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24: THE TWO FACES OF PRIDE (PART 2 “CompArrogance”)

Comparrogance is defined as the combination of the following three qualities:

- 1) *Comparing*
- 2) *Competing*
- 3) *Arrogance*

You see, where esteem ends and *comparrogance* begins is with the subject of comparing. **Philippians 4:8** says nothing about comparing ourselves with other people. It only says think about what is good (about yourself). If you do well at something and you objectively congratulate yourself, that is a good thing to do. We are told to do this – think about what is praiseworthy. And since the probability is that nobody else is going to praise you, the odds are that you and God are the only ones who are going to celebrate this goodness.

The problem begins with comparing. Our minds are very active and we are constantly observing, analyzing and sorting out our thoughts. Comparing is a basic skill that is needed to organize our world, so we all compare. If the thought remained at the comparing stage, we would be OK, but what happens is that in very short order we start to compete about what we compare. Our culture is organized around competition. We are taught values that we apply to what we compare. However, the really destructive influence is at the third stage when we personalize the subject and believe that we are better than other people because of what we are comparing and competing over. An example will help clarify how *comparrogance* works. Let's look at cars.

Stage 1 - Compare: Some people have new cars and some people have old cars.

Stage 2 - Compete: It is better to have a new car than an old car (value).

Stage 3 - Arrogance: I am better than you are because I have a new car (personalized).

Comparrogance has nothing to do with self esteem. It is all about superiority, rightness and betterness. Our culture has it backwards. It encourages us to have an empty positive cup by not thinking about our goodness and it teaches us to try and put other people down by being the winner. This is a formula for low self-esteem and bad relationships. God wants us to know that we are already winners without any *comparrogance*. We do not need the comparrogance that society wants us to have to be worthy. But, the influence of our society is pervasive. As you start to see *comparrogance* working in your own life, you will see that it does not happen once a week or once a day but often minute by minute. Another example:

Stage 1 - Compare: Some people eat with their right hand and others with their left hand.



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Stage 2 - Compete: It is better to eat with your right hand. (value)

Stage 3 - Arrogance: I am better than that person because I eat with my right hand. (personalized)

Comparrogance can be so petty and insignificant and yet it still holds all of its judging, condemning power. In fact, *comparrogance* works negatively through your body language even if you say nothing. I have come to believe that *comparrogance* is the single most destructive influence in human relationships. The example of Christ is servant leadership. The secret of Christianity is that by faith, Christ has made us holy and blameless so that we can serve others with high self-esteem and self confidence with no *comparrogance*.

How do we accomplish this victorious living? First, live out of the truth of the redemption of the Cross. As you come to see yourself through the eyes of Jesus, you will be able to nurture your true self and celebrate what is noble and pure and praiseworthy. Then, as your self-esteem grows, you need to work at becoming aware of *comparrogance* in your own life. This will be no small task because it has been so hidden. As you become aware, if you can catch yourself at the comparing stage and stop the thought process before it becomes competitive or arrogant, then you can pre-empt full blown *comparrogance*. As you succeed at eliminating *comparrogance* you will come to know the true meaning of humility.

Humility does not mean putting ourselves down because we have already learned that we are to value ourselves. Humility is about serving others the way Christ did. Henri Nouwen describes it in his book *The Wounded Healer* "to live life as authentically as Christ lived his." Know your true self and don't compare. Be the best you can be and don't compete. Celebrate your worth without arrogance. This is a formula for high self-esteem and good relationships.
