

Pride is a high opinion of one's own dignity, importance, merit, or superiority. Pride is also a dignified sense of what is due to oneself, or one's position, or character.

Pride has infected all humans in varying degrees. Through pride, Satan, originally the guardian angel of God, fell and became the devil (Isaiah 14:12-14). Satan then used an appeal of pride to entice Adam and Eve to rebel against God so that they could become "like God" (Genesis 3:4-5). Pride entices a person to exalt himself or to bring others low for the sake of comparative advantage or superiority. It is essentially competitive and wickedly deceptive. Proud people have difficulty recognizing their own pride, while being keenly aware of pride in others. The opposite of pride is humility.

"According to Christian teachers, the essential vice, the utmost evil, is Pride. Unchastity, anger, greed, drunkenness, and all that, are mere flea bites in comparison: it was through Pride that the devil became the devil: Pride leads to every other vice: it is the complete anti-God state of mind."
(C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*)

Common Characteristics

Here are some dangerous results of pride:

- **Distorted views of self and God:** We all fall short when compared to a holy God, so a man's pride works to minimize his own depravity and/or deny God's holy nature or even His existence. God must be moved to the periphery or dismissed, His character distorted, His authority discounted, or His word discredited to provide room for self-importance and self-authority.
- **Idolatry:** Mankind was made to worship/serve God only. Pride shifts a man's focus from God to pursue that which exalts himself, serves his own will, and affirms his own importance.
- **Depravity resulting in destruction:** When personal desires/glory are predominant, a man becomes dependent on what affirms his self-importance or comforts him when his idols fail him. Addictions and destructive patterns are formed when pursuing significance or coping with failure apart from Christ.
- **Stunted spiritual, relational, professional growth:** A man's pride closes his mind to feedback and makes him unteachable. A proud man is self-absorbed, won't admit mistakes, shifts blame, and places his desires above others' welfare. He denies his need for growth, correction, and repentance.
- **Shame:** A proud man finds it very hard to accept his desperate need for grace, perceiving himself to be above sin or holding himself to a higher standard than God. "How did I stoop so low? I'm above that sin. I know God forgives me, but I can't forgive myself."
- **False humility:** When caught in sin, a proud man may confess, but continue to sin when he thinks no notices. He may serve others, but congratulate himself for his humility, or want recognition for his act.
- **Self-disparagement:** When a proud man falls short of his own standards, he may tell himself, "I'm worthless, unlovable, a failure, too broken, unforgivable..." because he values himself based upon meeting his own standards. What he thinks about himself and performing to his own expectations matters more to him than what God thinks and allowing the grace of Christ to define him.

Biblical Insights

Pride will lead to your downfall.

- *"Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." - Proverbs 16:18*
- *"One's pride will bring him low, but he who is lowly in spirit will obtain honor." - Proverbs 29:23*

God is holy. You are a great sinner in need of His grace and mercy. Only Christ's righteousness can justify you before God.

- *"[Jesus] told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: 'Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.' But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to*

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heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted." – Luke 18:9-14

We were made to serve and exalt God alone. Your life is not your own.

- "Then Jesus said to [Satan], 'Be gone, Satan! For it is written,' You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.'" – Matthew 4:10
- "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body." – 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Abiding with Christ to love and humbly serve God above all others leads to life.

- "He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" – Micah 6:8
- "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." – Philippians 2:3-8

You are significant because you are significant to God—the One whose opinion matters most.

- "But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me." – 1 Corinthians 4:3-4

Next Steps

- **Shift your focus to God.** Spend time reading His Word. Ask him to reveal His nature and your nature. Understanding God's holiness and His love for you (a great sinner) brings humility. (Philippians 3:7-11)
- **Recognize symptoms of pride:** Are you critical of others? Are you defensive when someone points out sin (shift blame, present a resume)? Do you quickly notice pride in others? Do you look for others' approval more than God's? Are you insecure? Do you take advantage of God's grace? Do you think that your sin and brokenness are greater than God's grace? Do you believe that you are worthless or unforgiven? Does a particular sin define you more than God's claims on your life?
- **Ask people who know you well if they see pride in you.** Pride is deceptive. Just because you don't see pride, doesn't mean it is not there. (Proverbs 27:6, Proverbs 18:1)
- **Confess and repent quickly when you recognize pride or its symptoms.** (James 5:16, Proverbs 29:23)
- **Ask God to humble you.** (Psalm 51:17, Matthew 5:3-9)
- **Follow Christ's example as a servant.** (Philippians 2:3-8, Mark 10:45)
- **Fulfill your purpose in Christ.** (Ephesians 2:10, Galatians 2:20, John 17:3-4)
- **Praise God in all things—even weaknesses that humble you and cause you to depend on Him.** (2 Corinthians 12:7-9, Romans 5:2-5)

Learn more at a personal relationship with Jesus Christ at www.regenerationrecovery.org/freedom

Additional Resources

- Stories of victory over pride: www.regenerationrecovery.org: Blair O., Rob B., Nate G. teaching
- Books: *Mere Christianity: Book 3, Chapter 8, The Great Sin* – C.S. Lewis; *Humility: The Journey Toward Holiness* – Andrew Murray; *Landmines in the Path of the Believer: Avoiding the Hidden Dangers* – Charles Stanley; *The Freedom of Self-Forgetfulness* – Timothy Keller
- DesiringGod.org: Seven Subtle Symptoms of Pride; Biblestudytools.com: Bible Verses About Pride