

Attitudes that Destroy: Complacency

Amos 6:1-7

Arrogance says, "I'm kind of a big deal" and you need to treat me as such. It leads to misconceptions about the nature of self, life, and others; believing that they must control the world around them. Amos reveals in chapter six that arrogance leads to complacency and pride. The first seven verses deal with the by-product of complacency.

Amos was a shepherd from Tekoa before God called him to be a prophet. And even though Tekoa is in the southern kingdom of Judah, Amos delivered his message to the northern kingdom of Israel. His ministry happened in the reign of Jeroboam II; which means that Amos prophesied some 40 to 60 years before the northern kingdom was destroyed by the Assyrians in 722 BC.

I. Arrogance leads to complacency, which leads to a false sense of security; 6:1-3.

¹ Woe to you who are complacent in Zion, and to you who feel secure on Mount Samaria, you notable men of the foremost nation, to whom the people of Israel come! ² Go to Calneh and look at it; go from there to great Hamath, and then go down to Gath in Philistia. Are they better off than your two kingdoms? Is their land larger than yours? ³ You put off the evil day and bring near a reign of terror.

Amos grieves that the people in Zion (the capital of Judah), as well as the people in Samaria (the capital of Israel), have an arrogant and deceptive feeling of well-being and security; however, their arrogance ignores the true state of affairs. They feel important because people come to them for advice and help, but their significance is greatly exaggerated. They considered themselves important people who need to be listened to.

Amos asked them to consider a few cities. Calneh and Hamath were Syrian city-states under Israel's influence. Gath was a Philistine city-state under Judah's control. They were wrong if they thought they were better or bigger than the three city-states. They refused to learn from the history of their neighboring city-states, who once had been independent. Now they were subject to Israel and Judah. What happened to their neighbors could happen to them. They were confident such a day was reserved for God's enemies. What they failed to see was that they might be God's enemies. Any thought of a day of disaster for Israel was put off to the distant future.

Everybody wants security, the absence of threat, the absence of fear, the absence of danger, and that comfortable freedom that says everything is under control. Security leads to feelings of overconfidence and carelessness - a false perception of reality.

Complacency is a smug satisfaction with life and perspectives. We easily exaggerate our importance and think that we control our own destiny. We want change but for others to change, not us. Arrogance leads to the “big fish in the little pond” perspective, rather than the reality of being “plankton in a great ocean.” Arrogance leading to a false sense of importance and security has never been blessed by God.

Arrogant complacency pushes any accountability off to the distant future. In their secure perspective, they are right, and no one can tell them otherwise. Yet, they fail to realize how precarious they really are before God. As Paul said “So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!” (1 Cor. 10:12)

II. Arrogance leads to complacency, which leads to careless ease; 6:4-7.

⁴ You lie on beds inlaid with ivory and lounge on your couches. You dine on choice lambs and fattened calves. ⁵ You strum away on your harps like David and improvise on musical instruments. ⁶ You drink wine by the bowlful and use the finest lotions, but you do not grieve over the ruin of Joseph. ⁷ Therefore you will be among the first to go into exile; your feasting and lounging will end.

Amos now grieves over the people's careless ease. They lounge on couches that have ivory inlays on the wood frame of the furniture. They eat tender beef from prime fattened calves and choice lambs. The people also enjoy the finest music; they even picture themselves to be like David on musical instruments. The final physical aspect of these sumptuous banquets that catches Amos's eye is the huge bowls of wine in front of each plate and the expensive imported body oils and lotions. Rest and recreation were their greatest values.

These people are so busy enjoying themselves that they do not grieve over the ruin of Joseph, the nation of Israel. They are happy, so they ignore and deny the true status of their sick and dying nation. Amos is in grief over their self-imposed blindness, so he ends with a warning of exile. He ironically announces

that these people will be the first to go into captivity. The party is over; the end has come! What a sad ending for God's chosen people.

God does not tolerate a self-indulgent lifestyle. When you become addicted to self-indulgence, you don't see it as self-indulgence. There is always someone who has more and better than you. People live for comfort, and do not grieve over the lost. People are experts in loving themselves but have not thought about what it means to love your neighbor as yourself! Is there a God-given desire to do as much good for others as you can to the glory of Christ?

Self-indulgence grows from arrogant complacency. There is more concern over personal comfort and having life the way we want. There is not a willingness to grieve over the ruin and brokenness around, not recognizing one's own self-indulgent behavior. What grieves you? Is it the things that affect your joy, likings, way of life, and comfort or those who are caught in the ruin of sin and its brokenness?

Arrogant complacency causes one to think that God's judgment and discipline will come upon others but not them or their family. They're better than that. God warns that a rude awakening is coming. Arrogance causes us to focus on what others should do and not what we should do. Personal security and comfort become the goal and lead to complacency. You're more concerned about what others should do than what you should do.

God's solution reflects Jesus' last words to us. Focus on others, not on self-interests. With so much brokenness all around, the gospel brings hope to a hurting world and spiritual growth to our lives.