

# TAKE AIM, DON'T MISS! DEALING WITH THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS

## – THE “TAPROOT” SIN OF PRIDE –



*There once was a man named Narcissus  
Who thought himself very delicious  
So he stared like a fool  
At his face in a pool  
And his folly today is still with us.*

One driving conviction of these lessons is, *all our moral, behavioral, and relational issues (pretty much all our issues) are the fruit of much deeper spiritual issues, which are at the root of our problems.* Sinful patterns of living are manifestations of a much deeper problem within our hearts.

THE root sin, or the deepest rooted sin, most church fathers would say, is the sin of PRIDE. Pride is #1 with a bullet on the list of the seven deadly sins – sins with incredible power to destroy your life unless the Lord intervenes. C. S. Lewis called pride “the greatest sin, the utmost evil” and observed, “In comparison to pride, all the other vices are mere fleabites . . . pride leads to every other vice . . .”

What do we learn about PRIDE in *Proverbs 8:13 & 16:18*?

Let’s look at this taproot sin from which springs all the seven deadly sins.

### **1. Let’s consider the FRUITS of Pride.**

In one sense, the fruits (or manifestations) of pride are almost too many to cover in a year’s worth of lessons. But here are **3 common fruits / manifestations** of pride we would do well to consider.

- **Self – PROMOTION.** Are there times when it’s necessary to refer to one’s on accomplishments & credentials? YES, when seeking employment or interviewing for a job [track record is important . . . ]

**How does this manifestation of pride manifest itself?** The Guy name-dropping [5 famous people who’ve met me; my friend the famous \_\_\_\_\_; when I beat \_\_\_\_\_ on the field or court] or showing out on the basketball court or playing a sport, the lady dressing provocatively to get the attention of men, the “educated” person showing off his / her knowledge, is obsessed @ correcting EVERY LITTLE detail he/she disagrees w/in a discussion [Husband telling a story while wife

corrects him . . . ], and the person who simply tries to sound like a know-it-all are all manifestations of pride. It's called BOASTING, and in the Bible, boasting is called out as being wrong, cf *Jeremiah 9:23*, *1 Corinthians 1:26-29*. ANYTHING that calls attention to yourself is a manifestation of PRIDE [Reg McLelland story].

**WHY is self-promotion an enemy of grace?** God doesn't broker grace on the basis of merit, privilege, or personal success. GRACE comes through FAITH in the finished work of what CHRIST has done, NOT what YOU have done, and even that FAITH is a GIFT and NOT something you EARNED because you were all that! *Ephesians 2:8-9*; *Romans 3:27*; *1 Corinthians 15:10*. Grace is a GIFT, if you EARN it or think you DESERVE it, it's NOT a gift. Yet some people think their final appearance before the judge of the world is going to be resuME reading!

- **Self-PITY. Doesn't sound like pride, but it is!** When someone focuses on what they DON'T have – looks, ability, \$\$, whatever – the focus is STILL on the SELF, what I DON'T HAVE. Especially in COMPARISON to others. In comparison to others, I'm not much, so would you PLEASE pay attention to ME; for I am NEEDY, and you NEED to pay attention to my neediness! NEEDY people feel like they NEED to be appreciated, paid special attention to, treated with kid gloves, whatever . . . because we are soooo misunderstood, mistreated, blah, blah, blah. WHY do they NEED that attention? B/C in their minds, they are not getting the attention they need. ["It's all about MEEEEEE!"]

**Some DIAGNOSTIC QUESTIONS to see if this is a manifestation of pride in your life.** Do you feel uncomfortable being around those who are more educated than you are? Do you avoid participating in games or sports for fear of looking stupid? Do you secretly criticize people who are more attractive, more whatever than you are? Are you constantly thinking about what people think about you, and you don't think they think very highly of you, so you keep your distance? Do you get resentful if your accomplishments are NOT showcased and highlighted in the eyes of others? [Prayer list @ AWPCA].

- **Self-RIGHTEOUSNESS, ESPECIALLY in "Christian" circles. This takes two forms. One is the dogged INSISTENCE that you are RIGHT, and the other person is WRONG.** Pride won't let you consider the possibility that since you are NOT God and since only GOD knows EVERYTHING, you just MAY not have all the right answers all the time. PRIDE will not let you admit you are wrong; and you simply *must* point out where others are wrong. *The other form is trusting in the good things you do to make yourself acceptable to God while looking down on those who do NOT do all the good things YOU do.* The PHARISEE in *Luke 18:9-14* is the poster child for this kind of self-righteousness seeing sin as what THEY do & not what YOU do, namely boasting in all your "goodness". This kind of pride is failing to see the Pharisee in that parable as a mirror exposing the default setting in our own hearts.

[“Preacher, I’m glad I’m not like that Pharisee you preached about this AM!” Jaw dropped.]

***Here’s how subtle pride is: If you don’t THINK you have a problem with pride, you have a problem with pride. And if you’re gratified that @ least you have the ability to recognize your pride, watch out!*** The man talking to the preacher thought he was BETTER THAN the Pharisee, and his PRIDE was exposed by looking down on that Pharisee!

## **2. Let’s consider the deep ROOT of pride.**

***The simple answer is: SELF . . .*** The KEY to recognizing the root of pride is with the use of PERSONAL PRONOUNS, I, ME, MINE, SELF, etc. The prideful person thinks a lot OF himself/herself; and he/she thinks a lot ABOUT himself/herself.

***Here’s a working definition of pride. PRIDE is thinking much ABOUT one’s self (self-absorption/focus), AND thinking much OF one’s self (self-exaltation).*** It can take the form of thinking a lot ABOUT yourself, in comparison to others, AND thinking ABOUT yourself a lot, or consistent self-focus. It’s thinking the world, and everything in the world, exists for YOU.

***Something about SIN and PRIDE: “Sin as a state of being is the ultimate BLACK HOLE of the spirit, the IMPLOSION of an inwardly gravitating SELF. The black hole is PRIDE.”***

***To put it another way, what do both SIN and PRIDE do? S”I”N and PR”I”DE both put “I” in the middle of the universe. NOT God, but MYSELF.***

## **3. Let’s consider a CASE STUDY in pride – and it’s “cure”.**

From an incident in the life of King Nebuchadnezzar (in *Daniel 4*), we learn @ least ***four lessons*** about pride and why/how to be healed from it.

- ***We learn about the SLEEP of pride.***

*Vs 4 . . . He has achieved great success, but he cannot sleep. WHY? Dreams remind us, we are NOT in control; and PRIDE is about being in control. Prideful people are folks who stay in a state of insecurity, people who are easily threatened. [LPCA “I made her stop coming to PM service b/c when she came home, she was @ a different place spiritually than I was . . . “]*

- ***We learn about the HEART of pride.***

*Vv 28-30 . . . Pride is saying all things are done BY me / FOR me. Pride is COSMIC PLAGIARISM where we take credit for a life story we did NOT ultimately write. It’s saying what I have is MINE and NOT a gift. It’s a life saturated in personal pronouns.*

- **We learn about the *OUTCOME* of pride.**

Vv 31-33 . . . *Pride DEHUMANIZES us. It makes you LESS like a person / MORE like a beast.* Proud people have a problem empathizing w/others, and tend to treat others more like a means to an end, the end being getting what they want, no matter who they hurt to get it. Pride makes you like an animal, driven by survival instincts only; and joy, if it comes @ all, is short-lived. After all, we want what we want, and if we don't get what we want, we get angry. [Lion w/meat . . . ]

- **We learn about the (ongoing) *HEALING* from pride.**

Vv 34-37 . . . *The HEALING begins when we shift our VISION from OURSELVES to GOD.* When we focus on GOD, we see everything we have as a GIFT, and NOT as something we DESERVE "it's about time I got that, and if I don't, that's UNFAIR".

In order to begin the (ongoing and never complete this side of eternity) healing process from pride, here's what healing from pride looks like.

- ***It looks like seeing God's ANGER over our cosmic plagiarism.*** We are NOT the Author of our life story, but God is, and what He is writing is for HIS glory and OUR ultimate good.
- ***It looks like saying from our hearts, "EVERYTHING is under God's RULE (God rules, not me), that everything He does is RIGHT, & that everything we have here on earth is BETTER than we DESERVE."***
- ***It looks like looking to JESUS as the only object of our boasting.*** What we have is because of JESUS and what JESUS has ACCOMPLISHED for us. And He accomplished it by HUMBLING Himself!
- ***It looks like what humility looks like. "Humility is NOT thinking LESS of ourselves; it's thinking of ourselves LESS."*** What is the FLOW of humility? To become more humble (you'll never completely arrive there), my time, efforts, and energy should flow OUTWARD towards God & others, and not INWARD towards us!

*Egotistical, prideful person* → ←

Humble person: ← →