

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. Romans 12:3 (NIV)

Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. Romans 2:16 (NIV)

Pride begins to change to humility when we understand how despicable we actually are without Christ. Humility comes when we internalize the truth that nothing in the life of a Christian is to be about “me.” It is all about Jesus Christ and Him only. You cannot possibly dwell on “I want” or “what I think is better or right,” and be able to serve others or ask what would bring God glory.

Heart change begins to take place when we practice the principles in the verse below:

Do nothing out of ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than your- selves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Philippians 2:3-4 (NIV)

- Here are some suggestions to begin to serve others:
- Do one thing a day for someone you ordinarily would avoid.
 - Go out of your way to help another person.
 - Give up something you want to do for the sake of another’s pleasure.
 - Consider the opinion of a person you think is “beneath you” and follow his or her suggestion.

After practicing these suggestions, you will find joy returning to your life. Your world will open up to others as your heart opens up. As you continue to place others above yourself, your desire to serve them will grow, and life will become full of joy.

Ganschow, Julie. *Seeing Depression through the Eyes of Grace* (Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 2006).

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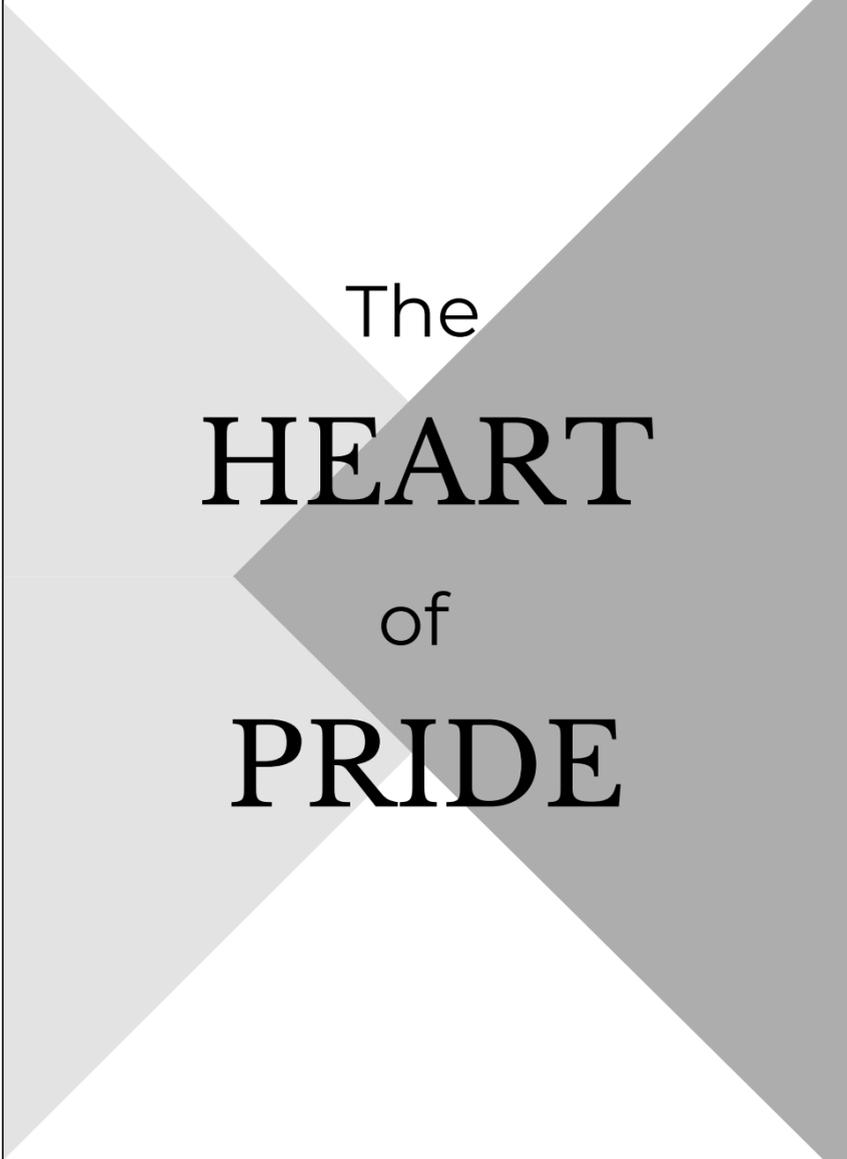


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PRIDE



Reigning Grace Counseling Center

rgconline.org
reigninggracecounsel@rgconline.org
(816)694-1677

The Heart of Pride

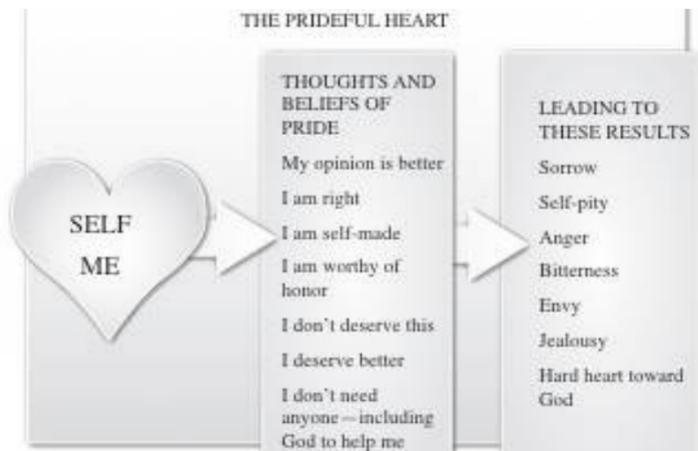
Pride is a heart-attitude sin that overflows into a person's motivation and activities. Pride is at the root of nearly every problem we struggle with in counseling!

The heart of pride is focused on "self." Proud people believe they deserve better than what life has brought them. They become sorrowful, resentful, and even jealous of other people and their successes. Pride breeds self-pity, which is a major component in depression. Typically, people who struggle with pride will live life based on how they feel and expect everyone else to accommodate them and adapt to their moods.

Two key characteristics of pride are independence and rebellion. It should not be too difficult for us to understand why this is so. The truth is we all want our own way about things, and we usually will do almost anything to have it our way. The sinful nature leads us to desire independence, and we rebel at the thought of being under anyone's control or authority.

In his pride the wicked does not seek him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God. Psalm 10:4 (NIV)

In our hearts we say as Pharaoh did, "Who is the Lord that I should obey Him?" Exodus 5:2 (NIV)



We Cannot Remain Full of Pride Because God Hates It

All who fear the LORD will hate evil. That is why I hate pride, arrogance, corruption, and perverted speech. Proverbs 8:13 (NLT)

The heart of pride brings devastating consequences that God ordains: a hardened heart and consequences of this sin.

Scripture shows us the results of pride through the examples of two kings: King Nebuchadnezzar and King Herod. They both became prideful and, consequently, were humbled by God.

But when [Nebuchadnezzar's] heart became arrogant and hardened with pride, he was deposed from his royal throne and stripped of his glory. He was driven away from people and given the mind of an animal; he lived with the wild donkeys and ate grass like cattle; and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven, until he acknowledged that the Most High God is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and sets over them anyone he wishes. Daniel 5:20-21 (NIV)

King Nebuchadnezzar lived like an animal until he came to his senses and repented of his sin. God then restored the kingdom to him.

On the appointed day Herod, wearing his royal robes, sat on his throne and delivered a public address to the people. They shouted, "This is the voice of a god, not of a man." Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died. Acts 12:2-23 (NIV)

In your life, pride will cause your heart to harden toward God. Consequently, God will not allow you to prosper. He will bring you dishonor, which is the last thing a prideful person wants.

When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom. Proverbs 11:2 (NIV)

Pride brings opposition from God. He will not share His glory with anyone or anything.

All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." 1 Peter 5:5 (NIV)

The prideful person is self-deceived.

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

Often prideful people are mistakenly diagnosed with "low self-esteem" because their actions and attitudes appear to be self-deprecating. Low self-esteem is defined as "a person's belief regarding the degree to which he is worthy of praise."

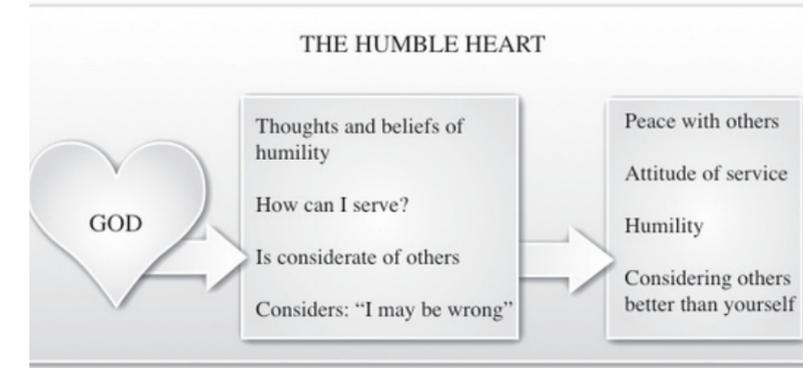
The prideful person already thinks very highly of himself or herself! People infected by pride typically think so much of themselves that they believe the world should revolve around them. The only thing important to prideful people is getting their needs filled. It may be an emotional need, a desire for attention, or a resistance to conform to social norms in order to be seen as an individual. Proud people struggle with bitterness, revenge, conceit, self-pity, a competitive nature, gossip, slander, and vanity. They display a desire to be noticed, which is disguised as shyness. They typically have a lust for attention, approval, and praise. Those who attempt to build them up psychologically only assist them in further self-indulgence.

Curing the Proud Heart

What is the cure for the proud heart? Begin by confessing, or admitting, to God that you struggle with the sin of pride. Confession is agreeing with God that what you have done is wrong. You might pray a simple prayer similar to this one:

Dear Heavenly Father, I confess to you that I struggle with the sin of pride in my heart and my life. This pride leads me to act out selfish desires and is hurtful to other people. I ask for the help of the Holy Spirit to change my heart so that I become selfless and learn to serve others as I consider them before myself. Thank You for the forgiveness that is mine through the Lord Jesus Christ, and I pray these things for Your glory. In Jesus name. Amen.

The next step is to begin to practice humility, a denial of self. It is considering others better than yourself and requires an examination through the Word of God of the actions and attitudes of daily life.



Then he (Jesus) said to the crowd, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must put aside your selfish ambition, shoulder your cross daily, and follow me. If you try to keep your life for yourself, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for me, you will find true life. And how do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose or forfeit your own soul in the process?" Luke 9:23-25 (NLT)

Jesus displayed the ultimate in humility when He condescended to come to earth as a human being. He denied Himself and deprived Himself of heaven and all its glory for 33 years for you and me. Because our goal is to become like Jesus in character and attitude, we are to practice how Jesus lived His life. Jesus was described as "meek and lowly." Meekness is an internal quality that comes with humility. As a heart attitude, it is the opposite of pride. The one meek in heart is not concerned about self and readily puts the interest of others before his or her interests.

You should be known for the beauty that comes from (the hidden person of the heart), the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God. 1 Peter 3:4 (NLT, emphasis added)

Being meek does not mean weak; in fact, it means just the opposite. It takes great strength to be humble before God and others. This really goes against the grain of the sinful nature. It is possible, however, for even the most prideful person to become humble. Humility is a fruit of the Spirit, and God joyfully responds to those who desire it.

