

Arrogants Anonymous

Author : Megan

Published: September 9, 2010, 3:38 pm

Hi. I'm Megan...and I'm arrogant.

Sure, it's a misquote: but if alcoholism is destructive enough to warrant intervention like A.A. groups, multiply the Destructo-Factor by the power of ten to describe the effects of arrogance in a person's life. If there were an organization called Arrogants Anonymous, I'd be a card-carrying member; and just like an alcoholic, I know it won't ever matter how many years I've been sober. Arrogance is always a constant danger. Ask Moses, the humblest man who ever lived...and who could not enter the Promised Land because for a time he looked to his own glory and honor instead of God's.

Arrogance is probably the oldest, most pervasive character flaw recorded in Human history. All people seem to carry it in their DNA just like the data to give them a nose and two thumbs. I'm clearly a descendant of my great-grandparents Adam and Eve, who thought they were smart enough to ignore God's one command and then fool him into not noticing what they'd done. To borrow a term I believe originally belongs to Bill Gothard, arrogance is "reserving the right to make the final decision." That's reserving the right above anyone - including God himself - to decide what's best in any situation. At its root, arrogance is a fundamental blindness towards the reality of who God is and who man is. It causes a person to think of themselves on equal footing with God himself.

All through history, arrogance has been at the root of the greatest disasters mankind has inflicted on itself, from getting kicked out of paradise to the first murder to multiple worldwide wars. It's destroyed homes, brought down empires, and wasted countless lives. And the sweet little eighteen-month-old exhibits it full strength when her mother teases her about the sky being green and she responds contemptuously, "No Mom. It's blue." You stupid idiot, the baby's tone implies.

Yes, I was that baby. A lot of the stories told about me as a kid are similar. I was a precocious child. Not unusually smart, but unusually quick to let everyone know how smart I thought I was, as evidenced by how much knowledge I had. If someone made what might be possibly construed as a mistake, I was right there to correct it. After all, that was my duty: to let everyone know they were doing something wrong! This might look cute in a baby - who hasn't been tempted to chuckle when a very tiny person first seriously argues about something as patently ridiculous as the color of the sky? - but it doesn't look so cute in an eight-year-old who compulsively has to point out every wrong their sibling does or argue with their parent about whether they really should unload the dishwasher or not.

Everything to my mind was about me: about how I could look good (as evidenced by how much better I was than everyone else), about how I knew best (because I knew so much more than everyone else!), and about how I had a right and place to do anything I felt was right. There was nowhere in my considerations for God's plans, God's glory, or God's authority.

As I got older, I caused myself a lot of needless grief, embarrassment, damage to my reputation as a reliable and honest person, and other harm I can only speculate on. All because of my most deeply-held belief that no matter what the circumstance, I knew best and my life was mine alone.

An arrogant child isn't willing to submit to anyone. How could I do what Dad wanted when I really knew it was better to do something else? What was Dad's authority compared to what I considered right? It's not that I was rebellious...I was just right! Even if forced to do things a parent's way, an arrogant child will not bow their will to anything; and one of the greatest truths in life is that there is always going to be a higher authority to submit to. Even if you rise to a position where you are theoretically answerable to no man, every person is answerable to God and under His authority. An arrogant person becomes incapable of recognizing authority the longer they live with their arrogance unchecked. There really does come a time when an arrogant person becomes unable to even consider the possibility they may be wrong about something: and who can live with a husband, wife, child, or sibling who can't even imagine they might be doing the wrong thing? Who wants to marry a man who never listens to his wife because he always knows what must be done? Who wants to marry a woman who is always trying to prod her husband into doing what she thinks is right? Who wants to live with a child who constantly resists doing what he's told because he always has a better plan?

Who wants to live with a person who is only motivated by their own glory? An arrogant, selfish person is a curse to those around them, even to those who love them.

Arrogance can only be rooted out if a person gives up that perceived right to making the final decision and recognizes that all of life is about God, not them. A child needs to understand that knowledge is just knowledge. It's not a virtue and it doesn't make someone special. A kind and obedient and truthful heart does. A person who loves God with all their heart and soul and strength and loves their neighbor as themselves...that's someone to be!

The hardest thing for me personally to learn in dealing with arrogance is how to be truthful. To recognize I can't wiggle out of being arrogant by saying to myself "I just did something arrogant - shame on me!". No, I didn't just do something arrogant, I am arrogant and whatever is inside a person shows in every. single. thing. a. person. does. The Bible says "Even as he walks along the road, the fool lacks sense and shows everyone how stupid he is." (Ecc 10:3 NIV) "Fool" and "Arrogant person" can be used interchangeably all through Proverbs, because a fool is arrogant: he never knows he's wrong or how foolish he is.

Mom may not know the color of the sky...but truthfully, does it matter? What does matter is that God made me Mom's daughter. What matters is whether I regard Mom - and God who gave her her position and mine - with respect and honor or with contempt because I hold myself to be so much better than her. What matters is whether I'm focused on God and his glory or whether I'm focused on myself and my own glory. All my correcting has been because I wanted to let everyone know how much I was to be revered because I knew more than someone else did...not because I honestly wanted to help someone else or to be of service to them. It was all about my glory.

Ultimately, the sky teasing was none of my business to correct. To laugh with, maybe, in humble recognition that Mom was playing with me; but not to correct.

My greatest blindness was in thinking that somehow I had merit on my own. That I was in possession of my own intelligence and wisdom and authority to prove it. I never saw my life as something given to me by God to be used for his purposes and for his glory: I have nothing to be proud of because nothing is mine! All I am, all I have, all I can ever be, as the old song says...is what God made me. If something in me is good, that is God's spirit and God's creation: in truthfulness, there is nothing that can be credited to me about it.

So if you have a kid like me who thinks it's their duty to correct everyone around them - no matter how sweetly or perhaps even accurately! - you may have a budding Arrogant yourself, and the greatest gift you can give them is to teach them who they really are and what really matters: they are a speck that God created, and all that matters in life is to become a reflection of God's glory, a vessel that is worth nothing on it's own but only for who created it and what fills it. Someone who can't be wrong can't see God because they think of

themselves as actually equal to God.

And me, I not only want to see God but I'd kinda like to have peace and joy in my life now. Arrogance destroys my chance of either one. About that Adam and Eve story again...

P.S. This article has been edited due to changes of heart in the author after writing. The ultimate point had not been included. It will now hopefully be more truthful and helpful.