

Vain Conceit

*Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit.
Rather, in humility value others above yourselves,
not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.
Philippians 2:3-4 (NIV)*

He was one of the sadder men that I have met in my lifetime. There seemed to be something very wrong with him and it took me a while to determine what was really going on in his life.

The first thing I noticed about him was the way he walked. He seemed to strut or swagger when he walked anywhere. The manner in which he moved suggested that he had a sense of self importance.

Then, I noticed that he had an opinion on every topic of conversation. He tried to show that he knew a lot about any subject at all. Yet, when you listened carefully to what he would say, you soon realized that he was mistaken about a lot of things.

What was wrong with him? Well he had a form of conceit – to use the term Paul does in our verses today. He sought to portray the notion that he was very clever and superior to other people.

However, what I learned was that deep down he sensed he was very inferior and that was the reason he tried to act superior to others. He tried to compensate for his inferiority by pretending to be better than others. Paul calls such action ‘vain conceit’.

Paul gives us the cure for “vain conceit”. He tells us to value the gifts of the other brother or sister more than any gifts the Lord has given you. So the one who is able to lead a church service, preach a sermon or teach a large Sunday School class should see that the person handing out bulletins and greeting visitors is also very important.

The finest sermon or the most impressive Bible lesson can fall on deaf ears if the visitor has not been warmly greeted when entering the church building. When someone enters church and has a friendly handshake and a sincere question about how they are today, that person senses that this church truly

cares for them and they want to know more.

Examine your own heart to see if you are among the humble whom Paul refers in our verses. Call to mind the words of Peter when he said in 1 Peter 5:5-6 (NIV) “In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, ‘God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.’ Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.”

Speak to someone today an encouraging word that will lift them up. Speak the truth, and do it in love so that the one to whom you speak will recognize the sincerity of your speech and be blessed.

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