

## e-concepts

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By Dr. David DeWitt

### Humility: The Root of Virtue

The *Oxford Dictionary* defines “humility” as, “having or showing a low estimate of one’s importance” (p. 397). But in the post-modern western world, it is not always virtuous to have a low estimate of one’s own personal importance. Today’s world seems to prefer pride, having or displaying excessive self-esteem and having proper self-respect (*Webster’s Ninth New College Dictionary*, p. 947).

Our post-modern societies find a place for both pride and humility. In the Bible, however, they are at opposite ends of the moral spectrum. Biblically, pride is always bad, and humility is always good (Psalm 138:6; Proverbs 3:34; Matthew 23:12; and 1 Peter 5:5-6). More than that, there is a sense in which pride is the center of all evil; and humility is the center of all virtue (Isaiah 66:2; Micah 6:8).

The pride/humility issue is not simply one of high or low self-esteem. Both Christian and pagan, theist and atheist, absolutist and relativist, would hold to the worth of the individual. The question is, how did the individual obtain worth? What makes us valuable?

**Pride** says we have value in ourselves.

**Humility** says we have value because we are created in the image of God.

**Pride** says we should pursue self-actualization.

**Humility** says we should be conformed to the image of Christ.

**Pride** says we should determine our own independent spiritual values.

**Humility** says we should seek and keep God’s spiritual values.

**Pride** says glory resides in man.

**Humility** says glory resides in God.

The question is, Where does virtue come from? What is its ultimate source?

**Pride** says, “Man.”

**Humility** says, “God.”

*Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they existed, and were created (Revelation 4:11).*

For more information see **Humility: The Root of Virtue** study paper on  
Relational Concepts web page: <https://relationalconcepts.org/>

**P.O. Box 141456 • Grand Rapids, MI 49514 • relationalconcepts.org**