

The Sin Amos Confronted Part 5: Arrogance

Introduction: Pride and arrogance are both listed in the Bible as sinful behaviors, and they are certainly similar terms, but nonetheless, there is a substantial difference, mainly in the fact that, in the right context, pride is actually a good thing, whereas arrogance never is.

For instance, I'm proud to be an American. If I'm out of the country and somebody asks me where I'm from, I feel no embarrassment at all in saying I'm a U.S. citizen!

I'm proud of my family, which means if you come up to me and say, "Aren't you Keri's husband, or Ari's, Ada's, and Remi's dad," then I will proudly say, "Yes!"

It puts a smile on my face when I'm out somewhere, and somebody says, "Hey, aren't you a pastor at Venture?"

Noticed that in each of these, the pride is not in anything that I've accomplished, but in who I'm associated with. As such, the most applicable example I can give you is that I'm a proud follower of Christ! Belonging to Jesus is not because of anything I've accomplished but because of who Jesus is and what He did for me to belong to Him! Therefore, if somebody says, "Do you believe Jesus is God and that He's coming back for you?", or, "Do you believe Jesus died on the cross and rose from the grave?", or, "Are you a follower of Jesus?", then I will, without hesitation or shyness, say, "Yes!" This is exactly what Paul was getting at when he wrote,

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes (Romans 3:16)

14 But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. (Galatians 6:14)

That kind of pride is not self-centered or self-promoting at all, but rather comes from a sense of gratitude and blessing to be part of something or with someone, in a way you know you didn't earn or deserve, but that you are extremely blessed and unashamed of having!

However, arrogance is never a good thing. Arrogance is when we see ourselves as more valuable than others; as more deserving of opportunity, love, and consideration; as somehow being better than others, either by birth or by achievement, and therefore we deserve to receive honor, praise, and priority over others.

Arrogance is a direct violation of the moral expectations of God that He made clear both through Moses and, more importantly, Jesus. The Bible states,

18 you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord. (Leviticus 19:18b)

35 And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. 36 “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” 37 And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. 38 This is the great and first commandment. 39 And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 40 On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.” (Matthew 22:35-40)

Later in His ministry, after washing His disciples' feet, Jesus brought greater clarity to God's moral expectation and standard for how we are to view and treat others. Jesus said,

34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. (John 13:34)

Instead of viewing ourselves and others as Jesus told us to, arrogance leads us to view and treat other people, life, and even the very laws of nature as beneath us. This is why arrogance always leads to stupidity, because it's always based on a lie—that you are somebody you aren't!

Ultimately, arrogance leads to the greatest stupidity, which is confidently refusing to live in submission to God because you believe you are entitled to do so and actually can! Nothing could be more stupid, especially given God's response to it! The Bible states,

5 Everyone who is arrogant in heart is an abomination to the Lord; be assured, he will not go unpunished. (Proverbs 16:5)

In the days of Amos, the arrogance of the Jewish people had become so obvious that the inevitable judgment of God was imminent. As a whole, they felt entitled to the blessings of God despite their refusal to obey God in matters as obvious as not worshiping false gods! Additionally, within their own society, those who had achieved financial success and power saw themselves as inherently more valuable to God and to society than the rest of society, and therefore as having the right to be served by others and even by God Himself! Therefore, God sent Amos to confront this blatant abomination and to pronounce the very judgment on them that King Solomon said was assured to come from the Lord because of it.

Proposition: The following are two of the blatant testimonies of arrogance in the Jewish people that Amos confronted.

The first testimony is in Amos 6:1-8.

(1) They viewed wealth as something they were entitled to. (6:1-8)

- A. 1 "Woe to those who are **at ease** in Zion, and to those **who feel secure** on the mountain of Samaria, **the notable men** of the first of the nations, to whom the house of Israel comes! 2 Pass over to Calneh, and see, and from there go to Hamath the great; then go down to Gath of the Philistines. **Are you better than these kingdoms?** Or is their territory greater than your territory, 3 O

you who put far away the day of disaster and bring near the seat of violence?

1. “at ease” and “who feel secure” speak to the attitude of entitlement in Jerusalem (Zion) and in the northern Kingdom (Samaria). There was nothing within them that felt the responsibility to obey the Law of God, which God made clear was required to receive the blessing of prosperity and protection in the land He promised them. Instead, they had the arrogant complacency of spoiled rotten brats who inherit the wealth of their forefathers with no appreciation for how it was earned, nor concern for how it should be handled. They instead feel they are somehow owed the lifestyle someone else built for them and, as such, have the right to always have it, no matter how irresponsible and foolish they are with what they were given to fund it!
2. “These “notables” (v. 1b) can’t imagine that they have anything to worry about. In fact, they think of themselves as the “first of the nations” (v. 1b).”¹
3. “6:2. But God directed these proud men to go to cities which once also considered themselves great, and to learn from their fall. Calneh (also called Calno, Isa. 10:9) and Hamath were city-states in northern Aram. They had been overrun by Assyria during Shalmaneser III’s campaign in 854–846 b.c. Gath in Philistia had been devastated in 815 b.c. by Hazael, king of Aram, and again in 760 b.c. by Uzziah, king of Judah (2 Kings 12:17; 2 Chron. 26:6; cf. comments on Amos 1:6). Was Israel any better prepared to fend off an attack than were those powerful kingdoms? No. Was their land larger than Israel’s? Yes. Those cities and their surrounding districts were greater in size than proud Samaria, yet they still were unable to stave off disaster.”²
4. “2 There are no verbs in the questions. Probably a present tense is intended in each. Different interpretations are suggested. (i) Amos invites his hearers to observe by comparison how great their prosperity is—and therefore how certain their judgment if they fail to be grateful to the LORD. However, the whole section implies that they would not need such proof but were already convinced of their superiority. (ii) *Gath etc.* are examples of fallen prosperity and constitute a warning of what will happen to Samaria. It is, however, doubtful if these cities were in ruins in Amos’s day. (iii) Amos is quoting a propaganda ‘handout’ from the rulers, drawing advantageous comparisons with distant and inferior places. This has the ‘ring of truth’; it is the way rulers behave and it matches the arrogance depicted in v 1. It also leads into

¹ Birch, B. C. (1997). *Hosea, Joel, and Amos* (P. D. Miller & D. L. Bartlett, Eds.; p. 226). Westminster John Knox Press.

² Sunukjian, D. R. (1985). *Amos*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, pp. 1442–1443). Victor Books.

v 3 as a deliberate concealing of the dangers which the rulers knew were on the horizon.”³

5. “6:3. Israel, arrogant and foolishly confident of its own prowess (cf. v. 13), put off the evil day. They scornfully dismissed any thought of coming calamity. But all the while, by their sinful actions, they were approaching a reign of terror. “A reign of terror” aptly describes the last years of Israel’s history before her captivity by Assyria (2 Kings 15:8–17:6). In the 31 years after Jeroboam II, Israel had six kings, three of whom seized power by political coup and assassination. The fear and violence in this period is reflected in the atrocities of 2 Kings 15:16.”⁴

B. 4 "Woe to those who lie on beds of ivory and stretch themselves out on their couches, and eat lambs from the flock and calves from the midst of the stall, 5 who sing idle songs to the sound of the harp and like David invent for themselves instruments of music, 6 who drink wine in bowls and anoint themselves with the finest oils, but are not grieved over the ruin of Joseph! 7 Therefore they shall now be the first of those who go into exile, and the revelry of those who stretch themselves out shall pass away." 8 The Lord GOD has sworn by himself, declares the LORD, the God of hosts: "I abhor the pride of Jacob and hate his strongholds, and I will deliver up the city and all that is in it." (6:1-8)

1. “6:4–6. Rather than heed the prophet’s warnings of judgment, the leaders of Samaria instead gave themselves to a decadent hedonism. They reclined on expensive **beds** whose wood was **inlaid with ivory** (cf. 3:15). At their opulent feasts they “lounged” **on** their **couches**. The Hebrew word for **lounge** (*sarah*) conveys a sprawled stupor of satiation and drunkenness, with arms and legs hanging over the side. They ate gourmet food—**choice lambs and fattened calves**—the tastiest and tenderest meat they could get. In their drunken revelry they imagined themselves strumming **like David** as they attempted to **improvise** music at their parties. Yet they were vastly different from David! Not content to **drink wine** from goblets, they consumed it **by the bowlful**. Only **the finest lotions** would do for their skin. Their sole concern was for their own luxurious lifestyle. They did **not grieve over the coming ruin of Joseph**, the Northern Kingdom (cf. 5:6, 15). They had no concern for their nation’s impending doom.”⁵
2. They, as the leaders of God’s chosen people, sat around leisurely in all their prosperity as if it was ok that they and the rest of the nation were spiritually

³ Motyer, J. A. (1994). [Amos](#). In D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Motyer, & G. J. Wenham (Eds.), *New Bible commentary: 21st century edition* (4th ed., pp. 802–803). Inter-Varsity Press.

⁴ Sunukjian, D. R. (1985). [Amos](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 1443). Victor Books.

⁵ Sunukjian, D. R. (1985). [Amos](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 1443). Victor Books.

dead, living in total violation of the Mosaic Law. They were living as if they were in the same standing with God as David, and as such, could sit around singing random music with no cares in the world, anointing themselves with the finest oils and drinking so much wine they had to pour it into bowls rather than cups! They sat there on their couches, eating the best meat of their flocks in abundance while the wrath of God was stirring up against them like a raging inferno, and yet, they saw no reason for concern! They felt so entitled to the blessing of God that even though they worshiped pagan gods, were justifying rampant sexual immorality and blatant unethical and unjust business practices, they still couldn't fathom why they wouldn't live in God's blessings—arrogance!

3. God had promised in His Law and even in the words He gave Solomon, that he would violently punish such arrogance, and therefore, to no surprise, Amos announces the certainty of the coming wrath of God in verse 8 – **"The Lord GOD has sworn by himself"**
4. "... Amos makes it clear that these 'notable men' of Israel demanded preferential treatment and recognition. And that is exactly what they got. God promised that they would be the first—but the first to be dragged off as captives (6:7). In fact, he declared that they would be 'at the head of the defeat march into captivity'. Now, instead of drunken revelry, they would discover that the party was over and the end had come."⁶
5. There is nothing more arrogant than saying you can live in sin, doing what you are not supposed to do, while you don't do what you are supposed to do, with no consequences! Bentley wrote, **"If we ignore our responsibilities and think that by doing so 'the evil day' will be pushed further and further into the future, then we are in for an unpleasant surprise. By acting like this we are, in effect, bringing nearer the judgement day. If our sole occupation is our present enjoyment then we are ignoring this fact: time is marching onwards."**⁷

The second testimony is in Amos 6:13-14.

(2) They viewed their past military victories as evidence of their invincibility. (6:13-14)

- A. (*Video clip of Nic Saban – "Rat Poison"*) Former University of Alabama Football Coach Nick Saban once described the media's description of his team as rat poison. At that point in the season, they had played less talented teams and beat them by an enormous margin. Basing their opinions on those victories, the media kept saying Alabama was the best team in the country, was guaranteed to

⁶ Bentley, M. (2006). [*Opening up Amos*](#) (p. 81). Day One Publications.

⁷ Bentley, M. (2006). [*Opening up Amos*](#) (p. 79). Day One Publications.

win the national championship, and was essentially unbeatable. Meanwhile, Saban was trying to keep his team focused on what they needed to do to continue improving and become the kind of team that could win a national championship. In like manner, the northern Kingdom was living as if they couldn't be defeated as well! Amos wrote,

- B. 13 you who rejoice in Lo-debar, who say, "Have we not by our own strength captured Karnaïm for ourselves?" 14 "For behold, I will raise up against you a nation, O house of Israel," declares the Lord, the God of hosts; "and they shall oppress you from Lebo-hamath to the Brook of the Arabah." (6:13-14)**
- C.** Another, more widely known example of this was France's assumption after World War 1 about the plans it made to defend itself against another invasion by Germany.
- D.** "The Allied debacle in 1940 that resulted in a stunning German victory in the West has been a popular subject for decades. How does France, a major military power considered to have one of the greatest armies in the world, spend 20 years planning for a war and then lose it disastrously alongside British, Belgian, and Dutch forces in a mere six weeks? ... When drafting the campaign plan to defend against a German attack, the Allies failed to develop an effective strategy to defeat Germany or to consider and implement key elements of operational art, especially in balancing a clear military objective with the operational factors of time, space, and force. In addition, **their tunnel vision in planning solely against the enemy's most likely course of action and disregarding other more dangerous contingencies had catastrophic results.** Together, these three major shortcomings that existed even before the German onslaught began in May 1940—a strategy without victory, an imbalance of operational factors, and the preoccupation with a single course of action—spelled doom for the victors of 1918.”⁸
- E.** In the run-up to World War 2, the French commanders were so confident in their previous four-year defense against a German invasion in World War 1 (which I would argue was a total disaster!) that they didn't feel it was necessary to even consider contingencies if Germany didn't attack as they planned for Germany to do! When Germany didn't do what the French arrogantly assumed the Germans would do, the proverbial truth that pride comes before the fall proved itself to be a trustworthy saying yet again! Past victories mean absolutely nothing to future battles.
- F. "6:13 Lo-Debar** A town in the northern part of the Transjordan, close to where the Yarmuk River joins the Jordan River. It may have been part of the territory

⁸ <https://www.usmcu.edu/Outreach/Marine-Corps-University-Press/MCU-Journal/IAMS-vol-14-no-1/Trying-Not-to-Lose-It/>

recovered by Jeroboam II (2 Kgs 14:25). **Karnaim** A city in Gilead east of the Sea of Galilee. It is mentioned in the OT only here and in Gen 14:5. Karnaim may have been part of the area that Jeroboam II reconquered (2 Kgs 14:25). **6:14 Lebo-hamath up to the wadi of the Arabah** Encompasses the full length of Israel's territory. The same locations are used to show how Jeroboam II expanded Israel's borders in 2 Kgs 14:25."⁹

- G. "The word **oppress** deliberately evoked and promised again the bitter experiences of Egypt (Ex. 3:9) and the time of the Judges (Jud. 2:18; 4:3; 6:9; 10:11–12; 1 Sam. 10:17–18); Israel would again descend into slavery. All the territory they so boastfully held—**from** the northern frontier of **Lebo Hamath to** the southern border of **the Arabah**, the valley extending from the Sea of Kinnereth to the Dead Sea (2 Kings 14:25)—would be swallowed by the invading foe. Then Israel would know whose "strength" really determined the destiny of nations."¹⁰
- H. "The final verses of this chapter (13–14) again mock those in Israel who think by their own strength they can gain security. "Lo-debar" and "Karnaim" are towns in the trans-Jordan where Israel may have been successful in victories over the Aramaeans, a traditional enemy. Amos pictures Israel as boastful of these successes and sarcastically twists their boast. He mispronounces "Lo-debar" as "Lo-dabar," which means "no-thing." They boast over nothing! "Karnaim" means "horns" in Hebrew and is a common image for strength. Israel's boast is that by their own strength they have gained strength. But Amos's rejoinder to this boasting ("We are the masters of our fate") is that it is not so. Because they have corrupted justice and righteousness and made them into absurd things (v. 12) they are not at all secure—in spite of their strength. God is raising up a nation against them (v. 14a), and this nation will oppress Israel from one end of its territory to the other (Lebo-hamath to Arabah). Only a few years after Amos's preaching, the Assyrians destroyed and ended the Northern Kingdom of Israel. This no doubt convinced those who remembered and preserved Amos's words that it was Assyria Amos had in mind as the instrument of God's judgment in sayings such as this one."¹¹
- I. In Amos' day, the northern Kingdom of Israel had defeated some of the nations around them, but nothing like the Assyrians had ever threatened Israel. The Assyrians were way more powerful than Israel, but in Israel's arrogance, they viewed their military victories as evidence of them being somebody they were not! Their victories were because of the hand of God in their life; His hand of

⁹ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., Whitehead, M. M., Grigoni, M. R., & Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (Am 6:13–14). Lexham Press.

¹⁰ Sunukjian, D. R. (1985). *Amos*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 1444). Victor Books.

¹¹ Birch, B. C. (1997). *Hosea, Joel, and Amos* (P. D. Miller & D. L. Bartlett, Eds.; pp. 229–230). Westminster John Knox Press.

favor; however, because of their arrogance, that same hand would raise up a nation to destroy them!

Conclusion: Amos concluded the letter with the certainty that God would destroy all who were living in arrogance.

10 All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword, who say, 'Disaster shall not overtake or meet us.' (9:10)

When we jump over to the New Testament, we read some interesting stuff on the subject of arrogance and how we should see ourselves and others. In 1 Peter, we read something very similar to what we just read in Amos.

5 Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” (1 Peter 1:5)

Nothing changes in the New Testament. Arrogance is an abomination to God, and He will oppose it. We should expect God to humble us when we walk in arrogance, because He promises to do so. As a matter of fact, the most chilling testimony of being under the wrath of God is if He allows us to continue in our arrogance! God disciplines those He loves!

To no surprise, then, Paul instructed believers to live in a way that is opposite to arrogance. He wrote,

3 For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. (Romans 12:3)

Paul said it this way to the church in Philippi,

3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. (Philippians 2:3)

The argument in Philippians chapter two is that Christ is greater than all of us and, as such, truly deserves to be praised by us because He is actually worthy of it. However, instead of living to be glorified by man, he humbled Himself to serve us with His life as the ransom for our sin.

Paul therefore says we should treat everybody else, who, before God, are as equally sinful as we are, and that Jesus equally suffered for, as actually being more significant than ourselves! It's not that they are more significant, and certainly not that they are less significant, but either way, I'm to treat them as if they are more significant than me because that's how the One who IS more significant than me treated me!

No matter how much good I've done in this world, no matter how important my job may be to society, no matter how much influence I have with others, no matter how disciplined I am in my obedience to God's commands, and no matter how deeply and sincerely I love Jesus, I am still no more significant than anybody else. Even if I could falsely imagine myself to be, I'm certainly no more significant than Jesus, who suffered God's eternal wrath for me so I could be rescued from sin and given God's eternal life! Therefore, I have no reason not to treat others as Christ treated me! If Jesus could treat me as more significant than Himself, then certainly I can treat everybody else that way.

Perhaps nothing captures this truth more than a parable Jesus taught. In the Gospel of Luke, we read,

9 He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: 10 "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.' 13 But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted." (Luke 18:9-14)

This tax collector didn't measure righteousness by how he compared to others but by the actual measure of righteousness—God! He knew he was unworthy of the love and favor of God, and therefore, He didn't come before God confident in His works but rather in confidence that He needed God's grace!

And listen, church, the grace needed by this fictional character in the story Jesus made up to illustrate a point is the same grace you and I need, and the exact grace Jesus gave us! Who could possibly be more glorious than Jesus? How could anybody see themselves as anything other than a servant of Christ once they have been exposed to the grace of Jesus?

So!!

Challenge: The cure for arrogance is to get your eyes off yourself and onto the only one worthy of praise and honor—Jesus!

You will never overcome your arrogance by focusing on your arrogance. You cannot HUMBLE yourself. We can only BE humbled. We can only BE set free from the foolishness within us that leads to arrogance, and the only one who can do that, who can SAVE us, is JESUS! It's why Jude, brother of James, and more importantly, Jesus, wrote,

24 Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, 25 to the only God, our Savior,

through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen. (Jude 1:24-25)