

# Two Faces of Pride

We all know how painful it is to be forced to listen to a confirmed boaster sound off on his favourite topic, that is himself and his accomplishments.

Boasting is particularly offensive when it is heard among Christians, the one place above all others where it should never be found.

Some boasters appear to be a bit self-conscious and apologise meekly for their outbursts of self-praise.

Others have accepted that they are all that their dotting relatives and friends claim they are.

They speak as if their superiority was a matter of common knowledge too well-established to require proof.

**Proverbs 27:21** [Living Bible] *“The purity of silver and gold can be tested in a crucible, but a man is tested by his reaction to men’s praise.”*

God is very patient with His human children, but for their own good this is only for a while.

**Proverbs 29:23** [NIV] *“A man’s pride brings him low, but a man of lowly spirit gains honour.”*

A person who is constantly boasting of his personal talent in the end will be brought to shame.

It may in the providential will of God that the very gift we have boasted of may be lost to us or the project we are so proud of will fail.

After we have learned our lesson God may restore what He has taken away, for He is more concerned with our character than with what we do to serve Him or other people.

**Proverbs 8:13** [NIV] *“To fear the LORD is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behaviour and perverse speech.”*

Two of these things that God hates, because they destroy holy character, are pride and arrogance.

Another habit not quite so odious is belittling ourselves.

This might seem to be the exact opposite of boasting, but actually it is the same sin under a different name.

For a Christian this is simply egoism in an effort to act out spiritual humility.

Self-derogation is bad for the reason that self must be present to derogate.

Prideful boasting is evidence that we are pleased with **self**, belittling is evidence we are disappointed with **self**.

Either way we reveal that we have a high opinion of ourselves.

The belittler is disappointed that he who is obviously superior, has **not** done better than he has, and he punishes himself by making uncomplimentary remarks about himself.

Such a person does **not** really mean what he says and this can easily be proved.

If someone else says the same things about him, he will be eager to defend himself thus revealing his real secret thoughts about himself.

**Proverbs 27:2** [NIV] *“Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; someone else, and not your own lips.”*

For a Christian this other Person should be only God.

**A Christian has shifted his interests from self to Jesus Christ.**

What a true Christian is or is not no longer concerns them.

Why?

**Galatians 2:20** [NIV] *“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”*

Jesus Christ is now where the person’s ego was formerly.

Such a person is Christ-centred instead of self-centred, and forgets themselves in their delighted preoccupation with the will of their Saviour Jesus Christ.

This is something that is a lot easier to write about than it is to live by, I know this by personal experience.

Self is one of the toughest weeds that grow in our personal garden of life.

Self is in fact, indestructible by any human means.

Just when we are sure self is dead it turns up somewhere else as robust as ever to trouble our lives.

Yet there is a means of deliverance.

**Philippians 4:13** [NIV] *“I can do everything through him who gives me strength.”*

The “*him*” is Jesus Christ as the context tells us.

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Crucifixion is the way out of this seemingly impossible situation.

**How have we been crucified by Christ?**

**Legally:-** God the Father looks on us as if we have died with Christ, because our sins died with Him.

**Romans 8:1** [NIV] *“Therefore, there is **now no condemnation** for those who are in Christ Jesus,”*

We are no longer under condemnation.

Jesus Christ took our sins on Himself and died on our behalf so we are freed from their penalty.

**Romans 6:3-4** [NIV] *“Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.”*

Baptism, by total immersion, is an outward sign that we have died with Jesus Christ, so we can then be resurrected to a new life. This is what “*born again*” really means.

**Relationally:-** We have become one with Jesus Christ because His experiences are also ours, our death and resurrection.

**Our Christian Life then begins:-** Our daily desires must be constantly crucified to live a life within the will of Jesus Christ and God the Father. This new life can only be lived by the power of the Holy Spirit working in us and through us.

**Our reconciliation with God is accomplished:-**

**2 Corinthians 5:17-19** [NIV] *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.”*

Having received this reconciliation we are to tell others about it, so that they also may be reconciled to God.

What Jesus Christ went through we also have to experience.

**Rejection by the world:-**

**John 15:18-19** [NIV] *“If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.”*

This can often be a violent rejection, always the pain of social criticism.

**Surrender to the will of God:-**

**Matthew 26:36-44** [NIV] *“Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.” Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.” Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. “Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?” he asked Peter. “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.” He went away a second time and prayed, “My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.” When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.”*

Three times Jesus surrendered to the will of the Father, which in this case was an ultra painful death.

**Loss:-**

**Matthew 10:39** [NIV] *“Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.”*

When we surrender our will to God we lose our life.

**Philippians 3:7-8** [NIV] *“But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ”*

**Nothing that the world offered us in our previous life is now of any value.**

Too many “*Christians*” have failed in the practical application of these teachings concerning the crucified life or the taking up of our cross. Both of these statements refer to the same thing, our death.

**Our victory over death in Jesus Christ will never come about while self is permitted to remain un-judged and un-crucified.**

**Psalms 19:13-14** [King James] *“Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.”*

If we boast or belittle we may be perfectly sure that the “*cross*” has **not** been at work in our life, and the penalty of our sins still remains on our head.