

# The 7 Deadly Sins

Greed  
Lust  
Gluttony  
**Lesson Four: Pride**  
Envy  
Anger  
Laziness

## Introduction

We recognize that every sin is deadly because every sin we commit is a violation of God's law. With every sin we become lawbreakers, thus falling short of the glory of God. But throughout the history of the Christian Church these deadly sins have been recognized as being especially insidious. They are all too common and all too easy to fall into. They are "besetting sins," that is they can easily entrap and entangle us in an attitude or a lifestyle that is very hard to change.

Today's deadly sin is *pride*. It is a common evil that lurks in every human heart, and it rears its head in many sinister, all-too-common ways.

## Pride—The heart of sin

Jesus said that the greatest commandment is to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and the second greatest commandment is to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. This love for God and neighbor is the perfect fulfillment of the law.

In contrast to this perfect love stands human pride. Our own ego puts self ahead of God and ahead of our neighbor. Augustine of Hippo described the nature of sin as "*Homo incurvatus in se*" (Man turned inward toward himself). He described a life lived inwardly and selfishly, as opposed to a life lived outwardly for God and for others. Self-gratification driven by pride is at the heart of every sin.

Author James Clear observes that there are many things that can drive human behavior. He lists:

- Safety: Does it provide peace of mind or reduce risk?
- Sex: Does it help them find love or make love?
- Convenience: Does it save time or energy?
- Social norms: Does it help them get along with others?
- Status: Does it improve their standing or help them gain approval?

What is the common denominator in all of these drivers? What is missing?

Many problems result from low self-esteem and self-loathing. Agree or disagree: We human beings need to learn to love ourselves.

## Recognize the pride in your heart

We are inherently arrogant. Is there any way you can answer "Yes" to the question, "Are you humble?" Explain.

Our sinful pride is rebellion against God.

**Proverbs 16:18** Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.

**Psalms 10:4-6** In his pride the wicked does not seek him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God. His ways are always prosperous; he is haughty and your laws are far from him; he sneers at all his enemies. He says to himself, "Nothing will shake me; I'll always be happy and never have trouble."

This is very foolish because our whole life and existence depend upon God, his mercy and his blessing.

**Acts 17:28** "For in him we live and move and have our being." (Paul quotes the Cretan philosopher Epimenides.)

## Consider the source

**1 Corinthians 4:7** For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?

## Boast in the Lord

**Galatians 6:14** May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

**Jeremiah 9:23,24** This is what the LORD says: "Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight," declares the LORD. (In **2 Corinthians 10:17** Paul quotes this passage from Jeremiah.)

**Mark 8:38** "If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."

## Pride reveals itself in different ways

Some people are naturally extroverted, others more introverted. Is one group more prone to prideful attitudes and actions than the other? How does pride show itself in the personality of an extrovert? In an introvert?

A wise Christian professor once said to his class, "People who are perpetually late are the most arrogant people of all." What did he mean, and what is the basis for his assertion?

Paradoxically, people can become so "humble" that they become proud of their humility! Give examples.

Are you a serious person? Do you take yourself *too seriously*? When is it good to be serious, and when should we "lighten up"?

## Humility—A heart of thankful love

As children of grace, we have much to be thankful for. God did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all. Jesus' humiliation gives us both the gospel power and the gospel motivation to live lives of humility.

### Humility accepts correction and repents

**Lamentations 3:22ff** Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, "The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for him." The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD. It is good for a man to bear the yoke while he is young. Let him sit alone in silence, for the LORD has laid it on him. Let him bury his face in the dust—there may yet be hope. Let him offer his cheek to one who would strike him, and let him be filled with disgrace. For men are not cast off by the Lord forever. Though he brings grief, he will show compassion, so great is his unfailing love. For he does not willingly bring affliction or grief to the children of men.

**Proverbs 9:7-9** "Whoever corrects a mocker invites insult; whoever rebukes a wicked man incurs abuse. Do not rebuke a mocker or he will hate you; rebuke a wise man and he will love you. Instruct a wise man and he will be wiser still; teach a righteous man and he will add to his learning."

**Psalms 51:17** The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

**Isaiah 66:2** "This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word."

**1 Timothy 1:15** Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst.

### Humility suppresses the sinful nature and lets its light shine

Christians strive to suppress prideful attitudes and actions, putting Christian love and service into practice.

**Job 42:6** "Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes."

**Romans 12:3,4,16** For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

**1 Peter 3:1-7** Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful. They were submissive to their own husbands, like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear.

Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

**Matthew 20:26-28** Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave - just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

### **Avoid false humility**

Humility is not self-deprecation. Don't despise the gifts that God has given you. Don't downplay your strengths. Acknowledge your strengths, give glory to God for them, then use your gifts to serve others with all the vigor and ability that God gives you. If someone compliments you, say "Thank you!" and receive others' praise gracefully.

**Romans 12:6-8** We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

### **Consider others better than yourselves**

Humility is celebrating others' accomplishments rather than magnifying our own. We are thankful for others, we give praise and credit to those who have served faithfully, and we give all praise and glory to God.

**Philippians 2:3-8:** Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus, who, being in very nature God did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!

## **For deeper consideration**

In what areas of your life do you find yourself struggling especially with pride? Reflect upon these areas where sinful pride has you in its grip. How can you learn and practice humility in these areas?

Identify how pride shows itself in each of the following circumstances . . .

- An athlete displays ribbons and trophies from his or her sporting accomplishments.
- Fans cheer for their favorite team by shouting, "We're Number One!"
- An employee puts in extra time to do the very best job possible, reviewing and reexamining the work for mistakes.
- People at a gathering sing "I'm Proud to Be an American," by Lee Greenwood.
- Parents beam as their child walks across the stage to receive an award.
- A person is embarrassed to drive an old beater car.
- A Christian wears their faith on their sleeve, letting their light shine, and pointing people to Jesus.
- One friend relates to another how he took extra time to help an elderly couple put groceries into their car.

- A woman refuses to appear in public without her makeup on.
- A person is consistently late for appointments and meetings.
- When tasks need to be completed in a volunteer organization, people say, “I don’t have time to help,” “I don’t do manual labor,” or “I want to be asked before I’ll volunteer.”

Which of the examples above demonstrate sinful pride at work? How? In which cases is the pride or boasting wholesome? What is the difference?