

ACCIDENTAL PHARISEE

WEEK 3: PRIDE



We Have a Very High Opinion of Ourselves

A healthy or positive self-esteem is not a biblical goal. In God's kingdom, it is the servant who is greatest and we are commanded to look out for the interest of others – not our interests.

- One of the Bible's major aims is to correct man's high view of himself. Jesus taught the virtue of humility (Luke 18:14), and the importance of self-denial, rather than self-love (Matthew 16:24).

God's Word	Self Esteem Advocates
<i>Love God & others (Matt 22:37)</i>	<i>Love yourself</i>
<i>Build up others (Heb 10:24,25)</i>	<i>Build your self-esteem</i>
<i>None is righteous (Rom 3:23)</i>	<i>You are good</i>
<i>Heart is deceitful (Jer 17:9)</i>	<i>Believe in yourself</i>
<i>Put others first (Phip 2:1-4)</i>	<i>Put yourself first</i>
<i>Be humble (Rom 12:3)</i>	<i>Think highly of yourself</i>
<i>We are sinners (Rom 3:10-11)</i>	<i>You are of great value</i>
<i>Walk in the Spirit (Gal 5:16)</i>	<i>Do what you want to do</i>
<i>Deny yourself (Matt 16:24-26)</i>	<i>Find yourself</i>
<i>Put confidence in God (Phip 4:13)</i>	<i>Have self-confidence</i>

The ultimate example of humility is Jesus:

³Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” – Philippians 2:3-8 ESV

Humility. We admire it in others, yet we all struggle to live it out in our own lives.

– Author Unknown

The Curse of Comparison

Unfortunately, many of us fail to grasp how dangerous pride is:

¹⁶*There are six things that the Lord hates,
seven that are an abomination to him:
¹⁷haughty eyes, a lying tongue,
and hands that shed innocent blood,
¹⁸a heart that devises wicked plans,
feet that make haste to run to evil,
¹⁹a false witness who breathes out lies,
and one who sows discord among brothers.” – Proverbs 6:16-19*

Haughty eyes, literally “eyes of loftiness”. According to Merriam-Webster, haughty means: “blatantly and disdainfully proud: having or showing an attitude of superiority and contempt for people or things perceived to be inferior.”

When the Bible says someone has haughty eyes, it means that they consider themselves above others.¹ “Haughty eyes and a proud heart, the lamp of the wicked, are sin.” – Proverbs 21:4

“Our spiritual comparisons are incredibly biased. We have an amazing ability to compare things in a way that causes us to come out on top. And when we come out on top, it’s hard not to look down on people who don’t measure up.”

– Larry Osbourne

No one is immune from comparisons:

³³*And they came to Capernaum. And when he was in the house he asked them, ‘What were you discussing on the way?’ ³⁴But they kept silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest. ³⁵And he sat down and called the twelve. And he said to them, ‘If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.’” – Mark 9:33-35*

Possible areas of comparison in the Christian life:

Spiritual disciplines (Luke 18:12)	Bible knowledge (John 5:39)
Giving (Matthew 6:3)	Service (Luke 7:7-10)
Spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:7)	Parenting
Popularity at church / In crowd	Praying publicly (Matthew 6:6)

Pride's Unholy Trinity

To understand how pride sneaks in, we need to recognize its three favorite paths into our lives. Each is toxic enough to kill on its own. Together they make up pride's unholy trinity:

- **Log-eye disease** – easy to explain but hard to overcome.
 - It's our natural tendency to see the speck in someone else's eye while being oblivious to the log in our own eye (Matthew 7:1-5).
 - It's why we see and remember the worst in others while seeing and remembering only the best in ourselves.
- **Self-deception** – most of us have a rather self-inflated view of ourselves. When it comes to evaluating our spiritual scorecard, most of us cheat.
 - Most of us, even if we struggle with self-esteem issues, still have an incredibly high view of ourselves.
 - We judge others by their actions but ourselves by our intentions.
- **Comparison** – the problem with spiritual comparisons is that we can not read hearts. All we see is the outside and we don't know backgrounds.
 - We don't know if someone has come a long way or barely grown.

"Some of the most meticulously obedient folks I've known have also been some of the most prideful."

– Larry Osbourne

Overcoming Pride

Scripture and obedience are the bread and butter of spiritual maturity:

- Obedience is important but it does not **impress** God (Luke 17:7-10):
 - A servant who obeys has done nothing special – he has simply done his job.
 - This doesn't leave much room for pride.
 - Once we comprehend that we've done nothing special, here nothing to boast about.
 - Pride and looking down on others wrecks everything. It's a cancer that spreads until it kills.
- Scripture is supposed to be used like a **mirror**. It's meant to show us who God is, what he wants, and how we measure up (James 1:22-25):
 - Some use it as a flashlight to blind people.

"So why is it that so many of us find pride in superior obedience? I think it's because we misunderstand God's commands. We think of them as difficult and burdensome. We hear sermons and read passages about counting the cost, dying to self, and leaving all behind, and we assume that God's commands are designed to separate those of us who have what it takes to become a true disciple from those who don't."

– Larry Osbourne

- Some use it as binoculars to examine other people's lives.
- Some use it as a prop to show off their knowledge.
- We forget that pride and a lack of love nullifies our knowledge:
 - Biblical knowledge and accurate theology are valuable traits. Right thinking leads to right living.
 - Most of the biblical and doctrinal points that we love to argue about (and take such pride in knowing) are not matters of salvation:
 - They may be important, but they're not essential – they're not damnable heresies.
 - When we use the Bible as a prop, every issue and doctrinal disagreement becomes a flash point, an opportunity to show off our superior knowledge and understanding.
- We will never have a full and complete understanding of all mysteries in the Bible:

"²⁹The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law." – Deuteronomy 29:29 ESV

*"⁸For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD.*

*⁹For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts." – Isaiah 55:8-9 ESV*

Discussion Questions:

1. How would you advise someone who asked you "What can I do to avoid 'log-eye' disease"?
2. Do you think most people are inclined to use the Bible as a mirror, or as a pair of binoculars?