

Elwell, W. A., & Comfort, P. W. (2001). *Tyndale Bible Dictionary*.

**PRIDE** A reasonable or justifiable self-respect; or improper and excessive self-esteem known as conceit or arrogance. The apostle Paul expressed a positive kind of pride when speaking of confidence in Christians (2 Cor 7:4) or of strength in the Lord (12:5, 9). However, it is the latter, sinful meaning of “pride” that most frequently appears in the Bible, both in the OT and the NT.

The ten Hebrew and two Greek words generally used for pride refer to being high or exalted in attitude, the opposite of the virtue of humility, which is so often praised and rewarded by God. One other Greek word refers to a person’s being puffed up or inflated with pride or egotism. The idea is that one gives the impression of substance but is really filled only with air (see, e.g., 1 Cor 5:2; 8:1; 13:4; Col 2:18).

Pride is basically a sin of attitude and of the heart and spirit. Hence one reads, “Haughty eyes and a proud heart, the lamp of the wicked, are sin” (Prv 21:4, RSV). Ecclesiastes 7:8 speaks of being proud in spirit and the psalmist declares, “O LORD, my heart is not proud, nor my eyes haughty” (Ps 131:1, NASB). Pride is cited in the two lists of the most glaring sins in the Bible. Along with the sins for which God is going to judge the Gentiles, one finds insolence, arrogance, and boasting (Rom 1:30). Included with the sins that will be prevalent in the last days, Paul includes boasting, arrogance, and conceit (2 Tm 3:2–4).

As so many of the sins of attitude, pride cannot remain internalized. It can infect one’s speech; boasting is one way by which this sin can appear in one’s speaking (see the passages referred to above and also Mal 3:13). Pride can also appear in the way one looks at another person. Hence, the Scriptures speak of “haughty eyes” in Proverbs 6:17, or, as it could also be rendered, “a proud look.” The psalmist speaks of a person with haughty looks and arrogant heart (Ps 101:5; see also Prv 30:13). Pride may also take the ugly form of contemptible treatment of others (Prv 21:24). One of the illustrations of this in the Bible is the way in which the Pharisees and other Jewish leaders treated and spoke of those beneath their social level (e.g., Mt 23:5–12; Jn 9:34). They especially despised tax collectors and sinners.

Outstanding examples of proud people can be found in both Testaments. Pride was the downfall of King Uzziah, who, because of this sin, dared to offer incense on the altar of incense and was smitten with leprosy as his punishment from God (2 Chr 26:16). Hezekiah, after his healing by the Lord, became proud of heart and brought God’s anger upon himself, Judah, and Jerusalem (32:25–26). The Pharisee praying in the temple, comparing himself with the humble tax collector, is another example (Lk 18:9–14). Herod’s refusal to give God the glory for his greatness brought judgment from God; Herod was eaten by worms and died for his sin of pride (Acts 12:21–23). In fact, Ezekiel 28, which describes the pride of the leader of Tyre, is taken by many biblical scholars to refer, in a deeper sense, to the fall of Satan back in the beginning.

Pride can bring about the downfall not only of individuals but also of nations. This was the sin that is specifically mentioned as leading to other sins and that ultimately brought about the removal of both Israel and Judah from the land of Canaan (Is 3:16; 5:15; Ez 16:50; Hos 13:6; Zep 3:11). It is also the specific sin that brought about the downfall of the king of Assyria (Is 10:12, 33) and of the king of Moab (Jer 48:29). Because of its deadliness, Israel is specifically warned against pride and the tendency to forget God that so often stems from it (Dt 8:14).

In the light of the preceding discussion, it is no surprise to read in the Bible that pride is one of the seven things that the Lord hates (Prv 6:17). It is also said by two different writers that God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble (see Jas 4:6 and 1 Pt 5:5; see also Prv 3:34 and 18:12, to which James and Peter may be referring). The words of Mary, the mother of Jesus, in her hymn of praise to God may summarize the attitude of God and the Bible toward pride: “His mighty arm does tremendous things! How he scatters the proud and haughty ones! He has taken princes from their thrones and exalted the lowly” (Lk 1:51–52, NLT).

Thomas a Kempis (Translated by Aloysius Croft and Harold Bolton). (1996). *The Imitation of Christ*.

### **AVOIDING FALSE HOPE AND PRIDE**

VAIN is the man who puts his trust in men, in created things.

Do not be ashamed to serve others for the love of Jesus Christ and to seem poor in this world. Do not be self-sufficient but place your trust in God. Do what lies in your power and God will aid your good will. Put no trust in your own learning nor in the cunning of any man, but rather in the grace of God Who helps the humble and humbles the proud.

If you have wealth, do not glory in it, nor in friends because they are powerful, but in God Who gives all things and Who desires above all to give Himself. Do not boast of personal stature or of physical beauty, qualities which are marred and destroyed by a little sickness. Do not take pride in your talent or ability, lest you displease God to Whom belongs all the natural gifts that you have.

Do not think yourself better than others lest, perhaps, you be accounted worse before God Who knows what is in man. Do not take pride in your good deeds, for God's judgments differ from those of men and what pleases them often displeases Him. If there is good in you, see more good in others, so that you may remain humble. It does no harm to esteem yourself less than anyone else, but it is very harmful to think yourself better than even one. The humble live in continuous peace, while in the hearts of the proud are envy and frequent anger.