

Of all my character traits, my **Pride** is the most twisted and senseless. For some strange reason, I hate to see it in other people, but I am always building it up in myself.

I am offended by an arrogant person, but then I won't admit when I have made a mistake.

I get frustrated with someone who won't admit they are wrong, but then I persuade myself that my own wrongful actions are "justified".

I let people know how good I am at something, but then I get upset when someone else brags about themselves!

After watching my pride cripple or destroy so many relationships, you would think I would have overcome it by now. But even though I hate my pride more than anything, it doesn't make it any easier to admit when I am wrong.

There is something so persuasive about my pride that it can prevent me from seeing who I really am. So I have always wondered . . . if I can't even see the truth about myself, then what else does my pride prevent me from seeing?

## PRIDE (2 pages)

To value how we feel about ourselves more than we value the truth.

Regardless of whether we think highly of ourselves or not, pride happens any time we twist or deny reality to build ourselves up or defend our self-image. It is a form of self-deception that happens in such small steps that we don't even realize it is leading us further from recognizing the truth.

Pride builds up our self worth for the moment, but the longterm consequences of denying the truth can be devastating. Each minor self-deception creates a distorted picture of our lives that is less true than the picture before it. Eventually, these minor self-deceptions can build on each other to the point where the only things that seem true to us are the things that are false.

Prideful **decisions** are conscious choices we make to twist or deny the truth whenever we don't like how the truth would make us feel. We are aware of these prideful decisions as we are making them, but once we have decided to believe what is false, it further distorts our picture of life. Prideful decisions can be as obvious as justifying something we did that was hurtful, or as subtle as believing that our needs or desires are more important than someone else's.

Prideful **attitudes**, on the other hand, are something we are not usually aware of because they are formed by our prideful decisions. We are only aware that we are deceiving ourselves as we make a prideful *decision*. After that, we become self-deceived and our attitude drifts further

from the truth. That's why we can always see stubborn, arrogant, selfish or controlling attitudes in other people, but we have such a hard time seeing these things in ourselves.

Our subconscious, prideful **attitudes** become increasingly deceived with every prideful **decision** we make to twist or deny the truth about ourselves.

God loves us and wants us to know Him, but He is the God of truth. If we choose to build up our self worth at the expense of the truth, we put ourselves in opposition to Him.

**"...for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble."** (1 Peter 5:5b)

The last thing I want is to be opposed to my Creator. But if I am so blissfully unaware of the prideful attitudes that keep me from knowing Him, then I could be opposed to Him without even knowing it!

Fortunately, if God is anything like the Bible describes Him, then all He wants is for us to take a few steps in His direction so we will recognize Him when He reaches out to us. It's a pretty basic concept, actually. If we are looking for the God of truth, we aren't going to find Him if our desire to feel good about ourselves overrides our desire to see ourselves as we really are.

This doesn't mean God wants us to feel badly about ourselves. He wants us to feel better about ourselves than we could imagine – just never at the expense of the truth.

**"Draw near to God and He will draw near to you...Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you."** (James 4:8+10)