

The Proudful Soul's Guide to Humility

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Humility is as contradictory to basic human nature as it is central to the pursuit of spirituality. According to this book, "The proudful soul can be successful-at all the things that ultimately do not matter. He will have no success where it really counts. What is missing in his life is the power of humility."

That is the basic premise of this book. After demonstrating (with support from the Bible and from basic common sense) the necessity of humility, the authors consider how humility affects relationships and other areas of life. Three helpful appendices clarify the differences between "good" and "bad" pride, offer telltale signs of pride, and provide pithy, proverb-style insights about humility.

Jones is the author of several books, including *No One Like Him: Jesus and His Message*; Fontenot is the minister of the Hampton Roads Church of Christ in Virginia. They state that pride is a destructive force that wastes time and energy, and distorts our understanding of our place in the universe. "Humility is so right," they say, "because it so squares with reality. It is a reality that we owe other people a great deal." In addition, Christ himself practiced humility. While discussing the memorable incident when Jesus washed his disciples' feet, the authors assert, "No one was ever less self-sufficient than the man who seemingly had the most reason to be so."

Humility also brings people closer to their families, friends, and the other members of their faith communities. If people are humble, they will be quick to apologize to those they wrong, which will prevent rifts and promote unity. Therefore, humility helps people both to be productive in group efforts and to live a more fulfilling life.

The authors claim that all sin is somehow attributable to pride. While readers may disagree with such a broad statement, it is difficult to argue with the assertion that pride is closely related to selfishness (the opposite of Christian love), and feeds discord. That point is well taken, and surely over-emphasizing the destructive nature of pride is less harmful than taking it too lightly-an error which many people commit, to their own detriment, as the authors point out.

This book highlights a concern of vital importance to any Christian actively seeking a deeper spiritual life. Yet, although the book is written specifically for Christians, it offers readers of all faiths, or no faith, the key to successful relationships: humility.

MELANIE SEIBERT (November / December 2003)

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