

Avoiding the Deadly Sins of Marriage
Why Can't I Always Be Right?

How to Kill Pride Before It Kills Your Marriage
Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney / Oct. 19, 2003

Lou Priolo in his excellent book, *The Complete Husband*, says this, "The sin of pride carries with it God's swiftest and most severe judgment. It blinds you to other sins in your life and hinders you from repenting of them. Pride is the AIDS or "Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome" of the soul. When a person dies as a result of acquiring AIDS, he doesn't really die of AIDS, he dies of an AIDS-complicated illness (pneumonia, tuberculosis, meningitis, etc.)... the AIDS virus somehow blinds the eyes of its victim's bodily defense system. This prevents the auto immune system from seeing and consequently destroying those deadly viruses and bacteria that ultimately kill him. Like AIDS, pride blinds you not only to itself, but to every other sin tucked away in the recesses of your heart and life. It causes you to hate correction and reproof. It hides your sin from you, it justifies your sin, it excuses your sin, and it keeps you from repenting of your sin. It deceives you into thinking that you're spiritually well when, in fact, you have deadly cancer and are in desperate need of the Great Physician's balm.

The Complete Husband, Lou Priolo, p. 21-22

I. Choose to Be Approachable and Teachable in Your Marriage

- Can your spouse rebuke you or is that absolutely off limits?
- Would you just fly into a rage?
- Men... would you just tell her she wasn't being respectful and submissive?
- Ladies... would you just tell him he didn't understand you... and wasn't being loving?

Eph. 4:15 "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head – Christ."

Prov. 12:1 "Whoever loves instruction loves knowledge, but he who hates reproof is stupid."

On a regular basis you should PRACTICE SAYING: "Have I offended you in any way?" "How am I doing in our marriage?" "Is there anything you've been wanting to tell me?"

- Do you really listen to your spouse?
- Are you approachable... and teachable?
- And when they start talking are you really listening... really?
- Are you carefully processing what they're saying or are preparing and sorting through what you're gonna say next?

Prov. 18:13 "He who answers a matter before he hears, it is folly and shame to him."

- If there was something God wanted to tell you through your spouse, could He do it? Or did you shut them down and stop listening a long time ago?

James 1:19-20 "Therefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God."

Prov. 18:2, "A fool has no delight in understanding, but in expressing his own heart."
NIV "airing his own opinions"

I. Be Ready to Repent Quickly

You should all PRACTICE SAYING: “I’m sorry. I was wrong. Will you please forgive me?”

Acts 3:19 says, “Repent... so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.”

Gary Thomas says, “Couples don’t fall out of love so much as they fall out of repentance... Sin, wrong attitudes, and personal failures that are not dealt with slowly erode the relationship, assaulting and eventually erasing the once lofty promises made in the throes of an earlier (and less polluted) passion.” **Sacred Marriage**, Gary Thomas, p. 96 & 97

A. But Instead of Repenting – Pride Drives Us to Fight!

Prov. 28:25 “He who is of a proud heart stirs up strife...”

Marriage was not supposed to be a **sporting event with two opposing teams**. You’re not opponents. You’re on the same team! You’re one flesh! Stop thinking in terms of winners and losers. Pride is what turns our marriages into a contest... a sporting event.

B. Instead of Repenting – Pride Drives Us to Pout!

In your marriage, watch out for pride masquerading as self-pity. Pride can disguise itself as self-pity.

Biblical Counselor, Bill Hines says, “We may have good reason to be sad about what has happened to us, but self-pity is the wrong way to respond to it. When we engage in self-pity we are in a position of pride and mistrust. Pride in that we say through our self-pity, 'I am too good for this', or, 'I don't deserve this'. It is mistrust in that we are not trusting in the providence of God. God is the ruler of the universe and we must trust that what He allows He allows for a good reason. We may not understand what the reason is, but we do understand that what He wants us to do now is trust Him and go on with life in obedience to Him. We need to forgive those who have wronged us and press on with what He would have us do. As we do this we consciously leave the hurt for Him to deal with in His own way. Every time I am tempted to entertain the old feelings of self-pity I remind myself, and God, that I do not own that situation any more. I have given it to God and I must refuse to take it back. As I do that each time I am tempted, the temptation becomes easier to handle the next time and I gain more and more freedom from it. *Leaving Yesterday Behind, William L. Hines, P. 137 & 138*

Self-pity is pride - because you are angry that you have not been appreciated like you think you should, or you’re just grieving that your spouse doesn’t see you and treat you the way you think you deserve. Self-pity cries out, “I deserve better!” Remember pride is **any** overt focus on yourself, whether how great you are or how pitiful you think you are, both are demonstrations of selfish pride.

Conclusion:

James 4:6 “God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

But! If you’ll repent this morning... choose to humble yourself – start being approachable and teachable and ready to repent and admit you’re wrong... then look at what you can expect from God.

1. You’ll get God’s attention!

Isa. 66:2 “But on this one I will look: on him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My Word.”

2. You’ll feel God bring back the joy!

Isa. 29:19 “The humble also shall increase their joy in the Lord...”

3. You’ll Sense God’s direction and guidance again

Psa. 25:9 “The humble He guides in justice, and the humble He teaches His way.”

4. You’ll experience new power and energy to work

Isa. 57:15 “For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name is holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him who has a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.”

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THE FRUITS OF PRIDE

Get alone with God and honestly evaluate yourself by this score card.

Rating Scale: never = 1; seldom = 2; sometimes = 3; frequently = 4; regularly = 5.

1. SELF SUFFICIENT

I tend to be self sufficient in the way I live my life. I don't live with a constant awareness that my every breath is dependent upon the will of God. I tend to think I have enough strength, ability and wisdom to live and manage my life. My practice of the spiritual disciplines is inconsistent and superficial. I don't like to ask others for help.

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1 2 3 4 5

2. Anxious

I am often anxious about my life and the future. I tend not to trust God and rarely experience His abiding and transcendent peace in my soul. I have a hard time sleeping at night because of fearful thoughts and burdens I carry.

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1 2 3 4 5

3. OVERLY SELF-CONSCIOUS

I am overly self-conscious. I tend to replay in my mind how I did, what said, how I am coming across to others, etc. I am very concerned about what people think of me. I think about these things constantly.

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1 2 3 4 5

4. FEAR OF MAN

I fear man more than God. I am afraid of others and make decisions about what I will say or do based upon this fear. I am afraid to take a stand for things that are right. I am concerned with how people will react to me or perceive my actions or words. I don't often think about God's opinion in a matter and rarely think there could be consequences for disobeying him. I primarily seek the approval of man and not of God.

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1 2 3 4 5

5. INSECURE

I often feel insecure. I don't want to try new things or step out into uncomfortable situations because I'm afraid I'll fail or look foolish. I am easily embarrassed.

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1 2 3 4 5

6. COMPARE MYSELF

I regularly compare myself to others. I am performance oriented. I feel that I have greater worth if I do well.

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1 2 3 4 5

7. SELF-CRITICAL

I am self-critical. I tend to be a perfectionist. I can't stand for little things to be wrong because they reflect poorly on me. I have a hard time putting my mistakes behind me.

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1 2 3 4 5

8. DESIRE CREDIT AND RECOGNITION

I desire to receive credit and recognition for what I do. I like people to see what I do and let me know that they noticed. I feel hurt or offended when they don't. I am overly concerned about my reputation and hate being misunderstood.

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1 2 3 4 5

9. DESIRE TO MAKE GOOD IMPRESSION

I want people to be impressed with me. I like to make my accomplishments known.

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1 2 3 4 5

10. DECEPTIVE

I tend to be deceptive about myself. I find myself lying to preserve my reputation. I find myself hiding the truth about myself, especially about sins, weaknesses, etc. I don't want people to know who I really am.

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1 2 3 4 5

11. SELFISHLY AMBITIOUS

I am selfishly ambitious. I really want to get ahead. I like having a position or title. I far prefer leading to following.

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1 2 3 4 5

12. OVERLY COMPETITIVE

I am overly competitive. I always want to win or come out on top and it bothers me when I don't.

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1 2 3 4 5

13. CENTER OF ATTENTION

I like to be the center of attention and will say or do things to draw attention to myself.

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1 2 3 4 5

14. TALK ABOUT MYSELF

I like to talk, especially about myself or persons or things I am involved with. I want people to know what I am doing or thinking. I would rather speak than listen. I have a hard time being succinct.

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1 2 3 4 5

15. SELF-SERVING

I am self-serving. When asked to do something, I find myself asking, "How will doing this help me, or will I be inconvenienced?"

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1 2 3 4 5

16. NOT EXCITED ABOUT OTHERS' SUCCESS

I am not very excited about seeing or making others successful. I tend to feel envious, jealous or critical towards those who are doing well or being honored.

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1 2 3 4 5

17. FEELINGS OF SUPERIORITY

I feel special or superior because of what I have or do. For example:

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|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| » my house | » being a Christian |
| » my neighborhood | » my position or job |
| » my physical gifting | » my car |
| » my spiritual giftings | » my salary |
| » my intellect or education | » my looks |

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1 2 3 4 5

18. THINK HIGHLY OF SELF

I think highly of myself. In relation to others I typically see myself as more mature and more gifted. In most situations, I have more to offer than others even though I may not say so. I don't consider myself average or ordinary.

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1 2 3 4 5

19. GIVE MYSELF CREDIT

I tend to give myself credit for who I am and what I accomplish. I only occasionally think about or recognize that all that I am or have comes from God.

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1 2 3 4 5

20. SELF- RIGHTEOUS

I tend to be self-righteous. I can think that I really have something to offer *God*. I would never say so, but I think God did well to save me. I seldom think about or recognize my complete depravity and helplessness apart from God. I regularly focus on the sins of others. I don't credit God for any degree of holiness in my life.

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1 2 3 4 5

21. FEEL DESERVING

I feel deserving. I think I deserve what I have. In fact, I think I ought to have more considering how well I have lived or in light of all I have done.

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1 2 3 4 5

22. UNGRATEFUL

I often feel ungrateful. I tend to grumble about what I have or my lot in life.

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1 2 3 4 5

23. SELF-PITY

I find myself wallowing in self-pity. I am consumed with how I am treated by God and others. I tend to feel mistreated or misunderstood. I seldom recognize or sympathize with what's going on with others around me because I feel that I have it worse than they do.

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1 2 3 4 5

24. JEALOUS OR ENVIOUS

I can be jealous or envious of others abilities, possessions, positions, accomplishments. I want to be what others are or want to have what other have. I am envious of what others have thinking that I should have it or deserve it. I find it hard to rejoice with others when they are blessed by God.

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1 2 3 4 5

25. INSENSITIVE

I am pretty insensitive to others. I feel that some people just aren't worth caring about. I have a hard time showing compassion.

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1 2 3 4 5

26. KNOW-IT-ALL ATTITUDE

I have a know-it-all attitude. I am impressed by my own knowledge. I fee like there isn't much I can learn from other people, especially those less mature than me.

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1 2 3 4 5

27. HARD TIME LISTENING

I have a hard time listening to ordinary people. I listen better to those I respect or people I want to leave with a good impression. I don't honestly listen when someone else is speaking because I am usually planning what I am going to say next.

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1 2 3 4 5

28. LIKE TO REVEAL OWN MIND

I like to reveal my own mind. I have an answer for practically every situation. I feel compelled to balance everyone else out.

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1 2 3 4 5

29. INTERRUPT PEOPLE

I interrupt people regularly. I don't let people finish what they are saying.

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1 2 3 4 5

30. COMPELLED TO STOP PEOPLE

I feel compelled to stop people when they start to share something with me I already know.

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1 2 3 4 5

31. HARD TO ADMIT WHEN I DON'T KNOW SOMETHING

I find it hard to admit it when I don't know something. When someone asks me something I don't know, I will make up an answer rather than admit I don't know.

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1 2 3 4 5

32. DON'T GET MUCH OUT OF TEACHING

I don't get much out of teaching. I tend to evaluate a speaker rather than my own life. I grumble in my heart about hearing something a second time.

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1 2 3 4 5

33. LISTEN TO TEACHING WITH OTHER PEOPLE IN MIND

I listen to teaching with other people in mind. I constantly think of those folks who need to hear the teaching and wish they were here.

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34. NOT OPEN TO INPUT

I'm not very open to input. I don't pursue correction for my life. I tend to be unteachable and slow to repent when corrected. I don't really see correction as a positive thing. I am offended when people probe the motivations of my heart or seek to adjust me.

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35. HARD TIME ADMITTING TO BEING WRONG

I have a hard time admitting that I am wrong. I find myself covering up or excusing my sins. It is hard for me to confess my sins to others or to ask for forgiveness.

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1 2 3 4 5

36. RESENT CORRECTION

I view correction as an intrusion into my privacy rather than an instrument of God for my welfare. I can't identify anyone who would feel welcome to correct me.

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1 2 3 4 5

37. I RESENT PEOPLE

I resent people who attempt to correct me. I don't respond with gratefulness and sincere appreciation for their input. Instead I am tempted to accuse them and dwell on their faults. I get bitter and withdraw.

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1 2 3 4 5

38. CONTENTIOUS AND ARGUMENTATIVE

When corrected, I become contentious and argumentative. I don't take people's observations seriously. I minimize and make excuses or give explanations.

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1 2 3 4 5

39. EASILY ANGERED AND OFFENDED

I am easily angered and offended. I don't like being crossed or disagreed with. I find myself thinking, "I can't believe they did that to me." I often feel wronged.

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1 2 3 4 5

40. PERSONALITY CONFLICTS

I have "personality conflicts" with others. I have a hard time getting along with certain kinds of people. People regularly tell me that they struggle with me.

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1 2 3 4 5

41. SELF-WILLED AND STUBBORN

I am self-willed and stubborn. I have a hard time cooperating with others. I really prefer my own way and often insist on getting it.

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1 2 3 4 5

42. INDEPENDENT AND UNCOMMITTED

I am independent and uncommitted. I don't really see why I need other people. I can easily separate myself from others. I don't get much out of our small group meetings.

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1 2 3 4 5

43. UNACCOUNTABLE

I am unaccountable. I don't ask others to hold me responsible to follow through on my commitments. I don't really need accountability for my words and actions. I think I can take care of myself.

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1 2 3 4 5

44. UNSUBMISSIVE

I am unsubmitive. I don't like being under the authority of another person. I don't see submission as a good and necessary provision from *God* for my life. I have a hard time supporting and serving those over me. I don't "look up" to people and I like to be in charge. Other people may need leaders but I don't. It is important that my voice is heard.

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1 2 3 4 5

45. LACK RESPECT

I lack respect for other people. I don't think very highly of most people. I have a hard time encouraging and honoring others unless they really do something great.

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1 2 3 4 5

46. SLANDERER

I am a slanderer. I find myself either giving or receiving evil reports about others. Often times the things I say or hear are true about other people. I am not concerned about the effect of slander on me because of my maturity level. I think I can handle it. I only share with others the things I really think they need to know. I don't tell all.

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1 2 3 4 5

47. DIVISIVE

I am divisive. I tend to resist or resent authority. I don't like other people to give me orders or directions.

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1 2 3 4 5

48. DEMEAN

I like to demean or put others down. I often think people need to be adjusted and put in their place. This includes leaders. Other people need to be more humble and have a "sober" assessment of themselves.

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1 2 3 4 5

49. CRITICAL

I tend to be critical of others. I find myself feeling or talking negatively about people. I subtly feel better about myself when I see how bad someone else is. I find it far easier to evaluate than to encourage someone else.

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50. I THINK I'M HUMBLE

I really appreciate somebody taking the time to put this paper together. I will really be a big help to my friends and family. However, I don't really need this because I think I'm pretty humble already.

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1 2 3 4 5