

# The virtue of pride!

Christianity condemns the "sin" of pride. It says pride is when you think you are better than you actually are. Its doctrines that we should love God with all our hearts and love others as ourselves imply that we always fall short and must have a low opinion of ourselves. Not only do we fall short but we fall infinitely short for God is infinitely better than us. So belief in God by default makes us out to be worse than what we are. We believe that we are terrific and that our imperfections are not really imperfections at all. We believe that to love ourselves is to love others too. We embrace the "sin". If we believe we are better than what we are, we become what we believe.

Pride makes you forget that you are not wholly in control of what happens to you or around you and that neither you or what you have will last very long. It involves you exalting yourself as if you were a god above all those things. You may not see how weak you are and that you are no better than the next person. Or you may see it and become a cold person – too proud to risk anything that brings you down to your real level. You may think you know more than others and/or you may simply try to keep others reminded that they don't know very much. Underneath the pride is the fear of others who are as good as you or smarter or "better". Fulton J Sheen says that virtually the only hope of a cure is losing your health. That is why catastrophes are necessary in an era of pride to bring people back again to God and the salvation of their souls. While there are risks with pride there is nothing wrong with being a god! It is vindictive to say that the proud need to lose their health!

Religion likes you to make a mistake that you are worse than others for it says it is better to do that than to mistakenly think you are better than others!

We say if you do think you are better than you are, the enthusiasm you will feel about yourself will actually make you the perfect person. Hide it in such a way that you don't upset others but get them to admire you. That way you can confirm your esteem for yourself. If you arrogantly think you will win a marathon, you will certainly try harder than most to do it.

Believe that imperfect beings are perfect as imperfect as they are and abandon your perfect deities. Is it not better to look to a parent or teacher as a divine being when you find them inspirational rather than a perfect God who was never imperfect? Is it not fairer?

True perfection is only possible for those who were once imperfect. They made themselves perfect. Having perfection without working for it is a contradiction. Christianity says that God is perfect though he never worked for it - this insults us. And the more it esteems him the less it thinks of people.

The maths exam is very tough.

Scenario 1, you do superficial study for it and still end up doing well.

Scenario 2, you put in a lot of work and you do well.

Scenario 1 will lead to you thinking you are superior at least in maths to everybody else. You will look upon those who have to work hard at it as somehow inferior.

Scenario 1 leads to arrogance and you think luck is on your side in the sense that it is great luck for the world that you are on it.

Scenario 2 will lead to you feeling happy with yourself and feeling you have earned the happiness. Scenario 2 seems humble. But is it? What if you decide that you are a natural at working hard and that makes you superior to many others? In that matter you are arrogant. But the person who thinks their abilities are their inherent and natural superiority will tower above you in arrogance.

With both scenarios you are arrogant but the arrogance is more obvious with Scenario 1. The arrogance of Scenario 2 is craftier and a slow burner. If doing well is easy and natural for you, you will feel others are inferior to you and perhaps they are dirt.

It is not true that putting in hard work makes you feel equal to others for you feel they can achieve something important to them by hard work too. The point is that you have done the work and its unique and nobody else can do exactly the same. And the other point is you will disdain those who put little or no effort in.

If your natural ability to do difficult things easily and effectively is inherent you will be arrogant. But saying a perfectly good God is responsible for this inherent gift maximises the arrogance. You are saying you know God made you special. You cannot know that. And it is a boast.

You cannot know that others do as much as you for you are you and you are not them. The arrogance is still there.

The healthy pride you take in your success will inspire you to be open to more success or to succeed in something else as well. But that pride is always tainted by arrogance.

## PRIDE, ARROGANCE AND PRAYER

Healthy pride is based on taking responsibility for doing something that is valuable for yourself or others. Doing something that others value is the best way to pride.

Arrogance is pride but is based on thinking "Great things happen because I am so wonderful and I am involved." You exaggerate your importance. The arrogant person looks at others with contempt. A wonderful achievement is not about helping another or yourself but about glory.

Quite simply pride requires being responsible for an outcome that is valued socially and arrogance means that nobody else is any good or much good without you. Thus to go and do something for the starving at your gate and seeing this good deed as entirely created by you is decent but to think you are God's tool for helping them and it cannot be done without you is arrogant. Arrogance is at the root of prayer and belief in God. To say, "I would not have given this indispensable help to x unless I prayed" is just another way of saying you are the one who sorts everybody else out for you are superior.