

Is It Wrong To be “Proud”?

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There is one particular sin which we often fail to *recognize* in ourselves. Furthermore, we often fail to realize how *loathsome* this sin is to God!

This particular sin was (and is) **the most fundamental sin of... Satan the devil!** (Isa. 14:13-14; Ezek. 28:15-17).

PRIDE! Let’s consider today, the sin of pride.

Satan the devil is *filled* with pride. And he tries to **instill** pride... in each of us! “...He [Satan] is king over all the children of pride” (Job 41:34).

“A proud look” is one of the seven things that God *hates*... and is an “**abomination**” to Him! (Prov. 6:16-17). “By pride comes nothing but **strife**...” (Prov. 13:10)

Three Attributes Which Easily *Lead to Pride*

On one occasion, I remember hearing a seasoned and wise pastor state that there are *three* types of individuals who *almost always* have a significant spiritual problem: Those who are extremely good-looking, those who are extremely talented, and those who are exceptionally intelligent.

Yes, in their hearts they tend to think, “I’m something *special*.” I’m so **talented**... or I’m so **good looking**... or I’m so **smart**.

Ahh... that *last* one... “I’m so smart.” *That’s* the one that actually afflicts the **majority** of mankind! We think we’re so smart... or so *wise*!

“Do you see a man **wise in his own eyes**? *There is* more hope for a fool than for him” (Prov. 26:12).

However— let’s be clear— “pride” is *not* something that afflicts **only** those who are exceptionally talented or good-looking or have a very high I.Q.! Rather, “pride” is a characteristic which afflicts us *all*— to one degree or another! Again, Satan is very *successful* in instilling pride within us all.

Comparing Yourself to Others

Do you ever *compare* yourself to others? Oftentimes, such comparison is not expressed verbally, but in our *thoughts*. Maybe the comparison that you make, is *not* one of comparing yourself to a *specific individual*... but rather, to others *in general*.

Whenever we *are* guilty of comparing ourself to others, we are actually doing **two** things wrong in God's sight: **(1)** we are *exalting ourself* (Prov. 30:32), and **(2)** we are being "*unwise*"—"For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But **they, measuring themselves BY themselves, and COMPARING themselves among themselves, ARE NOT WISE**" (II Cor.10:12).

The Apostle Paul exhorts the Christian "...**not** to think *of himself* more **highly** than he ought to think..." (Rom. 12:3).

Paul likewise said the following: "*Let nothing be done* through selfish ambition or **conceit**, but in **lowliness** of mind let each esteem others **better** than himself" (Philip. 2:3).

So, what about you? Do you esteem others **better** than yourself?

How often do you feel or express pride... perhaps pride which you haven't **recognized**... or, pride which you haven't appreciated how **detestable** it is *to God*?

The OPPOSITE of Pride!

Since "pride" is so repugnant to God, then we should want to live our daily lives feeling and expressing the very *opposite* of pride—which is "**humility**"!

Humility is one of the three great qualities which God looks for in those who worship Him: "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?" (Micah 6:8).

"At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, 'Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?' Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever **humbles** himself AS this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven'" (Matt. 18:1-4).

Yes, our Heavenly Father wants us to be humble and teachable—as a little child. God also says, "These are the ones I look on with favor: those who are **humble** and contrite in spirit, and who **tremble at my word**" (Isa. 66:2, NIV). Yes, you and I should study God's word, the Holy Bible, daily—and seek to be *corrected by* God's word (II Tim. 3:16). We should "tremble" at God's word. That is **teachable humility**!

Scripture instructs us to "...**be clothed with humility**: 'for God **resists** the proud, But gives

grace to the humble” (I Pet. 5:5). Furthermore, our humility is to be **genuine**— **not just a performance to be seen by others.**

Yet, living a life of humility is the exact *opposite* of what we are told in today’s world, with its foolish psychology. We are told to be **proud!**... to have **high** self-esteem! There is even one month of the year which is *shamefully* designated as “Pride Month”!

Consider Matthew chapter 23: “And whoever **exalts** himself will be humbled, and he who **humbles** himself will be exalted” (verse 12). **So...** if we **humble** ourselves, we will be exalted... but **not necessarily** exalted **by men.** Rather, we will be exalted *by* God! And, after all—*by whom* would you rather be exalted—by God, or man?!

The apostle *Peter* said something *similar.* He said this: “Therefore **HUMBLE yourselves** under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you **in due time**” (I Peter 5:6).

Some people are familiar with how *powerfully* God used Pastor Herbert W. Armstrong. In fact, **much** of the unique, spiritual understanding which The Church of God has today, came from God *through* Mr. Armstrong. A very powerful **work** of preaching the Gospel was done under the helm of Mr. Armstrong.

On one occasion, before a large audience of church members... the minister was *recounting* some of Mr. Armstrong’s many *accomplishments.* He then proceeded to present some type of plaque (or notice of recognition) to Mr. Armstrong.

Mr. Armstrong then slowly rose, but was noticeably uncomfortable. He, rather sheepishly, *thanked* the speaker and the church members. But then... somewhat akin to a **volcano** exploding... Mr. Armstrong said, essentially, the following: “Brethren, there’s something that you must understand... **I AM NOTHING!!** And then, following a prolonged pause, he said “and **YOU** are nothing!”

Yes, as the apostle Paul once lamented, “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) nothing good dwells... O wretched man that I am!” (Rom. 7:18, 24).

Even Jesus Christ Himself did *not* have **self-confidence.** He said, “I can of Myself do nothing” (John 5:30)! Likewise, Christ made it plain that you and I must humbly understand that without Him abiding in us, you and I can do nothing! (John 15:5). Whereas, ***through Him,*** we can do all things (Phil. 4:13).

“Proud” or “Pleased”?

The book of Matthew recounts God the Father saying the following: “...This is My beloved Son, in whom **I am well pleased**” (Matt. 3:17).

Here we see that God has no problem with you or I being “pleased” with the accomplishments of our children, our mates, or with anyone else!

Yet, there is a *difference* between “being pleased with another’s performance” and “being carnally proud.”

What about **your own** accomplishments? The scripture says, “Let another man praise you, and **not** your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips” (Prov. 27:2).

How Does One Develop Humility?

- (1) The first step to acquiring humility, is to get on your knees in private prayer. Proper prayer *requires* humility. Implore God to *help* you to humble yourself... by whatever means necessary!
- (2) Using a Bible concordance, deeply study the scriptures related to the subject of “humility.”
- (3) Occasional **fasting** (combined *with* prayer) is another vital, humility-producing tool!
- (4) By **obeying God’s laws** and fulfilling His will, we will—*in the process*—be **exalting** God and **humbling** the self. In His prayer to the Father, Christ prayed, “...not My will, but Yours, be done” (Luke 22:42). And, you and I should have that *same* attitude!
- (5) “**Serving** others” is a vital means of getting your thoughts **off** of yourself! Through serving others, we take on the very mind of Christ (Philip. 2: 3-5)— who “did not come to be served, but to **serve**” (Matt. 20:28).

Conclusion

Scripture instructs us to give monetary offerings on God’s annual holy days. Yet, there is one offering that the Christian should be giving each and every day of his life—an offering *of himself!* An offering of a **HUMBLE** life—a life that our heavenly Father truly *appreciates*— a life which— **as a HUMBLE servant**— God can truly **use!**

As we live our daily lives, let each and every one of us **REPLACE** our “Satan-inspired, human *pride*” with the “*humility* of Jesus Christ”!