

Crossing That Dangerous Line

Nurturing an appropriate sense of value in people is part of the work of both families and churches. Every day brings new examples of the turmoil and torment that result when people lack self-respect and consequently the ability to respect others.

Healthy self-esteem allows us to develop problem-solving and decision-making skills, recognize our strengths, acknowledge our weaknesses, evaluate our choices, act independently, set realistic goals, accept responsibilities and challenges and handle emotions properly.

It also permits us to see ourselves and others clearly, in relation to the God who created and loves us all. As long as our vision is clear, we can safely travel the roads of personal and spiritual development. A fine line exists, however, between self-esteem and pride.

Once we cross that line, everything changes. Our vision is blurred. Our confidence turns to conceit. We trust ourselves rather than God. We treat other people not as treasures but as commodities.

The biblical warnings against pride are stark: "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall" (Prov. 16:18).

The best way to avoid God's judgment and the self-inflicted punishment that result from pride is to foster its opposite quality, humility. That's not easy to do in a culture that values "self-made" people and scoffs at modesty and meekness.

Our culture views humility as a negative quality. Being humble, it says, means not only stepping aside but also stepping down and being stepped upon.

Scripture paints a different picture: "It is better to be of lowly spirit among the poor than to divide the spoil with the proud" (Prov. 16:19).

**<https://ethicsdaily.com/crossing-that-dangerous-line-cms-3093/>
September 12, 2003 Jan Turrentine**

Pride, not humility, takes us down, the Bible says. Humility is the ladder we must climb to achieve divine understanding, and each step takes us a little farther away from crossing that dangerous line of pride.

Jan [Turrentine](#) is managing editor of Acacia Resources.