

Reflection on “PRIDE”

Before we go further, let us evaluate the meaning of Pride:

What is Pride?

Pride is self-love and self-exaltation. It is the excessive belief in one's own abilities that interferes with the individual's recognition of Grace of God. Pride can be divided into egotism, arrogance, vanity and conceit, it is opposite to humility. Every human being experiences this sin but some fight against it while others succumb to it.

Sin of Pride - An Outline:

The sin of pride is rightfully distinguished as the foremost among the seven "deadly sins." Let us look at sin of Pride: how it manifests itself in our thoughts and lives, what are its effects and how we have to fight against it taking hold in our hearts.

It was the sin of pride, we're told, which transformed Lucifer, an anointed cherub of God, the very "seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty," into Satan, the devil, the father of lies, the one for whom Hell itself was created. We're warned to guard our hearts against pride lest we too "fall into the same condemnation as the devil."

St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430 A.D.) wrote, "Pride is the commencement of all sins, because it was this which overthrew the devil, from whom arose the origin of sin; and afterwards, when his malice and envy pursued man, who was yet standing in his uprightness, the devil lured the first humans created by God, Adam & Eve, saying "eat this fruit and you shall be like God". The very idea to become like God, i.e. to be proud of themselves made Adam & Eve eat the forbidden fruit.

Thus, because of pride, Adam & Eve lost the love of God and all that was given to them abundantly by God. It will be the same for everyone, some may lose peace of mind, while others may lose their health or wealth.

The sin of pride is a preoccupation with self, it blinds our understanding of other people.

a) One way to determine whether we are preoccupied with ourselves or are carrying pride is to evaluate our motives in life. For example take the pursuit of knowledge. If we study hard because that's what the Lord wants us to do and we're being obedient to Him, that's good. That's obedience to God.

Or if we study hard because we want to become a teacher so that we can edify others and help them to grow, that's good too. That's love for others.

But if we study hard solely to amass knowledge for ourselves, just so we can say that we know more than everyone else, that's bad! Then our focus is upon our self and our own glory. That's preoccupation with self. That's pride. And if this is the case for us, we are not only already suffering from pride, but setting ourselves up to be totally consumed by it! Knowledge for the wrong reasons (i.e. personal glory) *will* lead to a proud heart and enmity against God.

b) Another strong indicator of pride is competitiveness. There is nothing wrong with playing to win, provided the joy is in the playing. If our happiness depends on defeating others or knowing our child is the star of the team, we are building a world of illusion.

Proverb 16, Vs. 18 says:

Pride goes before destruction and the spirit is lifted up before fall.

Therefore it is most necessary for us to fight against this sin.

The following quotes are true in these circumstances:

"Proud people breed sad sorrows for themselves."

"Pride costs more than hunger, thirst and cold."

"Temper gets you into trouble. Pride keeps you there."

I would like to mention here a true incident a priest at a Retreat centre told:

A wealthy business man once attended the retreat at the same retreat centre. The man was a prominent figure in that area and the priest knew him very well. After the retreat he had a small chat with the priest. The man told the priest, that he is not in talking terms with his wife for the past 5 years and have no intention to talk again in future although they live together. He further said, she has many times tried to talk to him but his pride did not allow him to forgive her. Although the priest advised to forgive his wife he said "I had been a proud man all my life and for what she has done, I cannot forgive her". He soon left the centre to go back to his home, but unfortunately on his way back he met with an accident and died on the spot. Very sad for him, because of his pride he carried unforgiveness till his end.

John 2:16: says, 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.

Overweening pride, arrogance, haughtiness: these have been the stuff of tragedy. Vanity, fussiness, delicacy: the stuff of comedy. These are all forms of self-delusion, and paper-thin masks over rotting features. Pride and vanity refuse the truth about ourselves and substitute illusions for reality. While vanity is mostly concerned with appearance, pride is based on a real desire to be like God.

Proverbs 28: 25, 26 tells us that he that is of a proud heart stirs up strife, but he that puts his trust in the Lord shall be made fat. He that trusts his own heart is a fool, but whoever walks wisely shall be delivered.

At death, all illusions are stripped away. God's judgment will not take into account our bank balance, how much we own, or how much self-esteem we have. All that will matter is whether He recognizes us. From (Matthew 25:12).

Therefore, we shall practice some humble ways to combat Pride:

1. Be kind and humble and learn to accept others the way they are and reach out to others.
2. Pray for a spirit of Humility and Gratitude. Practice self denial, patience, charity, meekness and strive for doing God's will.
3. Read Philippians 2:3-11 and imitate it. Understand that without God's Grace, we will never cast away our illusions of Pride.

Thank you & God Bless

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