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worthless, He said, and divine exaltation is only ever gained through humble submission.

The apostle Paul warned that celebrities are further from salvation than the rest of the populace. *“For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence. But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God — and righteousness and sanctification and redemption — that, as it is written, ‘He who glories, let him glory in the Lord’ (1st Corinthians 1:26-31).* Glorifying, or boasting as it might be translated, ought to be God-centered, not self-centered.

Celebrity aspirations are decidedly selfish, but Christians must be selfless. *“Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others”* (Philippians 2:3-4).

To the extent one may gain a measure of influence, that influence must be directed toward the benefit of Christ’s gospel. He taught, *“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven”* (Matthew 5:14-16).

If fame is merely a means toward wealth acquisition, let it be known that, too, is a foolish endeavor. *“Those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows”* (1st Timothy 6:9-10).

The abundance of Scripture that warns against seeking fame should be sufficient to convince the reader, but a casual awareness of current events and history is also alarming.

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Statistics would be hard to come by, but it seems celebrities either cause or experience crime or other danger tremendously more than the general population.

Many celebrities die in car wrecks and plane crashes. Musicians go on tour, politicians campaign, actors commute to distant location shoots, actors also take on stunt driving for their roles, and all of them have the time and money to travel for leisure more often than the working class. Actors James Dean and Paul Walker both died in high speed automobile accidents and so did Princesses Diana of Wales and Grace of Monaco. Plane crashes claimed the lives of countless musicians like Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens, and the Big Bopper, members of Lynrd Skynrd, Ricky Nelson, Stevie Ray Vaughan, and John Denver.

Actors, musicians, and politicians are apparently more prone to stress or discontent, leading to depression and addiction, often resulting in suicide, like singer Naomi Judd and chef Anthony Bourdain, unintentional overdose, like actor Heath Ledger and singer Whitney Houston, and DUI arrests, like golfer Tiger Woods and actor Mel Gibson.

Famous people often deceive themselves into thinking they are above the law and unaccountable, so they commit rape, like actor Bill Cosby and film producer Harvey Weinstein, or murder, like athlete Aaron Hernandez and music producer Phil Spector.

Being public spectacles, celebrities attract obsessed fans who might kill them, like actress Rebecca Schaeffer or musician John Lennon. Sometimes, they find themselves in financial disputes that turn deathly tragic, such as singer Selena Quintanilla. Others wind up in domestic troubles that end violently, like actor Phil Hartman. Because of their power, perceived power, or prospective power, politicians can be targeted, like President John F. Kennedy and his brother Robert.

From a strict worldly view, there are dangers attending celebrity status that are probably not worth the risk. Far more importantly, there are definite stumbling blocks that should keep a spiritual person disinterested in fame.

Rather than the relentless pursuit of publicity, it is better to take satisfaction in the simple blessings of the Lord. *“Godliness with contentment is great gain”* (1st Timothy 6:6).

**"WHAT MUST I DO
TO BE SAVED?"**

ACTS 16:30

LEARN THE GOSPEL

John 6:45; Romans 10:17

BELIEVE IN CHRIST

Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16

CONFESS CHRIST

Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 3:19; 17:30

BE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST

Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-6

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"THE ASSEMBLING OF
OURSELVES TOGETHER"**

HEBREWS 10:24-25

SUNDAY

Worship @ 10:00 a.m.

Studies @ 11:45 a.m.

WEDNESDAY

Studies & Worship @ 7:00 p.m.

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Belén, New Mexico

Seekers Welcome.

Members Expected.

**"IF A MAN IS OVERTAKEN IN
ANY TRESPASS...
RESTORE SUCH A ONE"**

GALATIANS 6:1

CONFESS TRESPASSES

James 5:16; 1st John 1:9

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 8:22

PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS

Acts 8:22

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"A WORD FITLY SPOKEN IS
LIKE APPLES OF GOLD IN
SETTINGS OF SILVER"**

PROVERBS 25:11

"If you never run into the Devil,
it's because you're both running
in the same direction."

– Larry Acuff

"WHOLE COUNSEL"

ACTS 20:27

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CELEBRITY ASPIRATIONS

Bryan Matthew Dockens

Many children, and some childish adults, aspire to be celebrities, and the proliferation of social media, as well as the ironically named "reality television," has made the process easy. One need not have any talent or useful skill any more to gain celebrity status. Inspiration warns against this pursuit.

To be a celebrity, by definition, is to be celebrated. Thus, desiring the status means one wants recognition and honor. Concerning the Pharisees, Jesus warned, *"All their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments. They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, 'Rabbi, Rabbi.' But you, do not be called 'Rabbi'; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ. But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted"* (Matthew 23:5-12). They wanted to be seen, they wore conspicuous clothes, they wanted premium seating at events, and they expected strangers to greet them in public – the epitome of being a celebrity. And the Lord Jesus Christ condemned it all. Human exaltation is – Continued on page 2 –

RIO GRANDE VALLEY CHURCH OF CHRIST

505-864-0282

rgvcoc@gmail.com

Box 989, Belén, NM 87002

www.RGVChurchOfChrist.org

75 Sherrod Boulevard

Facebook.com/RGVChurchOfChrist