

American Idols

I probably should not admit this, but I, along with millions of other Americans, have become an avid watcher of the TV program, "American Idol." I'm wondering what Simon's next quip will be. What will Randy say? Will Paula cry? I haven't got to know the new judge.

More interesting than the judges, however, are the contestants themselves. Some do not seem to take the contest very seriously, even thanking the judges after being told, "You're going home." For others, this opportunity seems to carry "life and death" importance. And that is very disturbing.

In last year's series, Ryan Seacrest turned to Simon in the final episode and said, "And Simon, tell us what the winner will get." Simon snidely responded, "What they have always wanted – fame, stardom and a lot of money. It's what it's all about!"

What is it with our obsession with fame in America? We all feel entitled to what Andy Warhol once described as "our 15 minutes of fame."

Many will follow every move of their favorite celebrity in gossip magazines and TV shows. If the celebrity dies, it sometimes proves to be the person's best career move. Take the worship of Elvis Presley for instance. In recent years, someone paid nearly \$ 1,500 for a pool ball from Elvis's pool table. A hanging macramé plant holder from Graceland – complete with a plastic fern – went for \$ 633. Ebay recently sold three tablespoons of water said to have been touched by the king himself for \$ 455!

Elvis, Jackson, Marilyn, Britney. The names change with the passing of time, but we will always have our idols. Why is it that we want to admire, emulate, or even worship someone or something? The answer is simple: We were made that way. We are "wired" to worship. The insightful writer of Ecclesiastes in the Bible declares, " [God] has set eternity in the hearts of men" (Ecclesiastes 3:11). From the very beginning, God created us to know, worship, and love Him. This is the very reason we exist!

The final book of the Bible, Revelation, depicts what worship looks like in heaven. Those surrounding God's throne say to Him, "You are worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power. For you created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created" (Revelation 4:11 NKJV). Sadly, many of us do not fulfill this purpose for which we were created. We feel this urge to worship, but we turn our affections toward other things. A recent poll revealed that 61 percent of Americans believe that the main purpose of life is "enjoyment and personal fulfillment."

Why are we so unhappy?

The words thundered from Mount Sinai so many years ago still ring true – perhaps even more so today: "You shall have no other gods before Me." When God gave that command years ago, He didn't make it to put us on a guilt trip. He gave us this directive to show us how to live to the fullest, as He had intended – in heartfelt devotion to Him.

I believe the reason so many of us are unhappy is because we are not doing what we were created to do. We prefer worshipping the things that our Creator created rather than the Creator Himself. And we come up short.

In reality, whatever we worship, in this life – whether it is a bank account full of cash, a perfect physique, a coveted spot on “American Idol,” a long-for dream of the perfect mate, a sought-after position – will always fall short in filling that “God-shaped void” in our lives. It is a cheap substitute for the real thing.

Donald