

In Search of Ego Strength

In today's world people are often accused of arrogance or egotism. It seems we have not understood that a proper ego or identity is necessary to survive the storms of life and come out in relatively decent shape. There are those who teach that any need for ego is wrong. However, in Greek, the word simply means "your inner identity". It is certainly wrong for humans to unduly push their will upon others without proper authority and circumstances.

The Scripture about having no self-will is often misunderstood. It is really discussing a person trusting in his/her own volition instead following the dictates of God's will and acting on the best outcome for others. Meekness in Matthew, chapter 5, is frequently mistaken for humility when the original meaning was "to maintain emotional control" and contained an admonition not to rush in to take the best seats in the synagogue but, with humility, let the Lord exalt the member in due time. The Apostle Paul adds that no man should think more of himself than he ought to in comparison to other individuals. Paul does say in Galatians that pride in one's outfit is not a sin. It is certainly true that all of us fall short of the glory that God has waiting for us, and He loves us whether we are in sin or on the path to righteousness.

All human beings should have an internal locus of control and learn to follow our inner nature and pray in faith that the Holy Spirit leads the development of our spirit to bear witness that we are the Sons and Daughters of God. The Hebrew concept of righteousness is dependent upon which voice we commonly listen to which affects the development of character and habits.

Many of us have a bad habit of reacting in personal conversations to what we think has been said. Then, our ego has to respond in a disagreeable manner to defend our turf and create more tension and possibly animosity. A person with ego strength can talk through differences by allowing the other person to maintain his/her dignity and not continuously be hurt by the insensitivity of others. He/she knows from the wellsprings of his/her own heart who he/she is. Ego strength is not contingent upon the opinions of others.

When others appear angry and act insultingly, there truly are no logical discussions or reasonable conclusions that can be established. One should ask questions and not just make declarative statements. Statements of affirmation and concern towards the other should be offered with a suggestion to talk over the issues in more reasonable circumstances. Sometimes, there is nothing that can be done but to step back and let the other person respond to situation or not respond as the case may be. A person with proper ego strength will not attempt to respond and allow his/her ego to do the talking. Such a one would think and apply wisdom to his/her relationships to others.

The other extreme of victimology is just as damaging because pride and self-centeredness can result out of the attitude of being a victim. Why does God hate a

haughty spirit more than anything else? It is because the individual who wears the attitude of self-righteousness is usually blinded to the errors of his/her behavior. Spiritual mentors, leaders and those with good interpersonal skills can really help provide the feedback necessary to establish proper personal boundaries. It is certainly not wrong to be a person with deep convictions and beliefs, but we should have enough self-respect to honor and respect the travels and growth of others. Everyone has something unique to teach us and we should be students of life itself who are willing to learn from anyone.

The biblical philosophy of spiritual development is difficult in the sense that few get to the deep levels of conversion and change. Even fewer are committed to walking the road less traveled utilizing spiritual disciplines with theological enlightenment. For those who do walk this rare path there is an abundance of spiritual joy and doctrinal nuggets to make them wise and prepared to live life as Our Creator intended it to be lived.