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## Prima Donna in the Mirror?

[https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/prima donna](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/prima%20donna)

*1: a principal female singer in an opera or concert organization.*

*2: a vain or undisciplined person who finds it difficult to work under direction or as part of a team.*

Summertime is a good time to reflect and evaluate one's recent experiences; both private and professional. In my world, this year has featured several conflict situations that I have found myself called to mitigate. As I ponder, I have come to realize there is a common theme in every interpersonal conflict. There is at least one prima donna involved. While the term originally referred to the female lead performer in a play or concert it has come to be applied to all who see themselves as the central character in the group to which they belong.

As Merriam-Webster suggests, they create conflict by seeing themselves as primary and everyone else as secondary. When this happens, the individual is elevated above the group or team. Less we see this as a new phenomenon, I would point to an incident among Jesus' disciples when a Jewish mother sought to "center" her boys above all else on the team. [See Matthew 20:21ff]

The whole of Scripture consistently admonishes folks who worship the Living God, that He is to be preeminent, and we are to find our rightful place among His people. Faithfulness to Christ's Lordship means we value one another, defer to one another and seek to bless one another as fellow members of His body - the Church.

Whenever a Christian places their own status, agenda, desires or point of view above those of others in the group, this sub-Christian behavior inevitably leads to disruption and disfunction in the group. The essence of ego-centrism is focusing on self at the expense of all else. What is insidious about this behavior pattern, is that while it is to be expected in the 2 or 3 year old; it is not acceptable in a grown up adult. It can become a self-destructive ingrained behavior pattern that the individual reverts to unconsciously. It is amazing to try to help folks see this behavior pattern in themselves and to admit it and repent for the common good.

It is self-destructive because, this person will become a problem for every group they join, beginning with their family relationships and affecting work space, social relationships and church family. We are all unique creations of God, surely with different perspectives and preferences. But the Scriptures consistently admonish us to live together with humility, deference, and respect for one another.

***"By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."*** John 13:35,

***"Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. <sup>32</sup> Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.*** Eph 4:31-32

***"Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ."*** Eph 5:21

It has been said that we teach what we know but tend to reproduce what we are! Before we set out to correct someone else, may I suggest a long talk with the man/woman in the mirror?