Olympic-Sized “I Infections”

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As the 2014 Olympics continue to unfold, televised by the NBC sports team, anchorman Bob Costa’s very public battle with a nasty eye infection continues to be as hot a topic of conversation as which Americans are winning medals. Now both eyes are red, swollen, and painful-looking. As they say here in Texas, bless his heart!

If the spiritual dimension of life were made visible in the physical realm, most of us would be walking around looking like Bob Costa. His eyeball is inflamed and infected, interfering with his vision and affecting the way people see him. It’s a startling picture of our warped and diseased perception through which we experience life. No one is immune, since all of us have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23), and all of us live in a fallen world. We all have a spiritual eye infection.

It’s really an “I infection.”

We’re stupidly, pathologically self-centered and self-absorbed. Our life theme song is “It’s All About MEEEEEEEE!” Everything and everyone is evaluated in terms of how it benefits us or costs us. Adding insult to injury, this “I infection” is not only ugly, but it stinks to high heaven. Some people’s “I infection” comes from a vaunted sense of entitlement. They were showered with excessive parental adoration, believing that every successful trip to the bathroom deserved a round of applause, that they were owed a celebratory party and gifts for turning another year older, that they should receive a trophy for showing up to games.

Others’ “I infection” comes from the desperate fear that at their core, they really don’t matter and there’s nothing there anyway. They are plagued by a shame that colors all of life in

the kind of emotional gunk that blurs Bob Costa's eyes. Everything feels sticky and painful and gross. It just hurts to live.

Still others experience an "I infection" fueled by unhealed wounds that continue to fester and cause pain. It's like walking around with an arrow stuck in your heart, and it doesn't take much for life experiences to brush up against the arrow and cause a fresh wave of pain to an old wound. So they live life in a defensive mode, trying to protect themselves from the relentless presence of unfinished, undealt-with pain.

No matter what the cause of our "I infection," the cure is the same: we need to come to Jesus, in the humility of abject need and dependence on Him. The "I infection" of selfishness is the symptom of a heart that God calls deceitful above all things and desperately wicked (Jer. 17:9). This kind of heart is incurably diseased-we need a heart transplant. Fortunately, God's really good at that. He promises in Ezekiel 36:26 to give us a new heart and put a new spirit in us, which He does the moment we trust in Jesus to save us from our sins and our sin-diseased hearts.

When the person with a sense of entitlement develops an attitude of gratitude, disciplining herself to give thanks for the abundant showering of blessings and gifts from Jesus, her now-thankful heart clears up the ugly "I infection."

When a person infected with shame comes to Jesus, His loving acceptance and grace heals the "I infection" and allows him to see himself as beloved and valuable.

When the ones with unhealed wounds come to Jesus, giving Him access to the places of the heart that hurt and ooze, He pours His love into the wounds as they are exposed to the light by telling their story and then forgiving the ones who caused the wounds. Jesus heals their "I infection" through grieving and forgiving.

Bob Costa may have an eye infection. What’s your “I infection” that you need to take to Jesus?

This blog post originally appeared at
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