

Pride of Heart

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Everyone needs a pride and envy check—¹ John 2:16 “*For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*” Of the seven deadly sins—pride, envy, anger, gluttony, sloth, lust, and greed—pride is the worst, as most other sins proceed from the pride that is in our heart.

We began life with an attitude opposite to what it should be—we start with arrogance, vanity, conceit, egotism, narcissism, self-importance, and with a high opinion of ourselves. God wants us to be humble; unassuming; and unpretentious—like Jesus Matthew 11:29 “*meek and lowly in heart.*”

Everyone would like to be prosperous, respected, and enjoying the life God has given. The path to that is Proverbs 22:4 “*By humility and the fear of the LORD are riches, and honor, and life.*” God’s Word is clear—Proverbs 6:16 “*These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: 17 A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood.*”

We know when we are angry, envious, or greedy. If someone points out that we are conceited, being proud or arrogant, we just do not see it—and often do not think of it as a fault. The world values pride and self-esteem, but not meekness, shyness, or humility.

The Bible is clear on the sin of pride. Jesus told a parable: Luke 18:10-14 “*Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a*

tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week. I pay the tithe on all my gains.’

13-14, “But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’ I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

The Pharisee does not see his arrogance or the high opinion he has of himself; he thinks he is just being honest in dealing with others. On the other hand, tax collectors made their money from dishonesty and by extortion—they accumulated wealth by working for the government.

The Pharisee paid tithes and attended the synagogue, but the tax collector probably did neither. The Pharisee had always been honest, but not the tax collector—so we need to know how a *sinner* is justified before God. Pharisees were honest citizens and attended church; but tax collectors were dishonest and had no religious convictions.

The huge difference is, however, that the tax collector shows a humble and repentant spirit; he is willing to repent; to confess his sins; and to start over again—even though that means he will have to make restitution for every drachma taken by fraud, plus one fifth, and he would lose his good-paying job.

Jesus promises that anyone who gives up unscriptural employment, a worldly friend, or anything else for His sake Mark 10:30 “*He shall receive a hundredfold now in this time*”—anything we have given up for His sake, along—“*with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.*” God’s reward is always well worth any temporary loss.

The sin of the Pharisee is *pride of heart*—something that is easily *seen* in others, but easily *hidden* in us. When a person brags about something they did, what they have, or knowledge they have obtained, pride is quickly *recognized* in them, but it can remain *hidden* in us.

There is a self-test to determine if *pride* is in our heart. Are we *upset* when someone corrects us? Are we *jealous* when someone else receives the promotion or attention? Are we *offended* when the boss ignores our overtime work or rejects our suggestions? 1 Peter 2:20 “*When ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.*”

Pride is self-importance, arrogance, conceit, and over-confidence—it is different from self-esteem. Pride of heart always looks down on others—it is a deadly sin that must be admitted, confessed, and repented of before God with the help of the Holy Spirit. Pride must be removed from our heart.

The serious part of any sin is that it separates us from God, but pride is the worst because we often do not recognize pride or even admit it *is* a sin—therefore, our separation from God remains. Pride has us thinking only of ourselves, and forgetting that what we possess, use, or enjoy, is because God has loaned it to us temporarily. We are only stewards of God’s gifts, and someday, we will give account of how we *used* those gifts—to glorify God, or to glorify self.

The deadly sin of *envy* is linked to the deadly sin of *pride*. Envy leads to jealousy—then jealousy leads to resenting the one we envy. Coveting something is feeling discontented because of someone’s possessions, good looks, fame, ability, etc. God says Exodus 20:17 “*Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s house,”—“nor any thing that is thy neighbor’s.*”

Jesus gave a parable on envy. Matthew 20:1-4 “*For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner*

who went out early in the morning to hire men to work in his vineyard. He agreed to pay them a denarius for the day and sent them into his vineyard. About the third hour he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing. He told them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’

The landowner went out at the sixth, ninth, and eleventh hour to hire more for the agreed wage. 8-9 “*When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.’ The workers who were hired about the eleventh hour came and each received a denarius.*”

Envy and jealousy are revealed here—10-15, “*So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius. When they received it, they began to grumble [murmur] against the landowner. ‘These men who were hired last worked only one hour,’ they said, ‘and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.’*”

They were envious of the workers who did little work, but received the same wage. 13-15 “*He answered one of them, ‘Friend, I am not being unfair to you. Didn’t you agree to work for a denarius? Take your pay and go. I want to give the man who was hired last the same as I gave you. Do I not have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?’*”

The parable is actually about the Kingdom of God, and not about business on earth. God offers His kingdom to anyone who is humble, repentant, and with all pride removed. Mark 10:31 “*Many that are first shall be last; and the last first.*” Love does not keep score—but envy does. Love re-

sponds to the *need* of the moment—envy responds from the *pride* in our heart.

All the workers agree to a coin and receive it. The problem was not their wage, but the comparison. They *would* have been *content* with the wage, if the others received *less*. The first sign of *envy* is *comparing*. Envy is never satisfied, so it grumbles and complains.

Envy and jealousy are just part of the evil nature born in everyone, and which will eventually destroy us, if not revealed, dealt with, and eliminated by God’s help. If we truly want envy, jealousy, and pride taken from our heart, God has promised to do it—we just choose to let Him do that.

We are blessed beyond measure, but Satan says: *Look what you don’t have!* Envy is blind to its own gifts, but always sees the gifts of others as *more or better* than ours. Jesus said—Matthew 6:28 “*Consider the lilies of the field.*” If God has given such gifts to plants, He will surely give that much *more* to us. We should have a thankful and grateful heart for the many gifts—and for life itself.

The mother of James and John asked Jesus for special privileges for her sons. Matthew 20:21 “*Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom.*” The other ten are jealous, envious, and resentful. Jesus hears the murmuring, so He gives a spiritual lesson—envy must be replaced with humility. 25 “*You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them,*” He said.

Matthew 20:26-28 “*Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*”

Envy is not overcome by trying harder, but it can be overcome when we allow God to have our jealous heart, and we ask Him to change it to a *grateful* one. When we can *see* the gifts God has

already given, as clearly as we see the gifts given to others, we will begin to move from *pride* to *humility*, and from *envy* to *contentment*.

The apostle Paul says to *love* one another—not envy one another—nor covet their blessings. Romans 12:9, “*Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.*” Thinking of others above ourselves, eliminates pride and envy.

When we give something to another, we usually give them the *old one* and keep the *new one*, but Jesus would give the *new one* and keep the *old*. If the old item is good enough for *them*, then it would be good enough for *us*. Romans 12:10 “*Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another.*”

He goes on to say: Romans 12:16 “*Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.*” If we followed that advice, pride of heart and envy in spirit would be gone.

Too many times we have coveted the wealth of the world—being envious of lottery winnings; jealous of those in high-paying jobs, or complaining when we are asked to do a menial task. We should have our *conceit* changed to *contentment*—we should have *envy* converted to *gratitude*—for all that God has given us.

1 Peter 5:5-6 “*God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.*” Heaven is the greatest gift ever given, but only a lowly heart appreciates it, and only a humble spirit receives it.



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