

Pride and Self-Esteem

- I. There are two extremes that we need to avoid concerning our image of ourselves.
 1. On one hand, popular culture teaches us that pride is a virtue, which is certainly wrong.
 2. On the other hand, some fundamentalist churches teach that self-esteem is entirely evil, which is also wrong.

- II. Pride is evil
 1. Pride *n.* - B. Signification. The quality of being proud. I. 1. a. A high or overweening opinion of one's own qualities, attainments, or estate, which gives rise to a feeling and attitude of superiority over and contempt for others; inordinate self-esteem.
 2. Proud *adj.* - I. 1. a. Having or cherishing a high or lofty opinion of oneself; valuing oneself highly on account of one's position, rank, attainments, possessions, etc.; Usually in a bad sense: Disposed to take an attitude of superiority to and contempt for others; arrogant, haughty, overweening, supercilious.
 3. There is no such thing as "good pride" in the Bible.
 - A. "Pride" is used 49 times in the Bible, only thrice in the NT, and it is always used in a bad sense.
 - B. "Proud" and its variants are used 57 times in the Bible, 6 times in the NT, and it is also never used in a good sense.
 - C. If you want to express your high opinion of someone else or their accomplishments, say that you are *pleased* with them, not *proud* of them.
 4. Society teaches us that pride is a virtue, not a vice.
 - A. This is apparent by the "Proud to be an American" songs, shirts, and bumper stickers.
 - B. If you doubt that Americans are proud people, just look at their "Proud Parent of an Honor Student" bumper stickers.
 5. Pride is a sin.
 - A. Having pride and being proud go hand-in-hand (**Isa 16:6**).
 - B. They are both sin (**Pro 21:4**).
 - i. Pride is a worldly quality (**1Jo 2:16**).
 - ii. Pride is classified with serious sins (**Mar 7:21-22; Rom 1:30; 2Ti 3:2**).
 - iii. Pride was the underlying sin of Sodom (**Eze 16:49-50 c/w Rom 1:21-27**).
 - C. The wicked are proud (**Job 40:12; Psa 10:2; Psa 86:14; Rom 1:30**).
 - D. Pride is a companion of arrogance (**1Sa 2:3; Pro 8:13; Jer 48:29; Isa 13:11**).
 - E. Pride goes with lying (**Psa 31:18**) and believing lies (**Psa 40:4**).
 - F. Pride leads to the following:
 - i. Not seeking God (**Psa 10:4**).
 - ii. Not keeping God's commandments (**Neh 9:16, 29**).
 - iii. Not believing God's word (**Jer 43:2**).
 - iv. Teaching false doctrine (**1Ti 6:3-4**).
 - v. Not getting wisdom (**Pro 11:2; Pro 13:10**).
 6. God's view of pride
 - A. God hates pride (**Pro 6:16-17; Pro 16:5**).
 - B. Jesus, who is the wisdom of God (**1Co 1:24**), also hates pride (**Pro 8:12-13**).
 - C. God is against the proud (**Jer 50:31-32; Jam 4:6; 1Pe 5:5**).

- D. God will destroy the proud (**Pro 15:25; Pro 16:18; Pro 29:23; Mal 4:1**).
- E. God will destroy a proud nation (USA) (**Hos 5:5**).
- F. God will afflict His children to prevent them from getting proud (**2Co 12:7-10**).
- G. God will abase (humble) us if we become proud (**Dan 4:29-37**).

III. Self-esteem is the value that a person places upon themselves.

- 1. Esteem *n.* - 1. a. Estimate, valuation, in phr. *to make an esteem*. b. Estimated value, valuation. c. to put, set (an) esteem, a high, low esteem upon: to set a value upon, cause to be esteemed (highly, etc.).
- 2. Self-esteem - Favourable appreciation or opinion of oneself.
- 3. "Self-esteem" is not a bad thing in and of itself. It just depends on how one esteems themselves.

IV. Having a realistic opinion of one's self (self-esteem) is not pride.

- 1. To have pride or be proud is to have a *high, lofty, or overweening* opinion of one's self (see definitions above).
 - A. Overweening *adj.* - 1. Of a person: That thinks, expects, or has an opinion, beyond what is reasonable or just; overconfident or sanguine in one's own opinion; conceited, arrogant, presumptuous, self-opinionated. 2. Of opinion, estimate, pretension, desire, etc.: Conceited; excessive, exaggerated, too high.
 - B. Lofty *adj.* - 1. Extending to a great height in the air; of imposing altitude, towering. 2. In figurative and immaterial applications. a. Haughty, overweening, proud.
- 2. Pride is *inordinate* self-esteem, not just simply an accurate self-esteem.
 - A. Inordinate *adj.* - 1. Not 'ordered'; devoid of order or regularity; deviating from right or rule; irregular, disorderly; not regulated, controlled, or restrained. 2. Not kept within orderly limits, immoderate, intemperate, excessive.
 - B. Inordinate self-esteem is an opinion of one's self that is excessive and not regulated by the truth.
 - C. A person is deceived who thinks more highly of himself than he ought to think (**Gal 6:3**).
- 3. A proud person is overconfident and has an excessive and exaggerated opinion and estimation of himself.
- 4. On the other hand, a person who has a realistic opinion and estimation of themselves is not proud, and is therefore not sinning by doing so.
- 5. A person with an unrealistically low opinion of themselves can still be proud (more on this in Section V,4,F,v).

V. What is a realistic opinion and estimation of ourselves as Christians?

- 1. Firstly, we must realize and accept that in our flesh dwells no good thing (**Rom 7:18**).
 - A. We were conceived and born in sin (**Psa 51:5; Psa 58:3**) which we inherited from Adam (**Rom 5:12**).
 - B. We are *by nature* the children of wrath (**Eph 2:1-3**).
 - C. We are all as an unclean thing (**Isa 64:6**).
 - D. We are unrighteous (**Rom 3:10**).
 - E. We are not good (**Mar 10:18**).
 - F. We can do no good (**Rom 3:12**).

- G. Sin works in us *all manner* of concupiscence (**Rom 7:8**).
 - H. We are wretched men (**Rom 7:24**).
 - I. We are evil (**Mat 7:11**).
 - J. We are hateful (**Tit 3:3**).
 - K. We are abominable (**Tit 1:16**).
 - L. We are full of envy (**Jam 4:5**).
 - M. We are full of all manner of wickedness and will act it out if God gives us up unto it (**Rom 1:28-32**).
 - N. But thankfully, that's not the end of the story...
2. God saved us from our depraved condition by His grace and mercy.
 - A. God saved us when we were without strength to do it ourselves (**Rom 5:6**).
 - B. God saved us when we were His enemies (**Rom 5:10**).
 - C. God saved us when we were dead in trespasses and sins (**Eph 2:1-5**).
 - D. We had nothing whatsoever to do with our salvation (**2Ti 1:9; Tit 3:5; Rom 9:16**).
 3. Because we were saved by grace and not our will or works, we cannot take pride in our new state.
 - A. We can't glory about something that we received as a gift (**Eph 2:8-9; 1Co 4:7**).
 - B. We are what we are by the grace of God (**1Co 15:10**).
 4. How should we properly esteem ourselves then?
 - A. We should recognize that our nature is evil and capable to doing *any* evil.
 - B. We should recognize that we have no responsibility for our salvation (**Eph 2:4-5**), nor the faith (**1Jo 5:4**) and good works (**Eph 2:10**) that are the fruits of it.
 - C. We should not look at ourselves as worthless sinners, but rather as sinners who have been saved by God (**1Ti 1:15**).
 - D. We should know and accept that by God's grace we are:
 - i. Chosen by God (**Eph 1:4**).
 - ii. Predestinated to be children of God (**Eph 1:5**).
 - iii. Sons of God (**1Jo 3:1-2**).
 - iv. Loved by God (**Rev 1:5**).
 - v. Justified by God (**Rom 3:24**).
 - vi. Sanctified by God (**1Co 6:11**).
 - vii. Cherished by God (**Eph 5:29**).
 - viii. The apple of God's eye (**Deu 32:9-10**).
 - ix. Complete in Christ (**Col 2:10**).
 - E. Therefore, we should never esteem ourselves to be worthless.
 - i. God loves His elect children and esteemed them valuable enough to send His only begotten Son to die for them (**Joh 3:16**).
 - a. To esteem ourselves to be worthless is to insult God who made us.
 - b. We must not believe anyone who tells us that we are worthless.
 - ii. If we esteem ourselves to be chosen, predestinated, loved, justified, sanctified, and cherished children of God, then, in a sense, we have a "high self-esteem."
 - a. This is a "high self-esteem" which is Biblical and healthy.
 - b. This "high self-esteem" is esteeming ourselves as God sees us because of what God has done for us, not for what we have made ourselves.

- F. We must be humble (**1Pe 5:6**).
- i. Humble *adj.*- 1. Having a low estimate of one's importance, worthiness, or merits; marked by the absence of self-assertion or self-exaltation; lowly; the opposite of *proud*.
 - ii. Because of our fallen nature, we have a tendency to become proud (**Mar 7:21-22**).
 - iii. We must always remind ourselves of what we were before God saved us, which is what we would be had He not.
 - iv. We must not think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, but should think of ourselves soberly (**Rom 12:3**).
 - a. Soberly *adv.* - 1. Gravely, seriously, quietly; without any sign of excitement, impatience, or other strong feeling.
 - b. We must esteem others more highly than ourselves (**Php 2:3**).
 - c. This is the Biblical definition of "low self-esteem."
 - d. This is a good form of "low self-esteem."
 - e. To esteem ourselves as sinners by nature, as lower than others, and not more highly than we ought to is a good form of "low self-esteem."
 - f. But to esteem ourselves to be worthless is an unbiblical and unhealthy "low self-esteem."
 - v. One can have an unbiblical and unhealthy "low self-esteem," and yet be proud.
 - a. He can be stripped of all self-worth and feel that he is good for nothing, and yet strive with people who are trying to help him understand that he does have worth in the eyes of God.
 - b. He is proud, because pride is the source of contention (**Pro 13:10; Pro 28:25**).
 - c. He is too proud to admit that he has a problem and that someone else has the solution (**Phi 2:3**).
 - d. This is also manifested in the person who dresses, acts, or talks in a way that is self-demeaning or self-hating.
 - (i) He may appear to have a low opinion of himself, but actually he thinks too highly of himself and is "acting out" to get the attention he thinks he deserves.
 - (ii) This type of pride may be demonstrated by teenagers who wear all-black clothing, have posts in their ears, excessive piercings, or tattoos, etc.
 - e. If he will humble himself and admit that he has an unbiblical and unhealthy "low self-esteem," God will lift him up and give him a proper understanding of his own worth (**Jam 4:6,10**).
- G. We should understand that God has given us the talents and abilities that we have.
- i. God has dealt to each one of us a measure of faith (**Rom 12:3**).
 - ii. God has given each of us different gifts (**Rom 12:6**).
 - iii. Some are given one talent, while others are given five or ten talents (**Mat 25:14-15**).

- a. God expects each of us to use our talents to the best of our ability (**Ecc 9:10**).
 - b. If we do the best we can with what God has given us, He will be pleased with us (**Mat 25:20-23**).
 - iv. *Acknowledging* that we have gifts and talents given to us from God *is not pride* (**Eph 3:7; 2Co 11:5**).
 - a. But we must never think that we are superior to someone else because we have gifts and talents that they don't have (**Eph 3:8; 2Co 12:11**).
 - b. Neither should we think that we are inferior as a person to someone else because they have gifts and talents that we don't have.
 - v. *Boasting* about our merits and thinking that we are important because of them *is pride* and is sinful (**Rom 1:30**).
 - a. Being confident that you can do a certain thing if you have the ability to do so is not pride, but boasting about it is.
 - b. We must let others praise us and not praise ourselves (**Pro 27:2; Pro 25:27; Pro 20:6**).
 - (i) This is what a humble person does.
 - (ii) Humble *adj.*- 1. Having a low estimate of one's importance, worthiness, or merits; marked by the absence of self-assertion or self-exaltation; lowly: the opposite of *proud*.
 - c. Let the Lord commend you, not yourself (**2Co 10:18; Joh 7:18**).
 - vi. We must scrutinize the praise that others give us (**Pro 27:21**).
 - vii. You can tell a lot about a person by how they receive praise.
- H. We must have a realistic self-esteem.
- i. To have too high of self-esteem is not good.
 - a. To do so is pride, which is sinful and dangerous.
 - b. We must not think of ourselves *more highly* than we ought to think (**Rom 12:3**).
 - c. We should think of ourselves *soberly* (**Rom 12:3**).
 - d. Soberly - 1. Gravely, seriously, quietly; without any sign of excitement, impatience, or other strong feeling. b. In all seriousness; with full conviction. c. Without extravagance or excess.
 - e. In other words, we should think of ourselves *seriously* and *realistically*.
 - ii. To have too low of self-esteem is not good either.
 - a. To do so says that God did not create anything good and valuable in you as a new creature in Christ (**2Co 5:17**).
 - b. If our self-esteem is too low, such as having feelings of utter futility or self-hatred, then we will act and speak as if we are totally worthless (**Pro 23:7; Luk 6:45**).
 - c. Doing so will hinder our Christian walk and bring dishonour to our Saviour.