

# PRIDE CHECK!



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*Pride is your greatest enemy; humility is your greatest friend!* It is the devil's most effective and destructive tool. What has always been recognized as the deadliest of vices, is today often celebrated as a virtue. It was through *pride* that the devil *became* the devil. Pride leads to every other vice—it is an anti-God state of mind—it began early on Genesis 3.

We all need 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.*” The seven deadly sins—*pride, envy, anger, gluttony, sloth, lust, and greed*—begin with *pride*—the worst of the seven as the other sins come from pride.

Life began with an attitude *opposite* to what it should be—pride, egotism, conceit, narcissism, self-importance, and self-centeredness. God wants us to be humble, unassuming, and unpretentious—like Jesus Matthew 11:29 “*Meek and lowly in heart.*” *Meek* is not *weak* but takes divine strength to be humble.

Most people want to be respected, successful, and enjoying the life God has given them. The path to that position is Proverbs 22:4 “*By humility and the fear of the LORD are riches, and honour, and life.*” 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—but if someone points out that we are conceited, proud, or arrogant, we usually do *not* see it—and may not even *think* of it as a fault. The world *values* pride and self-esteem but does not value meekness or humility.

Jesus explained: Luke 18:10 “*Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. 11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. 12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.*”

In contrast: 13 “*And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*”

The Pharisee does not see the pride in his heart, and he thinks he is just being honest. Tax collectors made their money from dishonesty and extortion—accumulating *wealth* by working for the *government*. The Pharisee paid tithes and attended the synagogue, but the tax collector probably did neither. The Pharisee had been honest; the tax collector dishonest. Pharisees *were* honest citizens, but tax collectors were *dishonest*.

The big difference is that the tax collector shows a *humble* and *repentant* spirit; he is willing to *confess* his sins and to start again—even though that means making restitution for every drachma taken by fraud, plus one fifth—and he would forfeit 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 an hundredfold now in this time*”—anything we give up to remain in the center of God's will,

along—“*With persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.*”

The sin of the Pharisee is *pride of heart*—something that is easily *seen* in others, but easily *hidden* in us. When a person boasts about something they *did*; what they *own*; or some *knowledge* they have, pride is easily *seen* in them—but *hidden* in us.

There are self-tests to determine if there is any *pride* or *jealousy* in our heart. Are we *upset* when someone corrects us? Are we *envious* when someone else receives the promotion or has the attention? Are we *offended* when the boss ignores our work but notices others? 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, conceit, or overconfidence. 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.

Any sin separates us from God, but pride is the worst, because we often do not even admit it is a sin—thus our separation from God remains. Pride thinks only of itself, and forgets that what we possess, use, or enjoy, is because God has given it to us on loan. We are only stewards of God's gifts, and someday we will give account of how we *used* those gifts—to glorify *Him* or to glorify *self*.

The sin of *envy* is linked to *pride*. Envy leads to jealousy—then jealousy leads to resenting the one we envy. Coveting is being discontented because of someone's possessions, appearance, popularity, or skill. Exodus 20:17 “*Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house*”—“*nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.*”

Jesus gave a parable Matthew 20:1 “*For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. 2 And when he*

had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. <sup>3</sup> And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, <sup>4</sup> And said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way.”

The landowner went out at the sixth, ninth, and eleventh hour to hire more for the agreed wage. Matthew 20:8 “So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. <sup>9</sup> And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny.”

Envy and jealousy are seen—Matthew 20:10 “But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. <sup>11</sup> And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house, <sup>12</sup> Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.

They were envious of those who did little but received the same wage. <sup>13</sup> “But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? <sup>14</sup> Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. <sup>15</sup> Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?”

The parable is actually about the Kingdom of God and not about business on earth. God offers His kingdom to anyone who is repentant and humble. Mark 10:31 “Many that are first shall be last; and the last first.” Love does not keep score—but envy does. Love responds to the need of the moment—envy responds from the pride in our heart.

All 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 murmurs and complains.

Envy and jealousy are part of the evil nature born in everyone, and which will eventually destroy us if not revealed, dealt with, and eliminated with God’s help. If we really want envy, jealousy, and pride taken out of our heart, we can ask God—He has promised to do it.

We have been 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. 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 are to have thankful and grateful hearts for the many gifts we have—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 and resentful. Jesus hears the murmuring, so He gives a spiritual lesson—envy must be replaced with humility. <sup>25</sup> “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them,” Jesus 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 overcome when we allow God to change our jealous heart and make it a grateful one. When we can see the gifts and blessings God has already given us as clearly as we see the gifts He has

given to others, we begin to move from pride to humility—and from envy to contentment.

We are to love one another—not envy one another—nor covet their blessings. Romans 12:9-10 “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 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 is good enough for us. Romans 12:10 “Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another.”

He says 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 and envy would dissolve.

We may have coveted the wealth of the world—being envious of their lottery winnings; or jealous of their high-paying job. Conceit must be changed to contentment and envy converted to gratitude for all that God has already given us.

We must continually say Luke 18:13 “God be merciful to me a sinner”—because 1 Peter 5:5 “God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.”

Heaven is the greatest gift by grace, but only a lowly heart appreciates it—and only a humble spirit receives it!



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