

Pride

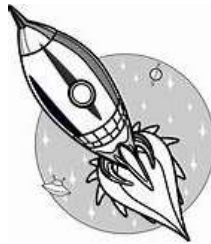
Pride is a costly sin, as well as a grievous one—it can cost us very dearly.

Shortly after my father died, my mother went to visit her mother, my Grandma, in a nursing home up north, where Grandma had been for a couple of years. The first thing Mother said to her mother was, “Mom, where is your hearing aid?”

“I don’t know,” was the answer. It seems that Grandma had tried to communicate to the staff that she couldn’t hear their requests and instructions, but the communication failed, and they decided that she was senile. Grandma “got her Irish up” about it, and said to herself, “If that’s what they want to think, let ‘em!” Thus my grandmother spent two of her last years in lonely, self-imposed isolation because of her stubborn pride.

Grandma’s hearing aid was found in a relative’s attic. After that she was back in touch with the world, miraculously cured of her senility.

My mother had her own full share of costly pride. She was very interested in the space program from its very beginning. When she came to visit us near Washington, D. C., she was thrilled at the prospect of visiting the National Air and Space Museum.



Mother had several ailments, including diabetes, failing eyesight, and heart disease. I wanted to rent a wheelchair for her so she could see the museum in relative comfort, but she would not allow it. “I don’t want to be pushed around in a wheelchair. I’m not crippled!” she said emphatically.

After fifteen minutes on her feet in the museum, looking up at the exhibits, she got a blinding headache. She nearly choked to death trying to take aspirins at a water fountain; then we went home. So much for the museum that she been so eager to see.

What is pride, and why is it a sin?

Pride is simply a way of thinking that “the most important thing in my world is me.” It may not be expressed in words, but it shows up in attitude and in relationships. It is sort of the ultimate expression of selfishness. It says, “I matter,” but more than that, it says, “I matter more than you.” Way too often “I love you” really means “I will care for you as long as you keep pleasing me.” In other words, for many, “I love you” is not about “you,” it’s about “I.”

Our pride makes us try to say, “I AM,” as if we were God. It’s true that we’re made in God’s image, but still, we are only created beings. We have no business pretending to the status of the Creator. Jesus could truly say “I AM” in that way, and He did say that several times—and it drove the Pharisees crazy. When we try it, there is destruction and a fall waiting for us. *Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.* (Proverbs 16:18)

One problem with pride is that it sometimes seems to be a good thing. People, especially young people, are encouraged to be proud of who they are, and take pride in what they do. People are told to be proud of being black, or gay, or from a particular part of the country or ethnicity. Athletes (and their fans) are expected to be proud if they win, but they can also be proud if they fought hard and lost.

Selfish pride is never appropriate. What do you and I have to be proud about? If there’s anything good in us, or if we own anything or do anything that’s worthwhile, every portion of it is a gift from God. It’s true that we should be responsible, and appreciate and care for God’s gifts to us. But we, like Paul, should limit our prideful thoughts and words to the excellence of our God and His provision. *Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.* (1 Corinthians 1:31)

Besides that, we can’t afford to be proud, because it makes God our enemy. *God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.* (James 4:6 and 1 Peter 5:5) The same thought, in various paraphrases, is stated many times throughout the Bible.

Fortunately there is a remedy for this pride, this fatal sickness that afflicts us all. Jesus gave us this prescription: “Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” What “yoke” is this? What “burden” is he talking about? It is simply obedience. When we submit to the Father’s will, not just with verbal assent but with whole-hearted commitment, we are humbling ourselves “unto death.” We’re saying, “It’s not all about me, Lord. It’s all about You. Thy will be done!”

The work of the Holy Spirit in the life of a Christian is to carry out a process of change, a complete transformation that replaces our human faults, foibles, and failings with the character of Jesus. If you



struggle with pride, as I do, remember that God isn't finished with either of us yet. But we need to cooperate with the process. We need to *present [our] bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.* (Romans 12:1-2)

How much grief could be avoided if people didn't let their pride control them? How many exchanges between parents and teen-age children would not need to turn into shouting matches or worse? How many discussions between police officers and civilians could remain at the level of conversation and negotiation, instead of turning into confrontation and violence?

Here's another question: How much pride gets out of control because the devil or a sneaky little demon is whispering into a person's mind, saying, "Don't let that turkey get away with disrespecting you! Show him you won't put up with that!" Or something to that effect.

Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. (1 Peter 5:8) He's also looking for someone to egg on into doing something stupid because of pride. When that happens, the devil wins and everyone else loses.

Overcoming Pride

I did some research and found lots of suggestions for dealing with pride. I've combined some of them with my own thoughts to suggest these three steps:

1. GET REAL

Simple truth: God is great; we are not. God is holy, just, and totally good. You and I are not anything like that at all. We're selfish, sinful, prideful, rebellious creatures. God may have used us to do good things—if so, that is a credit to His greatness, not ours.

We need to watch ourselves. We need to be aware of our pride, whenever it rears its ugly head. When we are tempted to lie, or make excuses, or brag, or think we're better or smarter than someone else, or insist on having our own way, it's an attack of pride.

When that happens, we need to recognize it, and we need to ask ourselves, "Is this one of the things Jesus was talking about when He said, 'Deny yourself, take up your cross and follow me.'?"

2. GET DOWN

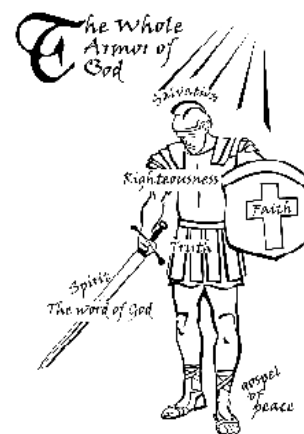
First, repent. Make up your mind that pride is not going to control what you think and what you do. Of course, that doesn't mean a thing until you turn to God for help. You need to pray before your attack of pride: "Jesus, be with me when I'm tempted to be prideful." You need to pray during an attack of pride: "Lord, I'm doing it again. Forgive me, and give me grace to cool down and

stop reacting with pride." And later, after you have given in to pride or successfully thwarted it, you should pray again for God's will always to be done, and that He will give you grace to avoid the sin of pride in the future.

3. GET WITH GOD'S PROGRAM

Actions you can take to help you overcome prideful behavior:

- ✚ Focus on being obedient to God, as you are being guided by His word and the Holy Spirit. God is most pleased with us when we obey Him.
- ✚ Become others-oriented. Look for ways to be interested in other people, to help them or bless them or bring a little sunshine into their lives.
- ✚ Give up complaining, and looking for things to criticize or be angry about. Instead, focus on and share things that are good and uplifting.
- ✚ Protect yourself with *the whole armor of God: the belt of truth, the breastplate of [Jesus'] righteousness, the readiness given by the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, along with prayer!* (Ephesians 6:10-18)
- ✚ Avoid temptation—in fact, run from it. (2 Timothy 2:22) If alcohol or the wrong friends tempt you to commit sin, whether it's pride or anything else, just don't even allow yourself to get into that situation. We're weak, and the devil takes full advantage of us every time he can.



What is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? Psalm 8:4) When we understand and respect the difference and the enormous distance between ourselves and God, we realize that pride is silly. We just need to remember that, and discipline our thoughts and our actions accordingly.

"God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you. (James 4:6b-10)

Peace, in our Risen Lord Jesus!

Brother Roland

[The clear opposite of pride, of course, is humility. We need to learn to be humble.]

Three People in the Bible Who Can Teach Us a Great Deal about Humility

(Adapted from <https://www.christiantoday.com/article/3-people-in-the-bible-who-can-teach-us-a-great-deal-about-humility/122289.htm>)

Humility is one of the most important qualities that we all need to have. It's so important that God Himself would want it from us. Micah 6:8 tells us,

"He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?"

Humility is a character trait that takes a lot of time and effort to develop. The effort in developing it in ourselves, however, won't go unrewarded. James 4:10 tells us,

"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up."

Humility is very important to God. Through it we recognize our very small standing in comparison to God. We realize our unrighteousness in comparison to His righteousness, our uncleanness in comparison to His holiness. Without humility, we can never repent of our sin and turn to God.

Biblical examples of humility

Thankfully, the Lord didn't leave us in the dark as to how we can grow in humility. The Bible presents to us several people from whom we can learn humility. Here are some of them:

Humility in religious and intellectual matters:

Paul

The apostle Paul is one of the men from whom we can learn humility. He gives to us a list of credentials in Philippians 3:4-6, but then he does what can only be done through humility in verse 7:

"If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ."

Humility to remember God's goodness:

David

David, famously known for being the Old Testament giant-slayer, is one of the men of God from whom we can learn humility. He came from obscurity, rose up to defeat a terror enemy named Goliath, and eventually sat on the throne as Israel's king. While pondering God's creation, he remembers:

"When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained, what is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him?" (Psalm 8:3-4)

Humility through painful experiences:

Joseph

Joseph, Jacob's son, is well-known for two things: the special coat his father gave him, and his leadership over Egypt as its administrator. Between these two things is a slew of painful experiences. Through it all, however, he grew in humility, recognizing God's hand in everything. He told his brothers in Genesis 50:20,

"But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive."

The Paragon of humility

The greatest example of humility the Bible gives to us is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. He – the only begotten Son of God – came down to earth and took on the lowest form ever: that of a servant.

Let's all learn from our Lord Jesus Christ, the Paragon of humility and all Godliness.

"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Philippians 2:5-11)

Pride

Words and phrases about what pride is and the ways proud people behave. Please don't be like them.
Enjoy the puzzle

Puzzle:

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Words:

ARROGANCE
BAD-MOUTHING
BELITTLING
BIGHEADEDNESS,
BOASTING,
BRAGGING
BLUSTERING
BULLYING
COMPLACENCY
COMPLAINING
CRITICIZING
CONCEIT
DISDAINFULNESS
EGOTISM

GOSSIPING
HAUGHTINESS
HUBRIS
IMPERIOUSNESS
LORDLINESS
POMPOSITIVITY
PRETENSION
PUTTING OTHERS DOWN
REBELLION
SELF-ABSORPTION
SELF-ADMIRATION
SELF-CONCEIT
SELF-CONGRATULATION
SELF-ESTEEM

SELF-GLORIFICATION
SELF-IMPORTANCE
SELF-LOVE
SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS
SELF-SATISFACTION
SELFISHNESS
SLANDER
SMUGNESS
SNOBBISHNESS
SUPERCILIOUSNESS
SUPERIORITY
SWELLHEADEDNESS
VAINGLORY
VANITY