

Pursuing the 'Perfect Selfie'

What do high cliff ledges, train tracks, animal game parks, bridges and buildings have in common?

They are apparently popular sites for people to take selfies, and places where more than 200 people have died in the last five years in pursuit of that "perfect selfie."

The Economic Times of India, a country leading the world in deaths by selfies, reports that 86 people in 2016 and 73 people in 2017 died in this tragic, needless way. Since 2014, reports show 128 have died in the course of taking selfies in this densely populated nation.

But other countries, too, are getting involved in trying to stem the tide of such tragedies. Irish doctors reported, "The consequences of poorer spatial awareness and a focus on getting a good or daring photo has led to multiple traumas," according to Indulekha Aravind, assistant editor of India's largest business daily, *The Economic Times*.

There are people in Russia who have become celebrities because of their daring self-centered photos. Nowhere social media has gone is there an exemption from this trend, including here in the United States.

Why do people go to these extraordinary lengths to capture oneself in these kinds of photos? Could it be an act of desperation for acceptance, friendship or even love? Could the yearning for admiration, congratulations and adulation drive people to disregard all restraint and precaution?

Henry David Thoreau, American essayist and poet of the 19th century, said in 1854, "The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation."

With selfies, we are able to project exactly the image of perception of ourselves that we want others to see. We don't publish the unflattering or the boring. We want to be seen as valuable, relevant and attractive.



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Why? Human nature yearns for community and relationship.

By contrast, God formed the church to be a place where we focus on others. The Apostle Paul wrote:

Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others (Philippians 2:3-4 NASB).

Christ wants our energy effort, and focus to be turned outward. It's not so much about projection as service.

– Beecher Hunter

