

Men and Their Emotions: Pridefulness

In the last post in this series about a man's emotions, I wrote about how often men find happiness in their work but that we can find eternal joy, not just happiness, by refocusing on our relationships, especially ones with Jesus, our family, and our friends.

This week's post about Pridefulness is also a by-product of a man's work. While pride in some aspects of our lives can be good, it can also lead to overconfidence and arrogance.

Is Pride a Weakness or a Strength?

Generally, men take pride in their accomplishments especially those fitting of his masculinity (the good traits of masculinity; not the misused traits we see too frequently today).

A man may take pride in his hobby, a good golf game, or a promotion at work. He takes pride in his family, the workout at the gym, and his physical achievements. We are proud when we complete another step in his education or training. We feel proud of our high moral standards. Many have pride in our country.

On the flip-side, pride often leads to an inflated version of self which shows-off his ego. This leads to defensiveness in which he takes everything as a criticism – as if he is under

attack. He passes the blame when something goes wrong. He doesn't take the responsibility given if he feels it's below him. His misused pride takes credit at work for something done well by someone else. It means he lets his family or friends suffer because he does not want any help. Pride puts others down. It measures a man's achievements against those of others. Pride shows up as being a narcissistic, arrogant, manipulative, entitled, and lacking in empathy.

While most of the traits of pride are seen as negatives, in the right place and in the right amount, proper use of pride can also be a good thing.

So let's first define pride; the root word of pridefulness.

Pride Defined

According to Wikipedia, Pride is an emotional state deriving a positive effect from the perceived value of a person or thing with which the subject has an intimate connection. It may be inwardly or outwardly directed.



The negative side of pride refers to a foolishly and irrationally corrupt sense of one's personal value, status or accomplishments.

The positive side of pride is a content sense of attachment toward one's own or another's choices and actions, or toward a whole group of people. It is a product of praise, independent self-reflection, and a fulfilled feeling of belonging.

Philosophers and social psychologists have noted that pride is a complex secondary emotion which requires the development of a sense of self and the mastery of its conceptual distinctions (e.g. that pride is distinct from happiness and joy).

Some philosophers such as Aristotle and George Bernard Shaw actually considered pride (but not hubris) a profound virtue.

Ancient Greek and biblical thought condemned what they referred to as “excessive pride” or “hubris” as the personality quality of extreme or foolish pride or dangerous overconfidence, often in combination with or synonymous with arrogance. These prevalent early philosophical and religious views led the Italian poet, Dante to refer to pride though as the deadliest of the Seven Deadly Sins. Author Solomon Schimmel’s 1997 book *The Seven Deadly Sins: Jewish, Christian, and Classical Reflections on Human Psychology* stated that “pride has been transformed from a vice into a virtue” in today’s Western culture.

Much like self-esteem, pride is generally perceived as something to be sought out, then rewarded and encouraged in children and adults.

Environmental and Physiological Reaction of Pride

Personally, pride is an easy line to slide across. While it can be hard for me to tell if its overconfidence or arrogance that I’m portraying, oftentimes, I can tell just by the look on the other person’s face.



In a paper titled *The Nature of Pride*, co-authors Jessica Tracey and Richard Robins indicate pride is universally recognized and displayed in a prototypical expression of an expanded and upright posture, head tilted slightly upward (about 20 degrees), a small smile, and arms either akimbo with hands on the hips or raised above the head with hands in fists.

Despite the importance of pride to everyday social life, this emotion has received relatively little research attention though, particularly compared with fear, joy, and other basic emotions.

However, a growing body of research suggests that pride is a psychologically important and evolutionarily adaptive emotion. Recent research suggests that pride develops somewhat later than the more biologically basic emotions, and is experienced and recognized by the time children reach the age of 4 years.

Research from the University of Zurich showed both pride and shame activated typical emotion-processing circuits in the amygdala, insula, and ventral striatum, the regions of the brain involved in social cognition.

The short answer, though, is pride is developmental and is learned.

This raises a perplexing question: How is pride both good or bad?

What the Bible says about Pride

The Bible warns us that God hates the sin of pride and will discipline the proud. God hates the kind of pride that stems from self-righteousness or conceit.

Proverbs 16:18-19 tells us that “pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall. Better to be lowly in spirit and among the oppressed than to share plunder with the proud.”

God also hates evil (Proverbs 8:13). In fact, Satan was cast out of heaven because of his pride (Isaiah 14:12-15) and his audacity to attempt to replace God as the rightful ruler of the universe.



<https://www.verseoftheday.com/topics/pride/>

However, there is a kind of pride we can feel about a job well done or the accomplishment of loved ones (2 Corinthians 7:4).

Some of this confusion comes from the original translations of the word "pride". This post from Spirit & Truth suggests the Greek word, καύχημα [kauchēma] translates pride as the sense of 'something to boast about.' It emphasizes "glorying in" and having "confidence in" or even "rejoicing in".

Like rejoicing in our work for The Lord.

The writer of Ecclesiastes in the Old Testament declared, "Nothing is better than that a man should rejoice in his own works" (Ecclesiastes 3:22, NKJV).

There is also this from 2 Chronicles: "He took great pride in the ways of the LORD and again removed the high places and the Asherim from Judah." (2 Chronicles 17:6, NASB)

Also, consider these verses from the NASB: The Apostle Paul said: "I have reason to be proud of my work for God" (Romans 15:17).

The biblical truth is that we are to exhibit high-quality, reliable character but must work from humility, not from a place of pride.

James reminds us of this: "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (James 4:6).

We are not to boast about ourselves but must proclaim that anything we accomplish is not possible without God.

Give God the glory—He alone deserves it.

How God Buddies Respond to Pride

There is such a fine line between pride and confidence and arrogance. But it is essentially self-worship. It's thinking about yourself first and not about others. C.S. Lewis famously reminds us about pride in his book, *Mere Christianity*: *"True humility is not thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less."*



For many men, pride is driven by poor self-worth and shame. We

may feel so badly about ourselves that we compensate by trying to demonstrate our superiority over others. We also criticize others to conceal our own weaknesses. Pride also prevents us from saying, "I'm sorry, I was wrong, I made a mistake."

Shame-driven pride also comes from acknowledging our sins. Overall, pridefulness makes it difficult to sustain relationships; nobody likes being with a know-it-all.

Learning to keep your pride in-check is important to your journey toward becoming more Christ-like.

One of the main ways to succeed in your battle with pride is to get connected to other men. A God Buddy will hold you accountable to remaining humble and keeping you from becoming boastful.

It takes a strong, godly man to know how to use his pride in positive ways and not stray toward boastfulness. Having a God Buddy can help you remain humble.

Just remember, excess pride eventually leads to a fall which results in the emotions of guilt and shame; the topic of the next post.