

Avoiding One of the Quickest Ways to Forget About God

I'm not the only one. We can all be a bit self-centered.

By nature, we are selfish people. Just think about it: You don't have to teach a child to be selfish. Have you ever seen someone sit down with a 2-year-old and say, "Sweetie, today I'm going to teach you to be selfish. It won't be easy, but I think you're old enough now to make the jump. So I just want you to hold this ball, and when I ask for it back, you scream as loud as you can, 'Noooo! Miiine!'"

That has never happened in the history of the world. When push comes to shove (as my friend John can attest), we all look out for No. 1—me, myself and mine.

Not only do we have our sinfulness working against us, much of what we see in culture affirms our self-centered tendencies. Some argue that a massive culture shift in 1973 changed everything. You may not have been close to being born then, but there's a chance your parents experienced this cultural climate change.

I was 6 at the time, so I'll share what I can recall about this catastrophic switch.

For decades, if you wanted a hamburger at almost any fast-food restaurant, it would come in the way that restaurant prepared burgers. If you didn't like the tomatoes, you could take them off yourself. If they used mayonnaise and you preferred mustard, you were free to scrape off the mayonnaise as best you could and squirt a mustard happy face across the bun.

Perhaps the best-known fast food chain at the time, McDonald's, had a song about one of their burgers. When you ordered a Big Mac, you got "two all-beef patties, special

sauce, lettuce, cheese, pickles, onions on a sesame-seed bun.” If you didn’t like the special sauce, the lettuce, the pickles, the onions, or the sesame seed bun (and trying to pick off the cheese was the worst), too bad for you. Why didn’t you order a Quarter Pounder instead? The song told you what you were getting. That’s how the burger was meant to be eaten.

Until the competition changed the rules.

In a move that rocked the fast-food world, Burger King boldly declared that you had choices, options, decisions to make: If you wanted a burger, you could “have it your way!” You read that right. It was crazy. It was your burger, and you could choose what you wanted on it. No mayonnaise? No problem. No pickles? No big deal. No onions? No worries. Extra ketchup? You got it. Burger King even developed a song that, once you heard it, was stuck in your brain forever:

“Hold the pickle, hold the lettuce, special orders don’t upset us. All we ask is that you let us serve you your way. Have it your way. Have it your way at Burger King.”

And the self-centered, consumer-is-king mindset spread like wildfire. There was a new sheriff in town who was always right—you.

You deserve it.

You’re worth it. Get what you want. Enjoy life your way.

It’s natural in our world to want it our way, and Burger King nailed it, even if it was just a smart marketing move. According to Jesus, life is not all about us, and yet everything in culture tries to tell us it is. Without realizing what a rabid monster we’d unleashed, we became more obsessed with self than ever before.

One of the quickest ways to forget about God is to be consumed

with self. Jesus had pretty direct words for those who wanted to follow him. He said, "If anyone will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross ,and follow Me" (Matt. 16:24).

We are called not to celebrate, promote or advance ourselves but to deny ourselves. To pick up our cross, to suffer through not having everything our way, to die to our selfish tendencies. God wants us to have it His way.

And we're not talking burgers. {eoa}

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