

# Sin of Pride

by John Donne

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*John Donne's sermon 'The Sin of Pride' highlights the fundamental nature of pride, its early onset, enduring persistence, and infectious spread.*

**Scripture:** Proverbs 16:18, Matthew 16:24, Philippians 2:3, James 4:6, 1 Peter 5:5

**Topics:** "Pride And Humility", "Christian Sanctification"

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## Description

John Donne preaches about the sin of pride, highlighting how it can stem from God's blessings, our own actions, and even our sins. He emphasizes how pride can start from early in life and continue until death, manifesting in the desire for high status and elaborate monuments. Donne warns against the love of place and precedence, stating that true crosses to bear are those prepared by God in the form of temptations and tribulations in our calling, rather than self-imposed hardships or seeking unnecessary suffering.

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## Transcript

SO EARLY, SO PRIMARY a sin is pride, as that, out of every mercy, and blessing, which God affords us, (and, His mercies are new every morning) we gather Pride; we are not the more thankful for them, and yet we are the prouder of them. Nay, we gather Pride, not onely out of those things, which mend and improve us, (Gods blessings and mercies) but out of those actions of our own, that destroy and ruine us, we gather pride; sins overthrow us, demolish us, destroy and ruine us, and yet we are proud of our sinnes. How many men have we heard boast of their sinnes, and, (as S. Augustine confesses of himselfe) belie themselves, and boast of more sinnes than ever they committed? Out of every thing, out of nothing sin grows. Therefore was this commandment in our text, Sequere, Follow, come after, well placed first, for we are come to see even children strive for place and precedency, and mothers are ready to goe to the Heralds to know how Cradles shall be ranked, which Cradle shall have the highest place; Nay, even in the wombe, there was contention for precedency, Jacob tooke hold of his brother Esaus heele, and would have been borne before him.

And as our pride begins in our Cradle, it continues in our graves and Monuments. It was a good while in the primitive Church, before any were buried in the Church, The best contented themselves with the Churchyards. After, a holy ambition, (may we call it so) a holy Pride brought them ad Limina, to the Church-threshold, to the Church-doore, because some great Martyrs were buried in the Porches, and devout men desired to lie near them, as one Prophet did to lie neare another, (Lay my bones besides his bones. ) But now, persons whom the Devill kept from Church all their lives, Separatists, Libertines, that

never came to any Church, And persons, whom the Devil brought to Church all their lives, (for, such as come cheery out of the obligation of the Law, and to redeem that vexation or out of custome, or company, or curiosity or a perverse and sinister affection to the particular Preacher, though they come to Gods house, come upon the Devils invitation) Such as one Devill, that is, worldly respect, brought to Church in their lives, another Devill, that is, Pride and vain-glory, brings to Church after their deaths, in an affectation of high places, and sumptuous Monuments in the Church. And such as have given nothing at all to any pious uses, or have determined their almes and their dole which they have given, in that one day of their funeral and no farther, have given large annuities, perpetuities, for new painting their tombed and for new Flags, and scutcheons, every certaine number of yeares.

O the earlinesse! O the latenesse! how early a Spring, and no Autumne! how fast a growth, and no declination, of this branch of this sin Pride, against which, this first word of ours Sequere, Follow, come after, is opposed! this love of place, and precedency, it rocks IIs in our Cradles, it lies down with us in our graves. There are diseases proper to certaine things, Rots to sheepe, Murrain to cattell. There are diseases proper to certaine places, as the Sweat was to us. There are diseases proper to certaine times, as the plague is in divers parts of the Eastern Countryes, where they know assuredly, when it will begin and end. But for this infectious disease of precedency, and love of place, it is run over all places, as well Cloysters as Courts. And over all men, as well spirituall as temporall, And over all times, as well the Apostles as ours.

Forraine crosses, other mens merits are not mine; spontaneous and voluntary crosses, contracted by mine owne sins, are not mine; neither are devious, and remote, and unnecessary crosses, my crosses. Since I am bound to take up my crosse, there must be a crosse that is mine to take up; that is, a crosse prepared for me by God, and laid in my way, which is tentations or tribulations in my calling; and I must not go out of my way to seeke a crosse; for, so it is not mine, nor laid for my taking up. I am not bound to hunt after a persecution, nor to stand it, and not flye, nor to affront a plague, and not remove, nor to open my selfe to any injury, and not defend. I am not bound to starve my selfe by inordinate fasting, nor to teare my flesh by inhumane whippings, and flagellations. I am bound to take up my Crosse, and that is onely mine which the hand of God hath laid for me, that is, in the way of my Calling, tentations and tribulations incident to that.

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