

The Idolatry Of "Us": Understanding Enmeshment & The Pride Of Life

Today's podcast is called, "The Idolatry Of "Us": Understanding Enmeshment & The Pride Of Life."

When we think of the "pride of life," our minds often go to the obvious: the billionaire flaunting wealth, the influencer seeking fame, or the high powered executive obsessed with their title. We visualize a person standing alone on a pedestal.

However, in many narcissistic systems – particularly within enmeshed families – the pride of life wears a much more subtle, & often seemingly pious, mask. In these dynamics, the idol is not an individual person, but the family unit itself.

The Apostle John warns us about the internal drivers that pull our hearts away from God. In 1 John 2:15-16 in the Amplified Bible, it says, ***"Do not love the world [of sin], nor the things that are in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh [craving for sensual gratification] & the lust of the eyes [greedy longings of the mind] & the pride of life [assurance in one's own resources or in the stability of earthly things]—these do not come from the Father, but are from the world."***

The Bible defines the pride of life as "an assurance in the stability of earthly things." In an enmeshed family, that "earthly thing" is the family identity. The members put their total faith, security, & sense of worth into the family's perceived superiority.

Enmeshment is not just closeness. It is a toxic blurring of lines where individual identities are swallowed up by the collective. I find them to be similar to the Borg of "Star Trek: The Next Generation." The "Collective" is the person who controls the family, often the mother. Her "Borg" are her husband & children whose job is to protect the family image. In narcissistic families, they believe their family is more moral, more successful, or more "Godly" than others, & work to display that image.

This is the "pride of life" in action. Their faith is not in the character of God, but in the reputation of the family. They believe that as long as they belong to this "superior" group, they are significant. Because their entire ego is wrapped up in this image, they cannot allow a single crack in the facade.

If you are the one who begins to see the toxicity, you become a threat to their stability. When you stop supporting the "our family is everything" mindset, you aren't just setting a boundary; in their eyes, you are committing a form of blasphemy.

This explains the intense rejection that follows when you try to bring health to this system. The pride of life demands that the "stability of earthly things" be maintained at all costs. To admit that the family is toxic would require them to dismantle their idol & face their own brokenness before God.

Instead of choosing the truth that sets them free, they choose the pride that keeps them "superior." If you do not bow to the family idol, they will punish you in a variety of ways.

They will reject & discard you, because your presence is a reminder of the reality they are trying to hide.

They will label you as the problem: To protect the pride of life, they must cast you as the “unstable” or “unloving” one.

They will vilify you because no matter how gently you try to approach the topic, they see it as an attack on their “god.”

Recovery from an enmeshed, narcissistic family requires a painful but necessary realization: you cannot save a family that has placed its faith in itself.

The pride of life is a house of cards. It feels stable until the wind blows, but 1 John 2:17 reminds us, ***“The world is passing away, & with it its lusts [the wordly pursuits & pleasures]; but the one who does the will of God & carries out His purposes lives forever.”***

If you have been rejected from a family like this, take heart. Your faith is being moved from the fleeting “stability of earthly things” to the stability of God the Father. Breaking free from the pride of a toxic family system is the first step toward finding your true identity in Christ—one that does not require you to lie, hide, or perform to be loved.

Thank you for listening to my podcast!