

## B. Development of Iconoclastic Arrogance, An Example

Let's put this in a church setting. Our example will be a person who is legalistic. In his legalism, he assumes that of those who attend the church the ones who are truly spiritual are the ones who have drawn the same conclusions from the Scripture as he. In time he will isolate a certain individual whom he assumes best upholds the ideas, beliefs, and attitudes which depict the authentic Christian way of life. He admires this person's qualities, i.e., the mellifluous resonance of his voice, the inspirational lessons he teaches at Sunday School, the energetic manner in which he performs his church duties, the sense of personal conviction he exudes as he sings specials in the choir, or the stately manner by which he distributes the elements of the Eucharist.

These are behavior patterns which can be presented successfully whether filled by the Holy Spirit or not. The advancing believer is led to function in these ways by a Spirit-led desire to serve the Lord as best he can and he does so under genuine humility.

Coincidentally, these same traits also appear on our iconoclast's list of sure-fire indicators of the spirit-filled life. But they really give no clue to the person's true spiritual status before the Lord. The carnal believer and even the unbeliever can put on such a show if he feels it expedient to do so. It is the latter type whom the self-righteous believer picks out and establishes as his role model. He institutionalizes this person in his own mind by creating a mental image to which he offers respect, admiration, and honor. This image is assigned all the attributes which this person believes makes one a super believer, one to be looked up to, imitated, and followed.

In effect, the legalistic believer has created a mental icon modeled after his role model and has placed that icon up on a pedestal. This poor person is totally and completely ignorant that any of this is going on. He in reality is nothing like the legalist imagines. He is a professor at the local university whose Ph.D. is in speech and communication. He sings in a jazz band on weekends. He is a believer who, although not mature, is ad within the system. He is known to take a drink, will tell a bawdy story on the golf course, owns a television, on occasion can be seen dancing in public, and, unknown to anyone, acquires his vast knowledge of the Bible by studying Bob Thieme tapes in his basement.

Eventually this man's behavior patterns are going to be revealed and they are not such that impress the legalist. Upon learning of any or all of these ghastly activities, the legalist is appalled. He immediately becomes disillusioned, disenchanted, and disappointed in his role model.

An illusion is an erroneous perception of reality. To be disillusioned is to be forced to admit that your illusion is flawed by unrealistic expectations.

To be enchanted means that another person has attributes which delight, charm, and enrapture. To be disenchanted is to realize that your role model's true attributes are in complete opposition to that which delights, charms, and enraptures you.

Disappointment occurs when the role model fails to satisfy the hopes, desires, and expectations of the legalist. Suddenly, the legalist is appalled by the realization that his role model has feet of clay. "*How dare him betray me!*" is the exclamation which unleashes a flood of sins from the emotional and arrogance complexes.

Immediately the legalist begins to function under the three arrogant skills. Through arrogance he has become so self-absorbed that everything is centered on self. In arrogant self-absorption he has created an idol out of a person and assigned to him his own unrealistic expectations of true Christian *modus vivendi*.

When betrayal occurs under the feet-of-clay syndrome the legalist never holds himself responsible for assuming too much by assigning unattainable attributes to an unsuspecting role model. The traitor must be destroyed. Therefore, the legalist projects blame for not upholding his own standards onto the largely innocent role model.

Believing himself to be right under self-delusion, the legalist is able to self-justify iconoclasm—the destruction of the idol. Destruction takes place through a sequence of sins from the emotional complex beginning with bitterness, anger, and hatred.

These mental attitude sins place the legalist on the road of the loser believer. Uncorrected by rebound, this person moves into sins of the tongue: malice, vituperation, vilification, and revenge motivation. Uncorrected by rebound the legalist then gains momentum by moving into overt sins associated with revenge function, such as, violence, physical abuse, and even murder.

When the smoke clears, the legalist finds the role model destroyed, the pedestal empty, and himself as the only candidate perfect enough to replace him. Endowed with fresh-found power, the legalist, now an iconoclast, assume the mantle of role model for others.

*“Since I created the idol and assigned to it my own self-righteous standards which the role model was unable to fulfill, then the only possible successor is ... me!”*

*“I am right. He is wrong. Others like him are also wrong. Since I have the power to destroy those who do not agree with me then I will appoint myself as perfect and begin to judge and condemn all those who don't measure up.”*

As self-appointed judge and jury the iconoclast now moves into crusader arrogance, gains a following, forms a special-interest group, later enters into political activism, and eventually becomes involved in various forms of civil disobedience. His self-righteous arrogance is facilitated by his followers who feed his approbation lust. *“You're right! They are wrong! We are good! They are evil! We are justified in tearing them down, judging them, condemning them, murdering them!”*

**James 4:1** - What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures [**hedone: gratification of lust pattern**] that wage war in your members?

**James 4:2** - You lust and you do not have; so you commit murder.

**Tyrell, R. Emmett, Jr. “The Continuing Crisis.” The American Spectator, Sept. 1996, p. 6:**

In Dadeville, Alabama, an unidentified priest shot Mr. Gabel Taylor dead after being bested by him in an early-morning Bible-quoting contest.

**James 4:2b** - You are envious and cannot obtain; so, you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask.

**James 4:3** - You ask and do not receive because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.

**James 4:4** - You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself the enemy of God.

**James 4:5** - Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: “He jealously desires the Holy Spirit which He has made to dwell in us?”

**James 4:6** - But He gives greater grace. Therefore, it says, “God makes war with the arrogant but gives grace to the humble.”