

MAY 2003 – *The Great Sin*

C.S. Lewis called it The Great Sin. Thomas Aquinas and Augustine called it the essence of all sin. It holds first place among the Seven Deadly Sins. The Bible suggests it was the cause of Lucifer's fall from heaven. It also led to the fall of mankind. And all of us suffer from it in some measure, whether we know it or not.

"According to Christian teachers, the essential vice, the utmost evil, is pride. Unchastity, anger, greed, drunkenness, and all that, are mere fleabites in comparison: it was through pride that the devil became the devil: pride leads to every other vice: it is the complete anti-God state of mind...it is pride which has been the chief cause of misery in every nation and every family since the world began."¹

Lewis tells us that pride is "essentially competitive – is competitive by its very nature – while the other vices are only competitive, so to speak, by accident. Pride gets no pleasure out of having something, only having more of it than the next man...it is the comparison that makes you proud: the pleasure of being above the rest."²

Because of its nature, pride eats away at our relationships. "...pride always means enmity – it is enmity. And not only enmity between man and man but enmity to God...as long as you are proud you cannot know God. A proud man is always looking down on things and people: and as long as you are looking down you cannot see something that is above you."³

The remedy for our pride is humility. "If anyone would like to acquire humility, I can, I think, tell him the first step. The first step is to realize one is proud. And a biggish step, too. At least nothing whatever can be done before it. If you think you are not conceited, it means you are very conceited, indeed."⁴

*Search me, O God, and know my heart, try me and know my anxious thoughts;
and see if there be any hurtful way in me,
and lead me in the everlasting way.*

Psalms 139:23-24

¹ Mere Christianity, McMillan, p. 109, 110-111

² *ibid*, 109, 110

³ *ibid*, 111

⁴ *ibid*, 114