

Pride

Pride is a sin because it constitutes a theft of glory, or credit for achievements, which belong to God. We are nothing beyond that which God created. What ever we as humans achieve is by His grace, by the attributes, which He gave us, and nothing more. Can pottery take credit for its beauty or its utility, or the watch for its accuracy? These are the works of their craftsman who have been blessed by our Creator with abilities, which permit these accomplishments. Thus, there is no legitimate basis for even the potter or the watchmaker to feel pride. Instead there is an obligation to give prayerful thanks for the endowment to them, of these capabilities by the Creator.

When we work hard and accomplish some significant task it is quite natural to feel a sense of pride to be proud of our achievement. However, pride is another one of these natural or things of the flesh, which the Lord is not pleased to see us exhibit. He created every aspect of our individual beings. Being strong or handsome, or intelligent or talented or persevering, are God-given attributes that He provided, along with the spark of life and all other faculties that allow any and all accomplishments. Thus, it is gratefulness and prayers of thanks rather than pride, which should be our reactions to our achievements, for only God the Creator is justified to feel pride; only to Him can credit be properly assigned. This is not easy. Pride is one of the greatest of all temptations. It was Satan's original and fatal flaw. From his experience, it can be seen that it is a most dangerous and damaging character flaw; it leads to many other sins and can thus be viewed as the father of all sins.

As has been noted, pride usurps some of God's eminence and thus implicitly suggests that one, who is proud, perhaps even subconsciously, believes he has a God-like quality worthy of pride. This was Satan's problem, and is also the problem inherent in most of humanity, except those few who recognize this error, practice humility, and give credit where it is due. For those seriously and diligently pursuing the Christian walk, the replacement of pride with gratitude and humility is an essential effort. Whenever personal

success in any form occurs, human pride is there seeking to soak up any and all glory and credit. It is human to crave recognition and praise, and there is nothing wrong with seeking these rewards for honest, praiseworthy achievements. What is wrong is the belief that one is anything more than the blessed implement through which the Lord allowed the praiseworthy achievement. Once this becomes an established pattern of thought, many obstacles in the way of the Christian walk will become less difficult to deal with or may even disappear.

Our built in propensity for pride, that is our ego, can only be subdued through our belief in the Lord and our prayers to Him. If at the moment that pride rears its head, we bring God into our consciousness with all that implies, knowing what we know as to where credits are due, pride by necessity of definition must and will disappear and be replaced by praise for The Lord and transference to Him of all credit.

The more accustomed we become to making this transference, which really should be public as well as personal, the more humble we will become, the more in tune will we be with the Lords desires, and the more will flow peripheral blessings and diminished temptations.

The devil was captivated by his own beauty and talent, and as chief angel in heaven. He failed to appreciate from whence his blessings came and believed that he could be as God. It was the arrogance, this overbearing pride that got him in trouble. On earth, to which he was banished, his pride-spawned hatred of God and his creation. Therefore, when he saw Adam and Eve, he at once sought to blemish and damage the Lord's finest and most precious work. He sought to achieve this through an outgrowth of pride, that is deceit. Because of their innocence and naiveté, it was not difficult for the great deceiver to convince Eve and through her Adam, to disobey God's command regarding this one issue, for he said to Eve, "No you shall not die the death. For God doth know that in what day so ever you shall eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened: and you shall be as God, knowing good and evil." That certainly is a tempting thought through which anyone, without the strength and the Truth of the Bible as armor, could easily be severely

wounded. The power of that offer has, even today, not lost its effectiveness as evidenced by the many “New Age” beliefs, which offer the same illusion as that part of his lie that is here underlined. It was this arrogance, this audacity, this pride, this belief that they could, with impunity, ignore God’s commandment, and further that they could be as God, that set the course of the world from that day on. Notice the cleverness of the great deceiver’s words, “...you shall not die that death.” What death? She didn’t ask. He didn’t say that they would not die, but they would not die that death. Technically, he was correct in terms of what he had in mind but deceptively avoided saying. They didn’t physically die at that moment but they did die spiritually. At that moment, entropy was introduced and also the process of physical aging and eventual physical death, to which they had been previously immune. Notice also the other deceptive and misleading statement “You will be as God.” The fact is they already were to some high degree as God. They were made in His image, they were totally innocent of sin and they had eternal never-ending life in Eden, a place as close to heaven as earth could provide. As I write this, especially the technically correct but grossly deceptive statement about dying by that death, I’m reminded of Clinton’s technically correct but totally deceptive public statements regarding his scandalous behavior. It would seem that he learned the technique well from his mentor.

The Bible contains many references to pride and the Lord’s condemning response to it. The following are a few random references to the point.

Psalms 73:6 “Therefore pride is the necklace; they clothe themselves with violence.”

Proverbs 11:2 “When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.”

Proverbs 16:18 “Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.”

Proverbs 21:4 “Haughty eyes and proud heart, the lamp of the wicked, are sin.”

Proverbs 29:23 “A man’s pride brings him low, but a man of lowly spirit gains honor.”

In John 2:16 “For everything in the world – the cravings of sinful man, the lust in his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does – comes not from the Father but from the world.”

If we need more evidence, consider Acts 12:23 where the Lord teaches Herod the final fatal lesson about pride, and for accepting for himself credit which was due the Lord. “...and immediately the angel of the Lord smote him because he gave not God the glory: and was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.”

Often in the Bible the word leaven is used as an idiom describing pride. It is the “puffing up” capability of leaven that makes it appropriate in the sense that pride is a puffing up of one’s self. Leaven is mentioned 36 times in this context. The basis of the traditions surrounding unleavened bread has to do with the Lord’s admonitions against pride. Whenever we feel pride we are, in fact, puffing ourselves up. The Lord’s idioms are, of course, perfect in every way, because leaven causes bread to expand, to puff up through the generation of air bubbles. However, it does not add to the substance of the loaf. It just makes it easier to be devoured. Pride likewise has no substance or worthiness in man, and is spiritually abhorrent. It is of value only to the great deceiver who delights in its use and propagation. This is exceedingly evident in our secular world, where pride takes on the trapping of a virtue and is an emotional reward for any achievement. It is the fleshy feel good product of almost anything from winning a contest to outwitting an opponent, to having superior strength or intelligence, or “good luck,” There is no such thing as good luck, only blessings from our Creator, or rewards which Satan is capable of providing and uses very effectively to deceive, seduce and reward his own, or those he is seeking to be his own.

There is one other very important, yet quite subtle and truly devastating form of pride, which the Christian believer must always guard against. That is spiritual pride. It is very natural for us as born again Christians to see ourselves blessed with a condition superior

to those who have not received the grace of faith, or who may have not progressed as far in their spiritual growth. It is tempting and difficult not to allow this sense of superiority of condition to become a source of pride and thus a feeling of personal superiority and impatience, which can in fact undo much or all of what the Lord would have for us. It is evident that the attitudes of the Pharisees, which Jesus so rightly rebuked, are clear examples of spiritual pride. Regardless of the strength and power and sincerity of our Christian walk, it should never be the source of pride, but only humble gratitude to our Heavenly Father who gave this ultimate blessing. If we are indeed saved, if we have that saving faith, it is 100% the work of the Lord through Jesus on the cross as Paul in Ephesians 2:8, 9 makes clear. Where then is there any cause for pride? Anything we do in concert with, or as a result of, that faith must be nothing more than an expression of gratitude to our heavenly Father!

These things which I have written are relatively new discoveries for me as I try to progress in my spiritual growth as a fairly recent born again Christian. In the past, I was always seeking something of which to be proud. I was addicted to praise and sought it as an essential nutrient without which my ego, my self-esteem, my whole reason for being, could not survive. I have yet to fully “kick the habit” as I even now find myself at times searching for praise to feed my weak ego. However now, praise the Lord, I usually see what I am up to and immediately proceed to transfer the recognition of achievement to its rightful place. That transference has progressively become easier to do as I have learned what pride really is and how good it feels to sincerely give all credit to the Lord. This paper was written for a two-fold purpose. First, to summarize and articulate to myself what I have learned in order that it may be better absorbed into my soul. Second, it was written in the hope that others might find it of benefit in their own spiritual search.