

Upright Woman



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Issues of the Heart: Pride

by Andrea Spradlin



Andrea lives in Milton, FL with her husband, Troy (a SWSBS graduate), where they serve at the Margaret Street COC. Together they labored in Paraguay as missionaries. Now Andrea owns her own business, Más Que Dulces. She holds two degrees from the University of Florida, previously worked as a Director with the American Lung Assoc. and completed the Women's Studies program at the SWSBS.

Proverbs 4:23 says, "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life." As Christians, we face challenges with keeping our hearts "with all diligence." Some of the "issues of life" include pride, anger, self-pity, and lust. Sometimes we struggle to maintain the healthy hearts which God desires us to have.

Proverbs is replete with verses that cover sins of the heart, but one that stands out is verse 5 of chapter 16, "Everyone proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord...." Anytime the Bible says "abomination," it should give us pause and a desire to know what this word really means and how to keep it out of our lives. In this case, it is pride.

Growing up, we learned that we need to have the kind of pride that keeps the chin up and the nose down. Chin-up pride is good. It gives us self-respect, confidence in our abilities, and the knowledge that we are "fearfully and wonderfully made" (Ps 139:14). But we are warned in Romans 12:3 that we are not to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think. Nose-up pride is bad. It is arrogance, haughtiness, and excessive regard for one's self in various aspects of their life. An analogy of the difference between these two kinds of pride is that we need to eat to be healthy, but it's a sin to be a glutton.

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One of the most extreme examples of nose-up pride is the hubris of Pharaoh when he asks, “Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice?” (Exodus 5:2). He wasn’t going to allow God to say what he was or wasn’t going to do. In other words, “God’s not the boss of me!” Many of us have encountered this kind of attitude when we try to teach others about the Lord. But don’t we all have that attitude sometimes?

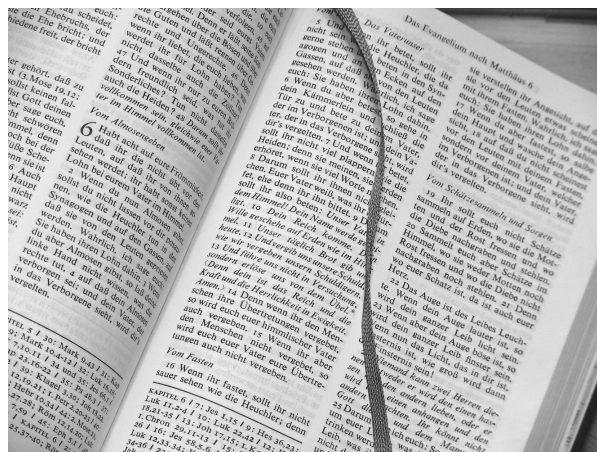
Pride manifests itself in many ways we don’t even realize. It is pride that causes us to think of someone else during the sermon when we need to be making application to ourselves. Pride causes us to justify our sinful behavior with excuses, yet magnify and condemn it in others. Pride causes us to be more concerned about how man sees us, rather than how God sees us. Is our desire to have the glory and praise of men interfering with the glory and praise we should be giving the Lord? Furthermore, do we give ourselves the glory for the successes in our lives, rather than thanking God for His blessings? In a culture that tells us to “DIY”, pride keeps us from reaching out when we struggle or have a need...like asking others for help... or asking God. Likewise, it also keeps us from accepting help when someone reaches out. Many of us have a heart to share and serve, but prideful hearts can keep us from this service. We must not let our pride take away another’s opportunity to serve.

As with any sin of the heart, we can fix the problem of pride by acknowledgment (without excuses), repentance, prayer, and always being in the Word. Have the kind of pride that let’s us know that “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me,” (Phil 4:13).

Issues of the Heart: Anger

by BJ Rollo

Anger has become an epidemic within our society. Road rage, child abuse, angry rhetoric between politicians, parents at sporting events, and many other types of anger pervade our society. As Christians, we must diligently study the scriptures to identify the characteristics of the anger we should avoid, examine our own actions, and provide solutions to correct anger in our lives.



Some believe that all anger is sinful, but this idea simply is not true. Two scriptures that quickly dispel that myth are Mark 3:5 and Ephesians 4:26. In the first scripture, Mark records Jesus’ action as anger; “And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts.” Since Jesus did no sin, we can conclude all anger is not sin. The second scripture indicates anger can result in sin, however it is not necessarily sin, “Be ye angry, and sin not.” Despite the prior passages, we know every form of anger is not approved of God. Ephesians 4:21 and Colossians 3:8 command the Christian to put off anger. Anger often becomes a conduit for sin to hijack our lives.

Anger, derived from *orge* or *orgay*, is a term denoting internal motion or swelling. This Greek term was used of fruit swelling with juice inside as it grew. Just as juice causes the fruit to swell, anger can swell within us and agitate our soul until we burst with violent emotion.

As a mother of four, I have had my share of head-spinning moments in my home. We can all identify with the aggravation of children (do husbands count too??) and the stress of daily activities that require attention or discipline. Often, we allow small issues to become large. These smaller annoyances (remember the juice in the fruit) begin to swell within us. Recently, while in the grocery store, a young mother and father were shopping with their three small children. As they were debating which chips to purchase, the youngest child in the cart was wailing. Their dialogue became curt.

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The aggravation of the crying toddler caused an argument between two spouses over chips! If the mother would have quieted the child, the great chip debacle could have been avoided! How many of us allow simple things to grow into anger in our lives?

Understanding proper perspective through the lens of the scripture will help us not to become angry unnecessarily. Advice from Psalm 37:8, "Cease from anger, and forsake wrath;" should exhort us. Temperance, commanded in 2 Peter 1:6, is defined as holding oneself in. If anger is swelling inside, temperance is critical. We falsely believe releasing anger on someone or something will improve our feelings. Explosions of anger often become guilt after the fact. Publilius Syrus was quoted as saying, "An angry man is angry with himself when he returns to reason." Ecclesiastes 7:9 instructs, "Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry; for anger resteth in the bosom of fools." Don't allow anger to derail your spiritual life!

Issues of the Heart: Self Pity

by Evelyn Bonner

Consider the cursory definition of self-pity - an excessive, self-absorbed unhappiness over one's own troubles. The woman who walks in self pity lives a life as an exclamation of sorrow and distress. This woman often makes exclamation statements such as; "Woe is me!"; "It's all their fault!"; or "I just don't know what I'm going to do!" This attitude of heart leads to a life void of the abundant life Christ came to provide.

**"Keep your heart
with all diligence"**

The proverbial preacher reminds, all who would hear, to "keep your hearts with all diligence; for out of it spring the issues of life." (Prov. 4:23) Jeremiah describes the deceitful nature of the heart in Jeremiah 17:9. The heart can be a source of compassion and at the same time be a shelter for selfishness. A heart concerned excessively or exclusively with self is a deceived heart. No wonder the Spirit of God would say "...to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly..." (Rom. 12:3). Self-pity is an attribute of selfishness.

Thankfully, God provides a thorough definition of pity. One Hebrew word defines pity as to cover (figuratively) compassionate - pity, regard, spare as in Psalms 72:13. Another defines pity as, to commiserate; by implication, to spare - have compassion, (have) pity, spare as in Joel 2:18. In the Greek, pity is to be compassionate, (by word or deed, specifically, by divine grace) - have compassion (pity on), have (obtain, receive, show) mercy (on) as in Matthew 18:33. The Bible always uses pity to refer to an action expressed toward others, NEVER toward self. 1 Peter 3:8 offers one cure for self pity: "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous.

Issues of the Heart: Lust

by Lakesha Garza

Lust, simply put, is an intense longing or craving. It is a strong appetite, an ardor, desirousness, eagerness, a thirst and hunger for something.

Lust used in the negative sense is not limited to sexual sins. One may be properly fed yet still desiring more, even to the point of being uncomfortable; this is called gluttony. Lust can take the form of gossip. So many have itching ears, sadly not for the edification of God's word but rather for the shaming of others.

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Upcoming Events

FEBRUARY 28-MARCH 3

SW ARISE Workshop

"Arise and Grow"

FEBRUARY 16

Ladies' Day

Youngsport COC, Killeen, TX

FEBRUARY 16

Ladies' Day

Rockport COC, Rockport, TX

APRIL 13

Ladies' Day

Colleyville COC, Colleyville, TX

Coveting and being envious of another's material possessions can also be a form of lust. Paul gives an extensive list of the works of the flesh in Galatians 5:19-21. Paul teaches that we are not to gratify the lust of the flesh (Gal. 5:16). Why are we not to fulfill the evil desires of our heart?

Sin, although pleasurable for a moment, is deceitful (Hebrews 13:3, 11:25). The instant gratification of that pleasure is indeed mis-guiding. One does not stop to consider the consequences of their actions. It does not consider the fact that such fulfillment has immediate spiritual repercussions, possible physical repercussions to yourself or neighbor, and eternal consequences if there is no repentance (Matt. 7:21-23).

Rather than longing for the things that are not of the Father, let us desire those things which are of the Father. Your treasure is where your heart is (Matthew 6:19-21, Col. 3:1-4).

We must therefore...

- 1) Transform and renew our hearts (Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:23)
- 2) Fill our hearts (Eph. 5:18-20, Col. 3:16, Col. 1:28)
- 3) Guard our hearts (Proverbs 4:23; Eph. 6:10-18)
- 4) Live in light of Christ's return (1 Thess. 5:1-11)

About Upright Woman

The Upright Woman publication is intended to educate, promote, and encourage the women of the church to strive for righteousness in every aspect of life. It is the mission of this publication to provide women an opportunity to study the word and share articles about various issues and topics to encourage us to be upright women in an upside down world.

**"FOR THE LORD IS RIGHTEOUS; HE
LOVES RIGHTEOUS DEEDS; THE
UPRIGHT SHALL BEHOLD HIS FACE."
PSALM 11:7**



We pray that with every issue and with every article all glory is given to God.