

Pride, Spiritual Arrogance & Judgmentalism

(An Every-Verse Method study)

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(All Bible quotes from the NASB, unless otherwise noted)

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Of all the sermons I've heard since I began attending Evangelical churches in 1990, there are few that I remember. However, there was one sermon I will never forget. It was the summer of 1993, and a pastor at Christ Community Church in Franklin, Tennessee gave a sermon on the sin of pride. I remember this sermon for two reasons: Number one, I probably learned more in that sermon than in any other, because I had never seriously considered the negative effects of pride on our lives. Number two, and more important, it was the only sermon on the negative effects of pride that I've ever heard, even though I've listened to over 1,000 sermons in my life. Is the sin of pride so insignificant that it only deserves to be the focus of one in every 1,000 sermons? Let's take a look at all the Bible verses that instruct us on the matter and see just how significant the sin of pride is in God's eyes.

Proverbs 6:16-19, "There are six things which the Lord hates, yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that run rapidly to evil, a false witness who utters lies, and one who spreads strife among brothers."

Context: Unlike most of the books in the Bible, the book of Proverbs has no context. Its verses contain general wisdom which is meant to apply to everybody.

Analysis: These are not the only things that the Lord hates, but pride is first among those listed here.

Proverbs 8:13, “The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; pride and arrogance and the evil way, and the perverted mouth, I hate.”

Analysis: Pride and arrogance are the foundation for numerous evil acts. Jesus even said to His disciples that “an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering service to God (**John 16:2**).” Those who persecuted Christians were arrogant in their beliefs and failed to examine whether or not their beliefs and actions were appropriate. Likewise, much of our sin is also the result of arrogance and failure to re-evaluate our ways.

Proverbs 11:2, “When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.”

Analysis: Those who are proud in their knowledge are closed-minded and are often proven wrong later. Those who are humble keep their minds open and learn the truth.

Also, we are often proud as the result of our circumstances, such as having a prestigious job title, making a lot of money, or having a beautiful physical appearance. Our pride turns to disgrace when we lose these things or fail to obtain them in the first place. When we possess biblical humility, on the other hand, we realize that all people are of equal value in God’s eyes, regardless of their circumstances. So we become free of having our self-worth determined by these ever-changing events. Biblical humility prevents us from being too proud to associate with the beggars, while it frees us from being too ashamed to associate with those whom society deems as elite.

Proverbs 13:10, “Through presumption comes nothing but strife, but with those who receive counsel is wisdom.”

Analysis: Just like we saw in verse 11:2, know-it-alls create trouble, but those who are willing to listen to others gain useful knowledge.

Proverbs 16:5, “Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord; assuredly, he will not be unpunished.”

Analysis: This proverb flies in the face of what our culture teaches us today. We teach children to be proud in order to counter any feelings they may have of inferiority, when we should teach them biblical humility. Meanwhile, many of us Christians believe we are so much better than those who do not live our version of the Christian lifestyle.

Proverbs 16:18, “Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling.”

Analysis: Those who think they are unbeatable invariably get beat.

Proverbs 21:4, “Haughty eyes and a proud heart, the lamp of the wicked, is sin.”

Analysis: This verse couldn't be any more clear—pride is sin. Of course, I must clarify that there are several definitions of *pride*. Webster's defines *pride* as “**1** a) an unduly high opinion of oneself; exaggerated self-esteem; conceit b) haughty behavior resulting from this; arrogance. **2** proper respect for oneself; sense of one's own dignity and worth; self-respect. **3** delight or satisfaction in one's own or another's achievements, in associations, etc.”. The Bible opposes both the first and third definitions. The second definition is acceptable, however, because we are allowed to feel good about ourselves. But we are prohibited from feeling that we are better than others because of our actions, possessions, children, or any other reason.

Proverbs 27:1-2, “Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth. Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips.”

Analysis: Boasting is simply a verbal expression of pride. Boasting about past or anticipated success has become more common in recent decades, whether it be in professional sports, music, or everyday life. It's seen by many Americans as a cool thing to do. Yet, when we exalt ourselves above others in this manner, we earn their resentment, thereby creating divisions among people rather than unity.

Isaiah 2:11, “The proud look of a man will be abased, and the loftiness of man will be humbled, and the Lord alone will be exalted in that day.”

Isaiah 2:12, “For the Lord of hosts will have a day of reckoning against everyone who is proud and lofty and against everyone who is lifted up that he may be abased.”

Isaiah, 2:17, “The pride of man will be humbled, and the loftiness of men will be abased, and the Lord alone will be exalted in that day.”

Context: Chapter 2 of Isaiah prophesies the Judgment Day of the Lord.

Analysis: Since Isaiah was a prophet, he usually focused upon the nation as a whole rather than upon individuals. These three verses predict that God will have a Judgment Day for Judah in which the proud will no longer have any reason to be proud. That prophecy of Judgment Day became reality when Judah fell to Babylon in 586 B.C.

Isaiah 3:16-17, “Moreover, the Lord said, ‘Because the daughters of Zion are proud and walk with heads held high and seductive eyes, and go along with mincing steps, and tinkle the bangles on their feet; therefore, the Lord will afflict the scalp of the daughters of Zion with scabs, and the Lord will make their foreheads bare.’”

Context: Isaiah prophesies against the women of Judah.

Analysis: How many times have we heard that confidence is the number one trait to which members of the opposite sex are attracted? Apparently, people have not changed one bit in over 2,500 years. These young women of Israel were full of pride and used it to seduce men. Even though we may find pride attractive, God finds it repulsive.

Isaiah 5:15, “So the common man will be humbled, and the man of importance abased.”

Context: Chapter 5 contains various woes to evil-doers.

Analysis: There are many examples in the Bible of proud kings whom God opposes; but here in this verse, God opposes the pride of the common man as well.

Isaiah 5:21, “Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight.”

Analysis: This is one of the most convicting verses for me, personally. If I write something that I think is brilliant, I tend to think that I'm pretty smart.

When we have an understanding which others lack, it's easy to think that we are wiser than they are. However, the biblical mandate is that we remain modest in our evaluation of our own intelligence. If we maintain a biblical focus and achieve a biblical level of intellectual modesty, we will never find ourselves insulting or talking down to others who disagree with us. Rather, we will "be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition [2 Timothy 2:24-25]."

Isaiah 13:11, "I will also put an end to the arrogance of the proud and abase the haughtiness of the ruthless."

Context: Here, God says He will bring down Babylon as well. This prophecy was fulfilled when King Cyrus of Persia conquered Babylon in 539 B.C.

Analysis: Notice that the "ruthless" are described as "haughty." The mean-spirited nature of the ruthless is rooted in pride. They believe that the oppressed deserve to suffer more than the oppressors, and they desire to be like God by inflicting judgment on those whom they've judge to be less worthy.

Ezekiel 16:49, "Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had arrogance, abundant food, and careless ease, but she did not help the poor and the needy."

Context: Chapter 16 is a prophetic allegory in which Jerusalem is portrayed as an unfaithful woman.

Analysis: If there's a verse in the Bible that convicts us where we are today, it's this one. Many of us Christians in America are arrogant and live with careless ease. Yet we often neglect the physical needs of the poor, because we blame them for their poverty, and we focus our money and energy only on evangelism.

Obadiah 1:3, "The arrogance of your heart has deceived you, you who live in the clefts of the rock, in the loftiness of your dwelling place, who say in your heart, 'Who will bring me down to earth?'"

Context: Obadiah prophecies against Israel's enemy, Edom, who delighted in the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.

Analysis: This verse addresses a nation of people who thought themselves clever for living in places that they believed to be out danger's reach. In recent times, we Americans, accustomed to safety and success over the past century, believe that we are assured future security as well. Therefore, we live for pleasure on earth rather than for God's purposes.

Malachi 4:1, “For behold, the day is coming, burning like a furnace; and all the arrogant and evil-doer will be chaff; and the day that is coming will set them ablaze,” says the Lord of hosts, ‘so that it will leave them neither root nor branch.’”

Context: The book of Malachi prophecies against the behavior of the Jews in the decades after their return from the Babylonian exile. Much of the bad behavior that caused the first fall of Jerusalem had returned, so God prophesied that judgment would come again. But this time, the Messiah would come first.

Analysis: The arrogant get first billing here, ahead of the evil-doer. When Jesus came several centuries later, warnings to the arrogant were a top priority for Him, too.

Matthew 6:1, “Beware of practicing your righteousness before men in order to be noticed by them; otherwise you will have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.”

Context: This verse is from the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus follows this verse with three examples supporting this statement: examples of people giving money, praying, and fasting, while hoping that others take notice.

Analysis: While some of the Old Testament verses addressed the pride of a nation, Jesus' entire ministry focused upon individuals. At this point in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gives examples of pride rather than simply preaching against pride itself. As I stated in the *Why Use the Every-Verse Method*, Jesus was not the law-giver. He is not creating new laws here in this sermon. Rather, Jesus is applying the Old Testament anti-pride verses to everyday living.

Jesus' message here is that we should never hope to impress others with our service to God. While the Pharisees may have gone to extremes in order to be seen by

others, we must be mindful of our motives even when our showing off is difficult for others to identify.

Matthew 7:1-3, “Do not judge lest you be judged. For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. And why do you look at the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?”

Context: This quote is also from the Sermon on the Mount.

Analysis: This quote from Jesus is both well-known and controversial. It in no way prohibits Christians from judging which actions are right and which are wrong. If we were unable to judge actions, we would be unable to control our conduct. This quote is about judging people.

Unfortunately, many Christians take this verse to mean that it’s okay to judge people, as long as we don’t sin ourselves. We fail to realize that Jesus’ primary focus in the Sermon on the Mount is on the immeasurable sins of the heart, like hatred, lust, greed, and pride. While the Pharisees failed at these, they thought their sins were minimal in comparison to others, because they succeeded in measurable things like tithing and fasting. Likewise, we Christians today fail at the immeasurable matters of the heart while successfully following measurable rules. Therefore, when we consider this quote from Jesus, we should not give ourselves the benefit of the doubt and assume that our sins are minimal in comparison to others. Instead, we should refrain from judging others altogether, because our immeasurable sins may be even worse than those we judge.

Judgmentalism directly opposes the Christian way of life, because judgmentalism is the opposite of forgiveness. When a person sins, they sin against one of three entities: they sin against you or someone you care about, they sin against people you don’t know or care about, or they sin against God. When a person sins against us, what are we Christians to do? Forgive them. Every Christian knows that! But when a person sins against others, or especially, when a person sins against God, what do most of us Evangelical Christians do? We damn the sinner in our hearts by passing judgment upon them. If we are to forgive those who sin against us, are we not to forgive those who sin against others or who sin against God? A lot of Christians are willing to forgive those

who harm them, but feel it is their duty to inflict some sort of verbal wrath upon those who sin against God. There's no command in the Bible that we are to carry out God's judgment against the infidels. God will be the judge in due time. Our role is not to be the judge, but to forgive others of their sins, since we are also sinful and lack God's authority to pass judgment.

For an example of an appalling display of mass judgmentalism among conservative Christians, let's look back to the 1990's when a contemporary Christian singer committed adultery. Did conservative Christians forgive him? Hardly. They trashed his music and insisted that he be banned from the airwaves. To them, this man's entire life's work had become worthless, because they deemed *him* to be worthless. There was nothing wrong with his music. It was not as though his song lyrics described how much fun adultery is. Nonetheless, many conservative Christians argued that the singer had become a bad role model for other Christians, so they had to destroy his music to demonstrate their disapproval of his action. Had conservative Christians behaved in a Christ-like manner, they would have acknowledged their disapproval of adultery; but then, out of their faith in Christ, they would have chosen to forgive the singer and keep his music as a demonstration of forgiveness.

When somebody sins, we have only two choices: judge or forgive. The first is the way of the devil and the Pharisees. The other is the way of Christ.

Luke 18:9-14, “And He also told this parable to certain ones who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt: ‘Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee, and the other a tax-gatherer. The Pharisee stood and was praying thus to himself, ‘God I thank Thee that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax-gatherer. I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.’” But the tax-gatherer, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me the sinner!’” I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, but he who humbles himself shall be exalted.’”

Context: This section of Luke lists various events and sayings from Jesus' life that are not necessarily listed in chronological order. No context is provided other than what we read in verse 9.

Analysis: We're all sinners, yet when someone commits a sin that we believe is worse than our own, our tendency is to despise them. It has become so commonplace for Christians to despise politicians, celebrities, criminals, party-goers, promiscuous people, etc., that we are infamous, even among non-Christians, for our arrogance and judgmentalism.

Let's consider how this might look from God's perspective. God is perfect; we are sinful. God commits zero sins during a person's lifetime; a given Christian will commit thousands of sins. During that same period of time, a non-Christian living the wild life might commit a few thousand more sins than the Christian will. Let's say the Christian commits 160,000 sins and the non-Christian commits 180,000. How does that compare to the zero sins that God commits? Isn't there a much greater difference between zero and 160,000 than there is between 160,000 and 180,000? From God's perspective, there's little difference between the light sinners and the heavy sinners. They are both at the opposite end of the sin spectrum from God. God is willing to forgive either one through Christ. Yet, many of us Christians look upon those whom we think are worse sinners than ourselves with contempt, rather than with understanding that, from God's perspective, we differ little from them.

Also supporting this point is another parable found in chapter 18 (verses 21-35), but this time it's in the book of Matthew. In it, a servant is forgiven a huge debt by a King, but then refuses to forgive someone else for a much smaller debt. Most people understand that the King in Matthew 18 represents God, the servant whose debts he forgives represents us, and the fellow servant denied forgiveness by the first represents those we are unwilling to forgive. The great debt that the King forgives represents the great chasm between God's perfection and our multitude of sins, which I just mentioned. The small debt that the first servant refuses to forgive represents the small difference between our sin and the sin of those we see as being worse sinners than ourselves. What many of us fail to realize is that the inability to forgive another person is the direct result of our pride over our own supposedly superior righteousness. If we realize that our debts

(sins) are similar in size to the debts (sins) of those we despise for their sins, then our pride over our own righteousness is eliminated and we are better able to forgive others.

Many Christians mistakenly look at the parable from Luke 18 (quoted above) as nothing more than an invitation to admit that we are sinners. We think that we differ from the Pharisee in this story, because he failed to realize that he was a sinner and we realize that we are. Ask almost any Evangelical Christian if they are sinful, and they will reply with an emphatic, “Yes.” They’re well aware of this parable and other Bible verses telling us that everybody, except Jesus, is sinful. Sadly, this admission of sinfulness is nothing more than lip service for any Christian who looks upon supposedly more sinful people with loathing. The first verse in this quote, verse 9, tells us this that this parable is directed toward those who see themselves as more righteous than others, and who look upon seemingly less-righteous people with contempt. This parable instructs us to not only admit that we’re sinners, but also to douse our pride when tempted to compare our own righteousness with the righteousness of others.

John 9:39-41, “And Jesus said, ‘For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see; and that those who see may become blind.’ Those of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these things, and said to Him, ‘We are not blind too, are we?’ Jesus said to them, ‘If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, “We see,” your sin remains.’”

Context: All of John, chapter 9, tells the story of Jesus healing a man who had been born blind. The Pharisees were critical of Jesus for doing this on the Sabbath day.

Analysis: Jesus’ response here is more than just a clever comeback. Had the Pharisees been humble in their knowledge of righteousness, they would have refrained from passing judgment on Jesus for healing this man on the Sabbath day. Ironically, the Pharisees’ judgmentalism, born out of arrogance over their spiritual knowledge, invited God’s judgment in return. Jesus denied forgiveness for the sins of these Pharisees, because they judged Him as a result of their arrogant belief that they had perfect spiritual knowledge.

Acts 7:51-52, “You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did. Which one of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who previously announced the coming of the Righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become...”

Context: Stephen, the first Christian martyr, speaks the word of God to the Sanhedrin (the Jewish court) after being brought to them by opponents of Christianity. After these words, the Sanhedrin stoned him to death under the supervision of Saul, who would later become the Apostle Paul.

Analysis: The term “stiff-necked” means *stubborn*. When we are stubborn, we are unwilling to consider the counsel of others, because we arrogantly believe that our way is the only way. Stephen points out to the Sanhedrin, many of whom were Pharisees, that they are arrogant, just like their fathers who killed the prophets, and he implies that this arrogance led them to kill Jesus.

Romans 2:1-3, “Therefore, you are without excuse, every man of you who passes judgment, for in that you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things. And do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment upon those who practice such things and do so yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God?”

Context: In the last half of chapter 1, the Apostle Paul writes of the many sins of the Gentiles who had not been exposed to the Gospel of Christ. Paul begins chapter two with a warning to the early Christians not to be arrogant toward those who did not live as wholesome a life as they did. We do not know exactly what kind of sins Paul addresses here; therefore, this quote a bit vague.

Analysis: Unfortunately, many Christians use this verse to support their judgmentalism in situations where the person they judge commits a sin that they do not. We have already learned, however, that the roots of sin are intentions of the heart, such as pride, greed, and hatred, so even if a person commits a sin that outwardly appears different from our own, their sin results from the same evil intentions that reside in our

hearts, as well. For example, a man may be promiscuous, because his sexual conquests boost his pride. Meanwhile, a Christian may be judgmental, because looking down on others boosts his pride. Both of these men have the same root sin of pride in their hearts. But this pride manifests itself in different ways for each man. Therefore, since our differing sins share the same root, we are never free to pass judgment on those whose sins appear to differ from our own.

Romans 3:9-10, “What then, are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are under sin; as it is written, ‘There is none righteous, not even one...’”

Context: Paul uses the issue of judgmentalism in the church to set up an explanation of how we are saved from God’s wrath by justification through faith in Christ.

Analysis: Just as Jews were no better than Greeks, because both were sinful, we Christians are no better than non-Christians because both groups are sinful. The only difference is that we are justified through faith in Christ and, therefore, forgiven.

Romans 3:27, “Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith.”

Context: Same as above

Analysis: Since we are no better than others in God’s eyes, we have no reason to boast.

Romans 12:3, “For through the grace given to me, I say to every man among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.”

Context: Paul goes on to say that each person within the church has his own role or skill that is of value to God. Apparently, some Christians were claiming that certain spiritual gifts were of greater importance than others.

Analysis: Again, the message to Christians here is that we are all of equal value in God’s eyes, so we are not to determine our self-worth by our God-given abilities, but by the fact that we are children of God.

Romans 12:16, “Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.”

Context: Paul advises the Christians in Rome on how to behave toward each other, as well as toward all people.

Analysis: This verse reinforces Isaiah 5:21, in that we should not consider ourselves to be smarter than others. It encourages us to associate with people in all situations, and begins by telling us to regard all people equally.

1 Corinthians 4:3-5, “But to me it is a very small thing that I should be examined by you, or by any human court; in fact, I do not even examine myself. I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord. Therefore, do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men’s hearts; and then each man’s praise will come to him from God.”

Context: In chapter 4, Paul writes about what it means to be an Apostle of Christ.

Analysis: Paul begins by stating that he has little concern for how other Christians judge him and that he doesn’t even judge himself. He leaves the judgment to God, who knows what’s in our hearts more than we do.

1 Corinthians 5:12, “For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within the church? But those who are outside, God judges.”

Context: Paul instructs the Corinthians to temporarily stop associating with a fellow Christian in order to discipline him for having an ongoing sexual relationship with his step-mother.

Analysis: At first glance, this verse appears to give Christians the right to judge others inside the church. This judgment of which Paul writes, however, is the judging of a deed as sinful and the determination of a method of discipline. Paul is not passing

judgment on this man by calling him evil or non-Christian. He is only passing judgment on the deed.

2 Corinthians 2:6-7, “Sufficient for such a one is this punishment which was inflicted by the majority, so that on the contrary you should rather forgive and comfort him, lest somehow such a one be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow.”

Context: The person discussed here may be the same as the one who sinned in I Corinthians 5.

Analysis: Even if this is not the same man, we see that Paul recommends punishment followed by forgiveness as the antidote for major sins. Paul does not recommend that Christians judge the person and damn him in their hearts for years to come, like many Christians do today.

1 Corinthians 8:1, “Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies.”

Context: As we discussed in the *Alcohol* chapter, Paul addresses disputes and dangers involving the eating of meat that had been sacrificed to Roman gods.

Analysis: This verse is further proof that spiritual knowledge often leads to the sin of arrogance.

Galatians 5:26, “Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.”

Context: Paul encourages the Galatians to be led by the Holy Spirit in their behavior.

Analysis: When pride and arrogance get the best of us, conflict within the church results.

Galatians 6:1-4, “Brethren even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another’s burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But let each one

examine his own work, and then he will have reason for boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in regard to another.”

Context: Paul gives a few more instructions as he closes out the letter.

Analysis: In the first sentence, Paul requires that Christians correct other Christians in gentleness, knowing that they, too, are susceptible to succumbing to temptation. This command is overlooked by many conservative Christians today, who address the sins of others with anger and judgmentalism. The gentleness of which Paul speaks comes from humility in knowing one’s own sinful heart. It is only out of arrogance that we harshly criticize others for their sins.

The last sentence of this quote provides us with the one exception in which pride is allowed, and that’s when we compare ourselves to our former selves. If your relationship with God and others has improved over the years, you are entitled to be proud of this accomplishment, as long as you compare it to the behavior of your former self and not to the accomplishments of others. This allowance of pride is similar to the 2nd definition of *pride* given in Webster’s.

Philippians 2:3-4, “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.”

Context: Paul encourages the Philippians to be like Christ by looking out for the interests of others.

Analysis: This quote is alternate wording for The Greatest Commandment of “Love your neighbor as yourself.” To do that, we must be humble. If we think of ourselves as better than others, we then believe our interests to be more important than the interests of others, and we end up serving only ourselves.

James 2:13, “For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.”

Context: This is the last verse of a discourse opposing favoritism. The recipients of this letter had been neglecting the poor among them, while they showered the wealthy with attention.

Analysis: When we judge a person of high social status to be more deserving of attention than someone of low social status, we are guilty of judgmentalism. When we seek the company of people with high social status over those with low social status, we are guilty of pride, because we often do such things in an attempt to elevate our own social status so that others will think highly of us.

Notice that the phrase, “mercy triumphs over judgment,” is similar to my quote from the *Greed & Oppression* study, which says, “when people are in need...fairness fails and mercy prevails.” When we judge people to be unworthy of assistance in the name of fairness, we practice judgmentalism. Those of us who do so despise mercy (mercy is never fair) and oppose God.

James 3:13-14, “Who among you is wise in understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth.”

Context: James encourages believers to obey Godly wisdom.

Analysis: Notice the contrast between “gentleness” and being “arrogant.” Wise Christians share their wisdom in a spirit of gentleness. Those who speak from selfish ambition are harsh, critical, and arrogant.

James 4:6, “But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, ‘God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.’”

James 4:10, “Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.”

James 4:11-12, “Do not speak against one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother, or judges his brother, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law, but a judge of it. There is only one lawgiver and judge, the One who is able to save and destroy; but who are you to judge your neighbor?”

Context: James encourages the recipients of this letter to put an end to the fighting and quarrelling among them, which resulted from their own selfish desires.

Analysis: I have to admit that I don't quite know what it means to judge the law. But I do know that this verse provides us even more biblical opposition to judgmentalism.

1 Peter 5:5-6 "You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you at the proper time."

Context: In this chapter, Peter gives encouragement to the elders who were overseeing the church. He then advises the young men to obey their elders.

Analysis: The young men here are to be humble in their spiritual knowledge and be subject to the elders who have greater knowledge. However, the elders are instructed to be humble, as well. For God to be "opposed to the proud" is to say that those who are proud in their spiritual knowledge are enemies of God.

1 John 2:16, "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world."

Context: John warns against living by our fleshly desires rather than by living as God desires. The next verse states that the world is passing away, but those who live by God's will live forever.

Analysis: The opposition to pride continues....

We have now reviewed 42 Bible quotes that oppose pride, arrogance, and judgmentalism. The total would be higher if I had included all the forgiveness verses in the Bible, because forgiveness is the opposite of judgmentalism. It is out of our pride that we pass judgment on others. Therefore, it is out of our pride that we fail to forgive, because it's impossible to simultaneously forgive and judge a person, so any Bible verse that promotes forgiveness opposes pride.

Pride and greed are the root sins that lead to almost all other sins. Both of them are, in turn, rooted in selfishness. Out of our pride, we fight, pass judgment, fail to forgive, withhold mercy, cut off other Christians, and fail to help those in need, because

we think that we would do better if we were in their shoes. Greed stands in the way of justice and the support of those in need, while it promotes dishonesty and oppression of the poor.

Pride and greed are the two mega-sins of the Bible. Yet most Evangelical/Fundamentalist churches focus so little energy on steering believers away from them. Instead, many of them focus on preaching man-made rules and beliefs that serve no purpose but to distract Christians from God's will and to shut the door to the kingdom of heaven in peoples' faces.

The Pride of the Pharisees

“You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness to Me; and you are unwilling to come to Me, that you may have life [**John 5:39-40**].”

Again, Jesus speaks to the Pharisees here. Despite their scriptural focus, they failed to see that the Old Testament Scriptures were loaded with verses that prophesied the coming of Jesus. For example, Isaiah prophesied of Him in chapters 7, 9, 11 and 53. Other prophets and the Psalms spoke of Him, as well. The Pharisees really had no excuse for failing to believe in Jesus, since their God-breathed Scriptures contained the verses that foretold His coming.

The Pharisees, however, chose not to see Jesus in these verses. They were unwilling to believe that this man who refused to honor many of their beliefs and practices was the Messiah. They felt that anyone claiming to be the Messiah would have to share their beliefs, because they were certain that their theology was perfectly in line with the Scriptures.

Being convinced that Jesus was not the Messiah, the Pharisees sought to use Scripture against Him, even though they had nothing to work with. When Nicodemus, one of the few Pharisees who believed in Jesus, spoke in His favor, they said to him, “Search and see that no prophet arises out of Galilee [**John 7:52**].” They meant that, upon searching the Scriptures, nobody could find a verse stating that a prophet was to arise out of Galilee. What the Pharisees failed to mention was that no Old Testament verses predicted from which cities any of the prophets were to arise; so, of course, there

could be no verse stating that a prophet was to arise out of Galilee (Isaiah 9:1-7 foretold that a ruler, a “Prince of peace,” would come from Bethlehem, but the Pharisees expected this to be a political ruler, not a heavenly one).

The Pharisees chose to ignore all of the Bible verses that pointed to Jesus as the Messiah, and instead twisted the Scriptures to support what they wanted to continue to believe. They employed the same Bible-based approach to Scripture that many Bible-believing Christians do today.

The Pharisees’ failure to see Jesus in the Scriptures was the result of one great sin in their hearts: pride. They believed that their mastery of the Scriptures gave them perfect knowledge of good and evil; that they had all of the answers, because they had the Scriptures; and that anybody who argued with them was arguing with the Scriptures which supported them.

Likewise, many of us Bible-believing Christians today take the same arrogant approach toward our knowledge of the Scriptures. We believe that having the Bible and knowing it gives us perfect answers to all spiritual questions. We believe that those who disagree with us are opposing God, because the Scriptures show that we are the ones in agreement with Him.

We fail to realize that a perfect understanding of the Scriptures is unattainable, even when we know the Scriptures well. As I stated in *Why Use the Every-Verse Method*, our minds are imperfect to begin with. Add to that the fact that we have to deal with improper translation issues, inexact quotes, unoriginal verses, and an incomplete understanding of context, and it’s easy to see how we can be led astray, even though we base our beliefs on the Bible. While the Every-Verse Method reveals biblical truth to us far more than Bible-based theology does, we must remain humble in our understanding, because we will never be perfect in it. If we are arrogant, then we are guilty of the same pride as the Pharisees.

Pride – the Original Sin

While this reasoning sounds logical to most people, some Fundamentalist Christians believe that we can attain perfect spiritual knowledge through the King James Version of the Bible. They argue that it’s written directly to us and is the Bible’s only

inerrant translation, because it was the first English translation, or because it was commissioned by a God-ordained king.

The flaws in their arguments are that no Bible verses say that the Scriptures address modern-day Christians; the original texts of the Bible were not written in Old English (they were written in Greek and Hebrew), so we have no reason to assume that the first English translation is the best one; and the fact that it was commissioned by a God-ordained king is meaningless, since we Protestants base our beliefs upon the Bible rather than upon the decisions of leaders appointed by men. If we were looking for guidance from a God-ordained king, we would be Roman Catholic, not Protestant, because the pope is the modern world's version of a God-ordained king.

The real reason that some Fundamentalists see the King James Version as the only perfect translation is that they want to have and claim perfect knowledge of the Scriptures. Even Christians who read other translations choose to see their Bibles as a perfect place to go where God's messages are plain, simple, and easy to understand without further study.

This longing for perfect knowledge can be traced back to the earliest chapters of the Bible. In Genesis, chapter 3, the serpent enticed Adam and Eve to eat the forbidden fruit by telling them that they would "be like God, knowing good and evil." He did not say that they would "be like God, able to create their own universe," or that they would "be like God, having a perfect understanding of how trees grow." Adam and Eve were not tempted to be like God in every way, but only in that they would possess God's perfect knowledge of good and evil. Why did they want this equality with God? Pride! Their prideful desire for perfect knowledge of good and evil was the original sin—the sin that caused the fall of mankind.

Do Christians today long for perfect knowledge of good and evil for the same reason? Of course we do. When we pass judgment upon those who have theological disagreements with us or who live the Christian life differently, we do so out of the arrogant belief that we have God's perfect spiritual knowledge. We fail to understand that only God has perfect knowledge of good and evil, only God has the right to pass judgment on others, and that the forbidden fruit of the Garden of Eden is still forbidden.

When we act as though we can have His perfect knowledge, we commit the original sin of pride all over again.

Who killed Jesus?

Most of us have been brought up to believe that the Jews killed Jesus. To say the Jews killed Jesus is like saying that the Americans elected Barack Obama president in 2008. The majority of American voters did indeed vote for him, but some voted for his opponent, while others did not vote at all. Likewise, those who saw to it that Jesus was killed were indeed Jews, but Jesus' followers during His ministry were also Jews, while other Jews probably never heard of Him. Why so many Jews in the story? Because Jesus' crucifixion took place in Judea. Everyone there was Jewish, except for some Romans keeping watch (Judea was under control of the Roman Empire at that time).

It wasn't the Jews who rejected and killed Jesus. It was the proud! The Pharisees and Sadducees, the arrogant leaders of the conservative religious establishment, saw to it that He was put to death. To conclude that the Jews killed Jesus is to view the situation from a racist or nationalist perspective, as most of us tend to do. That's not how God sees the world. He judges our individual hearts rather than our races or nations. And to God, those with proud hearts are Christ's crucifiers.

It was out of the Pharisees' arrogant belief in their own perfect spiritual knowledge that they hated Jesus for teaching biblical truth that differed from their traditional beliefs. Why did they believe their spiritual knowledge was perfect? Because, as a result of their pride, they desired to be on the same level as God, just like Adam and Eve did. The fall of mankind and the crucifixion of Jesus were the result of the same sin: the prideful desire for perfect spiritual knowledge. Adam and Eve were seeking it; the Pharisees thought they had already attained it. How many of us Christians today think we have attained it, as well?

If pride is responsible for both the fall of man and the killing of Jesus, what then is the number one worst sin in the Bible? That's right—it's pride! If pride is so bad, shouldn't churches focus on it more than once every one thousand sermons? How can we continue being one-dimensional or preaching man-made religious rules while practicing the Bible's greatest sin?

The Conservative Religious Establishment

The Pharisees' pride was not unique. They were a part of something much larger; something I call the *conservative religious establishment*. The Pharisees and Sadducees were the religious conservatives of their day. Jesus, His disciples, and those who believed in Him were the liberals.

Why do I label the Pharisees as conservatives? Because *Webster's New World College Dictionary, 4th Edition*, defines the word *conservative* as "tending to preserve established traditions or institutions and to resist or oppose any changes in these" (this is the 2nd of six definitions listed). Out of their arrogance, the Pharisees were the epitome of conservatism.

The conservative religious establishment existed not only in the time of the Pharisees, but it has always existed. And it has always been God's greatest enemy, just as it was in Jesus' day. As we look back on the history of the church, we learn of people other than Jesus who tried to promote the truth of God, but were persecuted by the conservative religious establishment. Here are some examples:

Arnold of Brescia urged the church to surrender its property and secular powers. He was burned to death in 1155.

Peter Waldo of France promoted a Bible-focused, back-to-the-simple life movement that appealed to many people. He was excommunicated in the late 1100's. Many of his followers, the Waldenses, were tortured and killed during the Inquisition.

John Wyclif of England opposed papal power and luxury, as well as other non-biblical church doctrines. He faced fierce opposition from the Church, but was too popular for the church to persecute.

John Hus of Bohemia promoted Jesus, rather than the pope, as the head of the church. He was burned at the stake in 1415

Martin Luther, father of the Protestant reformation, was excommunicated from the church, and declared an outlaw, but managed to escape death.

Felix Manz was the first person to receive adult baptism (1526). He was a leader of the Anabaptists, who sought to return to the lifestyles of the Apostles and to separate

the church from the state. He and over 4,000 other Anabaptists were killed by both Lutherans and Roman Catholics.

William Tyndale pioneered the movement to translate the Bible into English so everybody could know it. He was burned at the stake in 1537.

Throughout history, the conservative religious establishment, full of arrogance over its spiritual knowledge, has violently opposed those who introduced the beliefs we hold so dear today. As we look back on these examples, we wonder how the conservative religious establishment could have opposed God's biblical will. Additionally, we are appalled at their persecution of those who promoted it.

If we can look back on history and wonder at the sins of the conservative religious establishment, isn't it likely that Christians in the future will look back on our time and wonder at the sins of today's conservative religious establishment? Surely, we are wrong about some things. The statistical probability of our being correct in all doctrines is extraordinarily low. Since this is the case, how can we be arrogant toward those who disagree with us on theological issues?

We often fail to equate ourselves with the church of the late Middle Ages, which persecuted the martyrs I just listed, because we Christians today lack the political power to put those with differing beliefs to death. However, Jesus showed us in **Matthew 5:21-22** that we are guilty of murdering those with differing beliefs when we have hatred for them in our hearts. He said, "You have heard the ancients were told, 'You shall not commit murder' and 'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.' But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever shall say to His brother 'Raca,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever shall say, 'You fool,' shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell."

In other words, when we hate people, we desire to kill or hurt them. But we choose not to, because we might be imprisoned or sentenced to death as a result. So we do the only thing we can get away with—we call them the worst name we can think of. In God's eyes, this hatred and slander that we project toward those with differing theologies is as evil as the murder of the reformers by the church of the late Middle Ages.

What names do we call those Christians who differ from us in their views or lifestyles? The most common names sound rather mild, such as *non-Christian* or

unsaved. A traditional creation enforcement web site once referred to a pastor with a differing view as an *enemy of the cross*.

Regardless of the term used, the purpose of its use is to pronounce damnation on the individual holding the opposing view. By doing so, we seat ourselves on God's throne and pronounce judgment in His place. It's as if we want our theological opponents to go to hell for having different views on such things as creationism, polygamy (Mormons), penance (Roman Catholics), or the Trinity (Jehovah's Witnesses), even though salvation comes by faith in Christ, not by having perfect theological understanding.

Fortunately, it's not our right to send others to hell; it's God's right. Unfortunately, this verbal judgmentalism can lead those with theological differences to doubt their own salvation, and it can ruin their relationship with God. When this happens, Satan succeeds in using our pride to carry out his purposes.

This pharisaic hatred of those with differing beliefs is also directed outside the church. How many times have we heard preachers spew venom at celebrities and politicians? Take the Bill Clinton/Monica Lewinski scandal of the 1990's. Bill Clinton committed adultery and lied about it. But didn't King David, whom the Bible refers to as "the man after God's own heart," also commit adultery and even have the woman's husband killed? King David's sin was worse than that of Bill Clinton, yet conservative Christians embrace King David as a hero and damn Bill Clinton as a villain.

The biblical account of King David's evil deed is one of many examples of how God chooses and loves His people even when they commit major sins. While God did discipline David, He did not reject Him. Some conservative Christians may argue that the celebrities and politicians they attack are not Christians and, therefore, are not God's people. Perhaps, a reminder is needed here: we Christians are to lead people to Christ; and to us, every person is a potential Christian, because we do not know what the future holds. Remember that even Jesus, who had the authority to judge, said that He "did not come to judge the world, but to save the world [**John 12:47**]." Are we to be like Jesus and His Apostles leading people to salvation, or are we to behave like the Pharisees by judging the world?

Modern-Day Pharisees?

If you haven't noticed by now, I've pointed out many similarities between modern-day conservative Christian behavior and the Pharisees of Jesus' time. You may have been brought up to believe that the Pharisees were silly Jews who hated God and had nothing in common with us. If that's the case, I'm sorry to inform you that you were brought up wrong. The sad reality is that no group of Christians in the history of the church has had more in common with the Pharisees than the conservative Evangelical/Fundamentalist church in America today. I'm not saying that everyone who attends these churches is evil. I have known good-hearted, Christ-like believers in every church I've attended, regardless of how pharisaic that church may have been. But the overall vibe of the conservative, Evangelical/Fundamentalist church, nationwide, is that of the Pharisees.

The similarities begin with the Scriptures. The Pharisees were obsessed with the Scriptures, which we now call the Old Testament, just as the Evangelical/Fundamentalist church is obsessed with the entire Bible. This scriptural focus is not a bad thing. What's bad is the arrogant belief that having and knowing the Bible gives us perfect knowledge of good and evil. This arrogance gives way to judgmental hatred every bit as much among us today as it did among the Pharisees in Jesus' time.

The Pharisees read the Scriptures through tradition-colored glasses, filtering its verses through their pre-existing beliefs. In a similar fashion, today's conservative Evangelical/Fundamentalist church uses the Bible-based approach of harping on Scriptures that support what they already believe and ignoring those that don't. The result of their approach is the promotion of man-made doctrines over the biblical will of God.

Despite a strong knowledge of the Scriptures, the Pharisees followed and enforced numerous man-made religious rules which served no good purpose. As we have seen throughout this web site, conservative Evangelical/Fundamentalist churches also promote many man-made rules and beliefs as the law of God. These beliefs distract Christians from doing God's will and drive others away from the church altogether.

Jesus pointed out to the Pharisees that they ignored the weightier matters of Scripture, like mercy, compassion, justice, love, humility, and contentment. Likewise, the conservative Evangelical/Fundamentalist church today is also guilty of ignoring these

most important messages of the Bible, while diverting its congregations' focus to man-made religious rules.

The Pharisees were arrogant and hateful toward those who disagreed with them. Of course, Jesus experienced the full force of this hatred. Others probably experienced it, too. Likewise, many conservative Christians today are arrogant and hateful toward those who disagree with them.

Conservative Evangelicals might argue that their righteousness exceeds that of the Pharisees, because they place a heavy emphasis on evangelism and missions. However, the Pharisees were evangelicals, too! Jesus said to them, in **Matthew 23:15**, "Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, because you travel about on sea and land to make one proselyte ['a single convert' in the NRSV]; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves."

While many Christians behave as though evangelism matters most in Christianity, Jesus let us know that evangelism is useless if we convert people into Pharisee-like Christians full of pride, judgmentalism, and hatred. Don't get me wrong. We are called to promote the great religion of Christianity to the world, but we must take care not to convert new believers into Pharisees.

There is, however, one big difference between the Pharisees and the conservative Evangelical/Fundamentalist church: the church today has the example of the Pharisees as a warning. As the Pharisees looked back to the days of the Old Testament, they read of God's repeated warnings to the Israelites to avoid the worship of other gods. God's wrath fell upon Israel, and later Judah, because they continued to pursue these gods. Since the Pharisees avoided the worship of other gods, they thought they were righteous. Jesus then reminded the Pharisees of the Scriptures they had overlooked, but they refused to listen to Him and missed out on eternal life as a result.

If God's anger burned against the Pharisees, even though they were given no prior example of anyone being punished for their pride over spiritual knowledge, how much angrier might God be at today's pharisaic Christians who do have such an example in the Pharisees?

If Jesus were here today

In **Matthew 5:20**, during the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, “For I say to you, that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and the Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.”

For many years, I figured that the righteousness of all Christians was greater than that of the Pharisees, because we believe in Jesus and the Pharisees did not. That belief changed, however, when I realized that the Pharisees rejected Jesus because they were proud conservatives whose minds were closed to any ideas that did not align with their pre-existing beliefs. If Jesus had come along 1,000 years earlier and been a part of biblical Jewish tradition, the Pharisees would have accepted Him and His teachings, just as they accepted Moses and King David. To believe in Jesus would have been the duty of any good conservative. But since Jesus ministered in the same time and place as the Pharisees, and His teachings were out of alignment with many of their traditional beliefs, belief in Him was a liberal, even radical, move.

Today, on the other hand, belief in Jesus is a safe step into a conservative environment. Even if you grew up outside the Christian faith, once you join it, you become part of a conservative religious establishment which teaches you to embrace traditional beliefs. Those who question these beliefs (even non-biblical ones) are initially counseled to change and are later rejected by other Christians if they fail to agree with conservative theology. Those with liberal theology, therefore, often leave the church. Today, conservatives, not the liberals, are the ones drawn to Christianity—the opposite of how it was in Jesus’ day.

Notice that Jesus did not look to the conservative religious establishment to find disciples, because He knew that most of them would not change. The Pharisees were too arrogant in their mastery of spiritual knowledge to be Jesus’ disciples. Instead, He looked to those who might have been undecided in their beliefs or who pursued sin more than they did the perfect Godly life. He did not recruit those who were pure in their behavior; He recruited those who were humble enough to reconsider their beliefs. If Jesus were here today, the humble would follow Him, not the religious conservatives who believe that they have all the answers.

What, then, would Jesus do after assembling a group of humble disciples who have no part in arrogant Christian conservatism? Most people think He would unleash

verbal attacks on Hollywood and the Democrats while proclaiming the righteousness of the Republican Party and the conservative Protestant Church. That scenario, however, is inconsistent with Jesus' behavior in the Bible. Jesus had no interest in confronting prostitutes, tax collectors, or other well-known sinners, nor did He seek out leaders in an effort to influence political issues. Jesus focused on confronting the arrogant leaders of the conservative religious establishment while showing mercy to the known sinners—an approach that was the very opposite of what the Pharisees expected. Likewise, if Jesus were here today, He would show mercy to known sinners, but would be critical of arrogant church leadership.

How would conservative Christians react if Jesus behaved in this manner today? You guessed it—they would reject Him and find a way to kill Him, just as the conservative religious establishment did when He was here the first time. Not only would the conservative religious establishment reject Jesus today, but they would have done so at nearly any point in the church's history.

Many opponents of Christianity have asked, “If Jesus was the Messiah for the Jews, then how come the Jews did not believe in Him?”

The answer to their question: they rejected Him for the same reason that most Christians would reject Him if He were here today—they were religious conservatives who were closed-minded toward any views other than their traditional beliefs, and they proudly believed that had all of the answers, because they had the Scriptures.

Over the last few years, I have asked some conservative evangelical Christians a test question to see if they would accept or reject Jesus. Here's what I asked: “If Jesus were here today (yes, I know He said He's not coming back in the same human form, but let's pretend for a minute that He intended to come back in human form one more time), and you had heard of His miracles, and you liked His teachings and were beginning to think that this guy just might be Jesus; and then you walked into a restaurant one day and saw Him sitting at a table, having a beer with Paris Hilton, Eminem, and Howard Stern; would you still believe this man to be Jesus?”

I have only received two responses to this question: “Probably not,” and “Of course not!” Some of those who answered, “Of course not!” argued that Jesus would not drink alcohol today. When I pointed out that He drank it when He was here the first time,

they came up with a non-biblical reason why He wouldn't do it today. Others have told me that Jesus would never eat with such sinful people. When I pointed out that Jesus ate with "known sinners" when He was here the first time (Matthew 9:10-13), they replied that He would not eat with people who were as bad as those whom I just mentioned (as if there is a certain degree of badness that's too bad for Jesus' mercy). If Jesus ate with violent, thieving tax-gatherers, as verse 10 describes, He would also eat with the likes of those whose names I mentioned in the question.

How disturbing is it that conservative Christians say they would reject Jesus for doing the very same things that the Bible tells us He did? How many more Christians would reject Jesus if He believed in a 15 billion year old universe, or if He carved a pumpkin for Halloween, or if He voted for a Democrat?

Most important, these responses teach us that the vast majority of us Christians in America today are so conservative that we would reject Jesus, simply because He did not support or adhere to *just one* of our beliefs. To many of us, Jesus could only be Lord if His theology matched ours. These results prove that nothing stands in the way of a solid relationship with Jesus Christ more than pride over one's own knowledge of right and wrong.

Pride – What Do We Do About It?

I wish I could offer you a 12-step program on how to eliminate pride from your character in 30 days, but I can't. The best advice I can give is for you to continually remind yourself that pride is sin #1. It's the reason for the fall of man, as well as the reason that the Pharisees rejected and killed our Lord and Savior. It's the reason the conservative religious establishment rejected and killed the reformers and the prophets, too. Out of our pride, we drive those who disagree with our theologies from the church. Meanwhile, non-Christians who see our self-righteous pride swear to themselves that they will never become Christians. Pride fuels our hatred, judgmentalism, name-calling, fist-fighting, and snobbery. Loneliness is often the result of one person being snubbed by those who believe they are better. Suicide is the result of pride's evil twin—shame.

Remember that pride and greed, both of which are rooted in overall selfishness, are the foundations for all other sins. And remember that God hates sin, because He loves

people. Out of this love, He desires quality of life for all people, and it's our job make His desires reality.