

The Plague of Pride

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Introduction: What is the greatest danger facing God's people today?

A. Anyone who knows the history of God's people well understands that apostasy is common. **(Deut 8:11-20)**

1. The real tragedy is that we often depart from God in the midst of abundant blessings that He has given us.

2. How has the Lord blessed us? How long have we been enjoying the riches of the gospel? We are a people prime for a fall if we fail to be humble.

B. How is it possible for men and women with years of experience to leave the Lord with almost no shame?

1. As with all sin it begins in the heart.

2. Someone has said that the worst of all sins is pride. Why is that so?

I. What is Pride?

A. There are several words that indicate pride: "Haughty, vainglory, high look.."

1. Paul uses the word: "Puffed-up" - "to inflate, blow-up, blow out, to cause to swell up...fig. To make proud."

2. Have you ever said that someone is "full of hot air." **(Prov 25:14)**

(Proverbs 25:14 NKJV) Whoever falsely boasts of giving *is like* clouds and wind without rain.

B. Pride is an unrealistic view of ones abilities.

1. The scriptures clearly warn us. **(Gal 6:3; Rom 12:3)**

(Romans 12:3 NKJV) For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.

(Galatians 6:3 NKJV) For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

In his Screwtape Letters, C.S. Lewis contended that we can even be proud of our humility. Pride is a telescope turned the wrong way. It magnifies self and makes the heavens small. No wonder Jesus said, "To be congratulated are the poor in spirit." He illustrated their text with His parable of a Pharisee and publican in prayer.

Muhammad Ali was in his prime, and as he was about to take off on an airplane flight, the stewardess reminded him to fasten his seat belt. He came back brashly, "Superman don't need no seat belt." The stewardess quickly came back, "Superman don't need no airplane, either." Ali fastened his belt.

2. Be sure you do not confuse the Bible sin of pride with self-respect. There is a realm wherein we "ought to think".

3. An "inferiority complex" is not humility. Often these people will turn to pride as a mask of there internal insecurities.

C. S. Lewis called pride "spiritual cancer," which eats up love and contentment. It

is actually a sign of our own insecurity and feelings of inferiority.

4. "Let us make sure that the kind of pride we possess is the kind that keeps the head and chin up and not the nose!"

C. Pride comes from abundance, achievements and blessings, that is why it is so dangerous.

1. Knowledge is good, but watch for pride. **(2 Cor 8:1-2)**

2. Be careful at who you put into positions of responsibility. **(1 Tim 3:6)**

A newly elected politician was visiting Washington, D.C., to get acquainted. He was visiting in the home of one of the ranking senators who was trying to interpret the bizarre wonder of the capitol. As they stood looking out over the Potomac River, an old deteriorating log floated by in view on the river. The old-timer said, "This city is like that log out there." The fledgling politician asked, "How's that?" The senator came back, "Well, there are probably more than one hundred thousand grubs, ants, bugs and critters on that old log as it floats down the river. And I imagine every one of them thinks that he's steering it."

3. The apostle Paul needed help to avoid pride. **(2 Cor 12:7)**

II. The Horrors of Pride

A. Pride is a sin.

1. What does God think of pride? **(Prov 21:4; 6:16-19; 8:13; 16:5)**

(Proverbs 6:16-19 NKJV) These six *things* the LORD hates, Yes, seven *are* an abomination to Him: {17} A proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood, {18} A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that are swift in running to evil, {19} A false witness *who* speaks lies, And one who sows discord among brethren.

(Proverbs 8:13 NKJV) The fear of the LORD *is* to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way And the perverse mouth I hate.

(Proverbs 16:5 NKJV) Everyone proud in heart *is* an abomination to the LORD; *Though they join* forces, none will go unpunished.

B. Pride causes other sins. **(1 John 2:16-17)**

1. This was involved in the first sin. **(Gen 3:5)**

2. Still there is hope if one repents. Sadly pride blocks repentance because....

C. Pride causes blindness. **(Rom 1:20-22)**

1. "A man who is proud in time will be afraid to face self. Reality cannot be met."

2. Sometimes we use other words for pride such as "stubbornness".

III. Identifying Pride in our Lives

A. Pride is essentially competitive. You have to be the best.

1. The more you have of pride, the more you notice it in others.

The proud hate pride—in others. Benjamin Franklin (1706–1790)

2. A proud person is thin skinned. At his heart he is insecure.

3. Pride is not satisfied with mere possession, he must have more than the other fellow.

B. Pride looks down on others. **(Luke 18:9)**

(Luke 18:9 NKJV) Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:

1. They are quick to give harsh, unloving criticism. What will the proud talk about at lunch today?
2. They often cover their own failures with attacks on others. (Ex. Personal work, “They are not sincere” or “I do not like what the brethren are doing”.)
3. Because the proud cannot admit or look at their own weaknesses they get involved in this rationalizing, fault-finding game.

C. Pride produces envy and Jealousy.

1. “Envy is that uncomfortable feeling that one experiences over the advances or good fortunes of another. An envious person feels that any honor for another is a gauling dishonor for himself.”
2. Pride cannot give honor when due. **(1 Cor 12:26)**
3. Pride will cause some to use the charge of pride to destroy and minimize the influence of their “competitor”. (Ex. Korah charged Moses with pride) **(Num 16:3)**
 - a. “He is trying to run the church!”
 - b. Do not confuse conviction with pride nor compromise with humility.
4. This is why the leaders murdered Jesus. **(Mark 15:10)**

D. Pride seeks the praises of men. **(Matt 23:5-12)**

1. Pride may cause one to be busy with religious activity.
2. Pride substitutes the outward service for the inward service. **(2 Cor 10:18)**
3. Pride always compares, looks at others and as a result men become the standard. **(2 Cor 10:12)**
4. One may be “raised in the church” but judge what is right upon the “status quo”.
5. Pride seeks status and false symbols. **(1 Tim 6:17)**

The pride of dying rich raises the loudest laugh in hell. John Foster (1836–1917)

E. Pride produces self sufficiency.

1. The middle letter in pride and sin is “I”. Ex. “I am a self made man.”
2. Pride causes one to be intolerant in their study of the Bible. **(1 Tim 6:3-4)**
3. Rather than admit they are wrong they will use names and labels to attack others. **(3 John 9-10)**
4. Pride causes men to do foolish things and never make it right.
5. Pride stifles the work of God. Proud men will pit brethren against one another in an atmosphere of suspicion. They are sensitive people! (Ex. Saul) **(1 Sam 22:8)**

(1 Samuel 22:8 NKJV) “All of you have conspired against me, and *there is* no one who reveals to me that my son has made a covenant with the son of Jesse; and *there is* not one of you who is **sorry for me** or reveals to me that my son has stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as *it is* this day.”

F. Pride causes men to ignore clear warnings of danger. (Ex. Dating)

G. A Test for pride.

1. Have we ever become envious when someone out-did us, or were commended and we were not?
2. Are we offended at constructive criticism?
3. Have we ever pushed ourselves to the breaking point because of pride?
4. Have we ever had difficulty appreciating what others have done, and expressing that appreciation, because of pride?
5. Have we ever been controlled by pride to the extent that we would not admit that the position we held on a given matter was wrong?
6. Has pride ever hindered us in responding to the invitation when we really should have done so to make things right?

IV. The Final End of the Proud

A. God will destroy the proud in hell. **(Prov 15:25; 16:18; 1 Cor 10:12; Jas 4:6)**
 (Proverbs 15:25 NKJV) The LORD will destroy the house of the proud, But He will establish the boundary of the widow.

(Proverbs 16:18 NKJV) Pride *goes* before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall.

(1 Corinthians 10:12 NKJV) Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

(James 4:6 NKJV) But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."

B. Please do not take this sin lightly!

How to Be Perfectly Miserable

1. Think about yourself.
2. Talk about yourself.
3. Use the personal pronoun "I" as often as possible in your conversation.
4. Mirror yourself continually in the opinion of others.
5. Listen greedily to what people say about you.
6. Insist on consideration and respect.
7. Demand agreement with your own views on everything.
8. Sulk if people are not grateful to you for favors shown them.
9. Never forget a service you may have rendered.
10. Expect to be appreciated.
11. Be suspicious.
12. Be sensitive to slights.
13. Be jealous and envious.
14. Never forget a criticism.
15. Trust nobody but yourself.

Conclusion: When we are humble we can see God and then ourselves clearly.

(1 Cor 4:6-7)

A. Humility may hurt, but God will heal and comfort you.

B. Pride will cause us hurtful blows in this life and the life to come!