, I will be carried along in the river of humanity and at some frequency lead, participate or ignore the wrong or false things that contribute to the dark state of this world.

Most people are primarily ignorers. Many are participators. Some are leaders. Few are fighters.

What are you dear reader, really?

Are you living an exceptional life, an evidence of which is experiencing the animosity of those to whom you say some version of, “no, that is not true, or that is not right”? Or are you justifying your life of being part of the problem? Are you actively fighting against the evil each day and if so, how so? Be real with this self-examination because self-deceit and delusion is a sad and ultimately destructive way go through life. Also, don’t forget about the concept of accountability, which we will look at a bit later. Perhaps there is one whom we cannot fool with all our self-justifications and excuses?

Perhaps the most important question we could ask about ourselves is how we can escape the “cage” of self-pride and fear and selfishness? Or, what do I have to do to change to a fighter? We will take a preliminary look at the answer to those questions in the next chapter.

Chapter Summary:

- Human beings enter into and are bound in a cage consisting of self-pride, fear, and selfishness when they turn into adults and make decisions for themselves;
- We filter reality through a lens of the cage of self-pride and fear and selfishness. In other words, we do not see ourselves or the reality around us as it is, but instead, we see them only through the prism of our cage.

- We are either part of the problem (leader, participator, or ignorer) or part of the solution (non-violent fighter). There are no other options.