

This document is offered for discussion of basic Christian views and does not represent policy or officially agreed views of Anglican Essentials Wales or any of its member organisations.

Is pride a deadly sin?



In Matthew's gospel, at chapter 23, we find that Jesus tells us:

¹² Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

“Pride” does indeed appear consistently on all variants of the list of 7 deadly sins. It is one of the true constants. It is also thought to lead us into much other wrongdoing.

Pride has been labelled the “father of all sins.”

We have the phrase that “pride comes before a fall” which reminds us that pride is almost always false and the fall thereafter is almost always inevitable.

Yet the Bible talks much, much more about the antidote to pride. The Bible talks extensively about an antidote that God asks of all of us: Humility.

Pride is an excessive view of one's self without regard for others.

The Bible says the following in Jeremiah chapter 9 at verse 23 and 24:

“...Let not the mighty man boast of his might...but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me [God]...”

So the Bible puts value in knowing and exalting God rather than knowing and exalting yourself. In Scripture Humility cures pride.

Pride is generally associated with an absence of humility. Humility, on the other hand, is a clear willingness to put others forward as being equal or better than yourself. Humility and Equality go well together.

Right at the very beginning of the Bible in Genesis chapter 1 at verse 27 we are told:

*So God created mankind in his own image,
in the image of God He created them;
male and female He created them.*

That fundamental concept, that we are all created in God's image, is then used throughout the Bible. So, for example, Jesus Christ tells us (Matthew's gospel chapter 5, verse 48):

"Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

That means that everyone else is equal to you and you are not really better than others.

So it is no surprise that Humility is regarded well throughout Scripture and pride as a failure. In Micah chapter 6 at verse 8 we have words that appear in the Anglican Church very regularly:

*⁸ He has told you, O man, what is good;
and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?*

That one verse is one of the most important things we need to remember whether we are Jews or Christians: Do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with God?

That is not approaching God humbly at the end of our lives, which we should indeed do, but it is being humble throughout our lives because we are required to walk through our lives humbly with God.

So it is that Jesus Christ himself gives us a clear warning when we read in Matthew's gospel, at chapter 23, verse 12:

¹² Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

So if we do engage in pride and exalt ourselves then we can expect to be humiliated and humbled, but if we humble ourselves throughout our lives then we can expect to be exalted by God.

The New Testament tells us in the letter from James, chapter 4 at verse 10:

¹⁰ Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

The Bible tells us again at 1 Peter chapter 5, verse 6:

⁶ Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you...

At every communion service in an Anglican church one of the closing prayers begins:

We do not presume to come to this thy Table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies.

This is known as the prayer of humble access with good reason.

October 2019