

1 Corinthians 13:4

Love ... does not boast, it is not proud.

In the New Testament, various words are translated as "boast" and "proud." Here we will look at the words found in the 1 Corinthians 13:4 passage.

BOASTING

This specific word occurs only here - nowhere else in the New Testament. It refers to drawing people's attention to one's self. Love is not constantly trying to get people's attention, trying to impress them with one's self. It does not have a "me, me, me" attitude.

PRIDE

Some of the New Testament Greek words translated as "pride" can refer to a good action. It is good to take pride in what God has done. In some instances, it is good to take pride in other people, or even (in rare instances) in one's self. But it is *never* good to have the type of pride that exalts one person (especially one's self) above others (or above God). Most forms of pride are sinful; we must forsake such attitudes, and have repentance and humility, instead.

The specific word translated as "proud" in 1 Corinthians 13:4 is *never* good. It is always sinful. This word is translated as "puffed-up" in the King James Version. It can refer to someone with an "inflated" ego - someone who is "filled with hot air." In his own eyes, he may be superior to the rest of us. But in the eyes of others, he may be nothing more than an arrogant "air head."

This is what the Bible says about this arrogant, "air-headed" pride:

1. It can easily be associated with many types of sinful attitudes and conduct.
Example: 2 Corinthians 12:20
2. It can cause people to become blind to the presence of serious sin. Example:
1 Corinthians 5:2

These are some of the things that can cause (or be associated with) this "air-headed" arrogance:

1. Knowing a lot of truth, but not having the love that God requires us to have.
Example: 1 Corinthians 8:1

2. Empty, foolish talk that is not backed-up by one's actions. The words do not match reality - like the proverbial saying: "His bark is worse than his bite.": 1 Corinthians 4:18-19
3. Fake humility and superficial religious activities: Colossians 2:18 [Note: The person may consider his experiences (and even himself) to be quite important - and even godly! Yet God knows better, and to him, they are fake and superficial.]
4. A focus on leaders (rather than on Christ), trying to exalt one leader (your favorite one, for instance) above another: 1 Corinthians 4:6 (& context)

In contrast to all this...

... is love, which never exhibits an air-headed arrogance: 1 Corinthians 13:4

Things to think about:

For most people, it is easy to think about *other* people who commit these sins. In this section, focus on ways in which *you* might also be guilty - even just a tiny bit. Think of ways in which you may have had this type of "me-centered" boasting and/or the "puffed-up" type of pride.

Boasting / A Focus on One's Self

- What are some of the ways a person can direct attention toward himself? (Some ways are obvious; others may be less noticeable.) What are some ways you could inadvertently become guilty of this sin?
- This week, observe the way you interact with others. Think about whether or not you might need to apply this characteristic of love in some specific situation. [If you discover some ways... then do it!]

Pride / Arrogance

- How bad is it, to be "puffed up" or to have an "air headed" arrogance? How easy is it to get such an attitude? [Note that the people Paul wrote to probably didn't even realize they had this problem. He had to tell them repeatedly that they were that way!]
- Are there ways you could have such an attitude (being "puffed-up"), without being aware of it? ...even just occasionally? Think about this for a few days. If you discover that there is a possible tendency for this, try to develop an awareness of it, so that you will be able to recognize it when it begins to occur. Make it your goal to repent of it (every time it happens) before it has time to destroy you (and others)!

For further study:

Look for other verses that make mention of pride, boasting, arrogance, and similar concepts. (You may wish to use a concordance or other Bible study help, if available.) Find out what you can about these concepts, such as, what types of pride does the Bible mention? Under what circumstances may such attitudes be good and at what times might they be sinful? There may be examples, as well as direct statements or commands, that will help you better understand this entire concept. [Your study would include more than just the two specific words used in this 1 Corinthians 13 passage. (These two words refer only to sinful types of pride and boasting.)]

The Greek words:

The word translated as "boasting," above:

perpereuomai - to boast one's self - 1 Corinthians 13:4

The word group translated as "proud," above (2 related words are included in this study):

phusioo (related to the word **phusa** - a pair of bellows) - to inflate, blow up, blow out, to cause to swell up; figurative, to puff up, make proud; passive to be puffed up, to bear one's self loftily, be proud - 1 Corinthians 4:6, 18-19; 5:2; 8:1; 13:4; Colossians 2:18

phusiosis - a puffing up of soul, loftiness, pride - 2 Corinthians 12:20