



SEVEN • Pride

What Do I Need to Know?

Introduction

The first section of the study is primarily a conversation starter, dealing with the definition of pride. Pride, is an overestimation of one's abilities: intellectual, moral, athletic, or creative. Such overconfidence often leads to an unteachable spirit, condescending attitude toward others, self reliance, and self absorption. Words that are synonymous to pride, such as arrogance or vanity, are often associated with the specific type of pride: vanity usually referring to beauty, and arrogance to intellectual pride. A healthy self esteem is an accurate appraisal of one's abilities and value, while a low self esteem is an unhealthy underestimation that, while appearing humble, may be just as erroneous and spiritually detrimental, as pride.

The Signs of Pride

The Book of Proverbs is a study in wisdom. As such, the issue of pride is dealt with quite frequently, being a major roadblock to living and being wise. The study investigates four signs of a prideful heart. Because all of us struggle with pride, the question most relevant is not whether you manifest these traits, but to what degree.

Bragging: Proverbs 25:6 says, "Do not exalt yourself in the king's presence, and do not claim a place among great men." Besides being rude, the core sin of bragging is the lack of acknowledgement of God. Bragging brings glory to the person rather than to God.

Unteachable: Proverbs 29:1 says, "A man who remains stiff-necked after many rebukes will suddenly be destroyed – without remedy." When one is overconfident in their abilities, they become unable to accept correction or receive criticism from others. They see their opinion and judgment as infallible, and reckon it to be of greater truth and value than the opinions and judgments of others.

Mocking: Proverbs 21:24 says, "The proud and arrogant man – 'Mocker' is his name; he behaves with overweening pride." People will not usually correlate mocking or cynicism with the sin of pride, but mocking is really passing judgment on others, and assumes a higher perch by which to look down on others and pass judgments. Mocking assumes your habits, practices, and judgments are on a higher plane from those you mock.

Vanity: Vanity, gives undue attention to oneself, and assigns a higher value to one's appearance than is rightful or warranted.

What's the Big Idea?

This study will explore the sin of pride. The symptoms of a prideful heart will be examined, and then the study explores how pride impairs our relationship with God.



Pride Toward God

This section will examine how pride is also an obstacle in our relationship with God. The point of this section is to transition into some significant gospel content.

Luke 18:11-14: In the parable, both a Pharisee and a tax collector approach God in prayer. The Pharisee approaches with a prideful attitude apparent in two ways. He feels he is worthy to come before God on the basis of his good works, and he assesses himself as righteous by comparing himself to others. The parable makes it clear that the Pharisee tried to justify himself (presented himself as just and righteous before God).

In contrast, the tax collector saw the reality of his spiritual condition, and therefore sought mercy.

Jesus' summary is that the Pharisee who tried to justify himself remained unforgiven, while the tax collector who humbly admitted his sin, was justified.

What if There's a Problem?

All foreseeable issues are dealt with in "What Do I Need to Know?"

What Are the Answers?

1. A sense of superiority to others: an overestimation of one's gifts and abilities. (Make sure you have the group read through all of the Web quotes and Bible passages that are on the study. Their content is essential to the flow of the study.)
2. Words that are synonymous to pride, such as arrogance or vanity, are often associated with the type of pride. Vanity, usually refers to beauty, and arrogance to intellectual pride. There is great overlap among the terms.
3. Confidence is a healthy and accurate appraisal of one's abilities and value, as well as one's potential. Pride, is overconfidence and an overestimation of one's abilities.
4. Discuss. Usually embarrassment.
5. Have the group share.
6. Truthfully acknowledging one's accomplishment is not necessarily bragging. Bragging, is connected to the heart motive. If it is an attempt to make others think more highly of you than they should, or to take glory that should be shared with others or God, it is sin.
7. Open discussion. You might ask why it's so difficult to take correction from parents.
8. Because you see your opinion and judgment as infallible, and reckon it to be of greater truth and value, than the opinions and judgments of others.
9. Mocking, is really passing judgment on others, and assumes a higher perch by which to look down on others, and pass judgments on them. It assumes your habits, practices, and judgments are on a higher plane from those you mock.
10. There is little academic agreement on the meaning of this phrase. Allow the group to discuss.
11. Vanity is sin in that it places a wrong emphasis on appearance – more emphasis than is merited. Self absorption and narcissism are not God's desire for us, but they are not necessarily the same thing as pride, though there is much overlap.
12. Because pride can keep us from seeing our need for God's forgiveness and salvation. Thus pride prohibits us from having a relationship with Him.
13. Allow the group to discuss.
14. You might share first and help the group be more vulnerable.
15. Allow the group to discuss, and look for a chance to share your testimony. If you already have done this, ask another Christian in the group to share theirs.

What's Our Response?

After looking at the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector, several questions are asked that relate to the gospel message of salvation by grace alone. Like the tax collector, we can not justify ourselves before God but we can humbly receive His mercy. The final question would be a good place to share your testimony of how you came to Christ. You might follow your testimony by asking where others are at on their spiritual journey. Within your testimony make sure you explain the basic gospel message, so that you are using your testimony to present the gospel.