

Proverbs 16:16-19

- (16) How much better to get wisdom than gold!
And to get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver.
(17) The highway of the upright *is* to depart from evil;
He who keeps his way preserves his soul.
(18) Pride *goes* before destruction,
And a haughty spirit before a fall.
(19) Better *to be* of a humble spirit with the lowly,
Than to divide the spoil with the proud.

Psalm 101:5

- (5) Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor,
Him I will destroy;
The one who has a haughty look and a proud heart,
Him I will not endure.

New King James Version

Regarding pride, [God](#) gives some strong warnings. It must definitely be eradicated from our character. Pride has many manifestations, but it almost always starts when a person makes perverted comparisons, elevating one thing above another, making the self feel better or more deserving than another, and so forth. Pride may well be the father of other sins. God says that pride leads the way to destruction ([Proverbs 11:2](#); [17:19](#); [18:12](#)), which a product of [sin](#).

The natural corollary of pride is prejudice, which is all about perverse comparisons. Jane Austen wrote a popular novel a couple of centuries ago entitled *Pride and Open-mindedness*. I jest. The title is *Pride and Prejudice*.

Prejudice falls on the heels of pride because of the perverted judgment that is a part of it.

Pride begets numerous emotional disorders because it brings people into conflict either openly or internally. Whenever mental discord is held within, its outbreak will likely manifest as some sort of emotional disorder. We call the people unbalanced or even mentally ill, but churning away inside this person is a perverted comparison. Pride is present, bringing them into conflict with another, and they never resolve the conflict. Most frequently, the conflict occurs within the home, usually with someone close. Sometimes, it can be on the job. Wherever it may occur, good personal relationships are almost impossible where pride and its firstborn, prejudice, exist.

Another of the more damaging children of pride is intellectual arrogance. It produces an inability to learn either from one's own experiences or those of others. It also spawns a hatred of criticism and disdain for others.

The greater the pride, the more dangerous the consequences to the relationship, whether in a marriage, a partnership, or politics. It is a major cause of war between couples, within companies, or between nations.

Have we ever considered that America offers few rewards for modesty and moderation? The big rewards in the United States go to the arrogant, and we have thus produced a competitive and violent society that rides on the coattails of this proud attitude.

This is illustrated in no better place than in entertainment, especially in the movies. At one time, the heroes in the movies were almost always valiant and modest men or women. The actors like Jimmy Stewart, Alan Ladd, Spencer Tracy, or Gary Cooper usually portrayed them with an understated strength. It is difficult to remember them ever playing somebody arrogant. Today, the heroes are often proud and vain, reflecting the general attitude that has changed in that direction over the decades. Now the icons of the entertainment world are the arrogant, the smug, the aggressive, the abusers.

Pride has its roots in a sense or feeling of strength, wealth, prosperity, or accomplishment. Sometimes these things are imagined, and sometimes they are real, but whatever the case, misplaced confidence in self arises, producing a "better than" feeling. The perverted comparison emerges.

There is nothing wrong with having confidence in one's ability to perform something. However, an ability to do something does not make a person intrinsically better than another. All the individual has done is to develop a skill that he already had a latent ability to perform. In the eyes of God, that talent does not make one better than another. Skill is good, even great. We should strive to develop them but always understanding that they do not intrinsically equate with "better than." If we fail to understand this, our comparisons are on their way to becoming perverted.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

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