

EGOISM AND SELF-LOVE

When Christ gathered a huge crowd on a mountain at the beginning of His ministry, the bible tells us that He sat down and 'opened His mouth' and the first words that came out of His mouth were,

**"Blessed are the poor in spirit
for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven"**

When Christ is speaking to the vast crowds in His famous "Sermon on the Mount" and he starts off with this blessing, He is directly describing the most blessed of 'all' the virtues.

HUMILITY

The secret to our entrance into heaven.
Our direct ticket to eternal life.

But how difficult it is to achieve the great virtue of **humility**.

Truly, how many TODAY have unravelled
the secret of humility.

**What is humility?
How do we understand humility?
How can a person that is not truly
humble learn about humility?**

YES -we can read about humility
-we can see it in Christ's life and the Saints after Him.
-we can see it in people's lives around us.

BUT - How do we attain it? How do we make it ours?

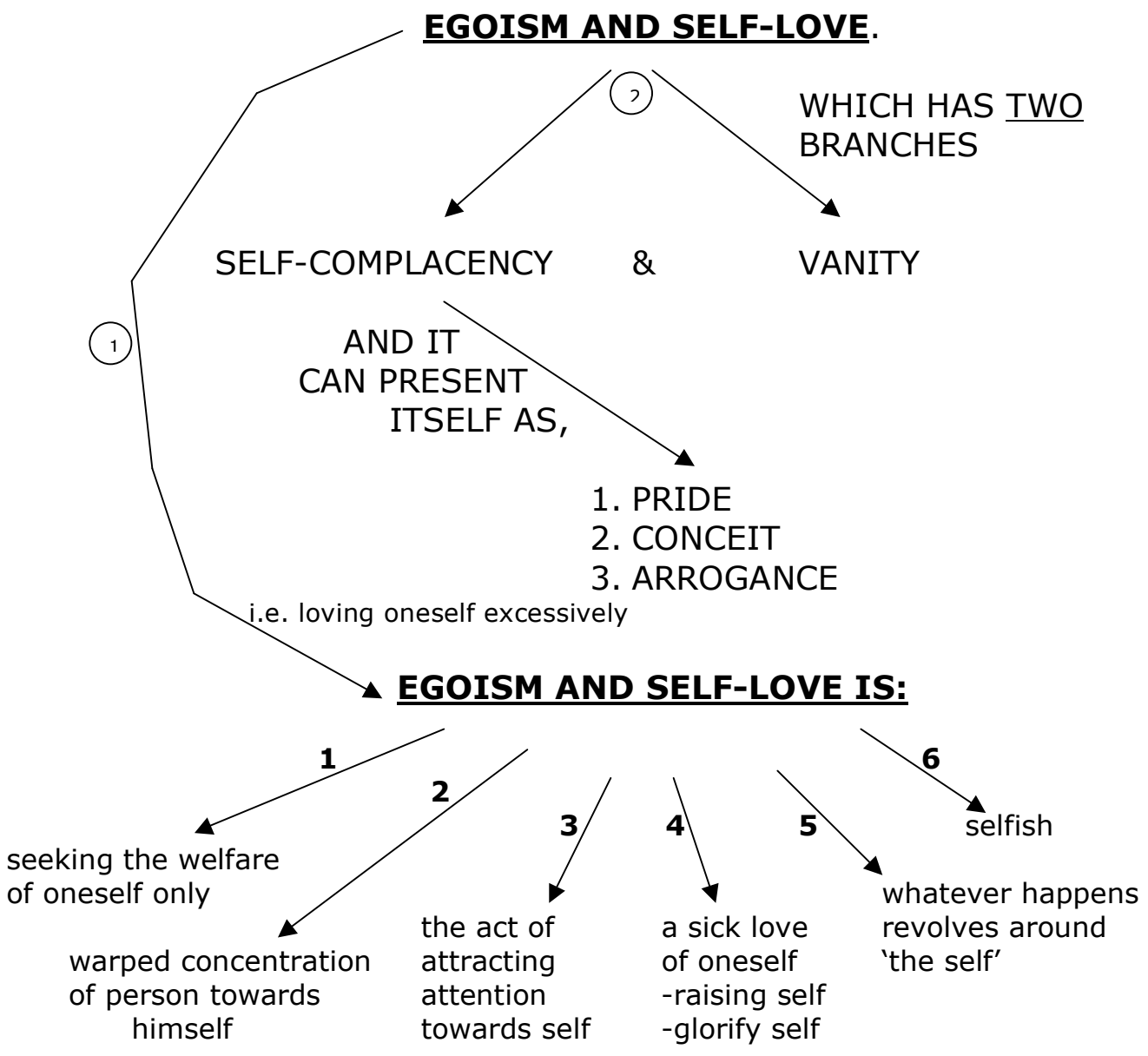
Ironically we can understand a little about this beautiful virtue through the study of its opposite.....

EGOISM AND SELF-LOVE!!

Just as we can appreciate

- 1. light better if we live in darkness for an extended period of time,
- 2. or our gift of good health during times of illness,

We can also learn to appreciate humility and its TRUE BENEFITS by discussing and studying and relating to its opposite,



GOD CREATED US IN ORDER



- to achieve happiness and bliss
- to learn to totally depend on God, to unite with Him and find happiness with Him.

A SICK MAN/PROUD MAN, however,

1. Feels that he can achieve bliss on his own, and by his own means
2. Puts himself in the PLACE OF GOD and, therefore replaces

love & dependence on God
with love and dependence on self!!!

- and instead of "*loving God with all your heart, and all your soul, and all your strength, and all your mind*", the proud man loves SELF "*with all heart...*"

But we can think within ourselves and say

- ONLY THE DEVIL is a true representation of the ULTIMATE in pride
- ONLY people far away from the church or that are totally WARPED fall into the pits of PRIDE

**BUT THESE TRAGICAL STATES CAN VERY EASILY
ENSNARE US IF WE ARE NOT CAREFUL IN THE
TRAPS THAT ARE SET BEFORE US!**

- and knowledge regarding the branches and format that egoism and self-love can take can help us arm ourselves accordingly to fight these DREADED PASSIONS!

Let us begin by discussing the first branch of egoism which is;

1.SELF-COMPLACENCY

What is self-complacency?

1. The feeling you have when you are satisfied with yourself
2. Happy/Content even with a fault that I have
3. Pleased with oneself



I AM HAPPY WITH MYSELF

a self-complacent person sits back and adores himself!

- with my actions
- with my life
- with my talents and abilities

WHATEVER I DO IS JUST FINE

- I don't have to do any more
- the path I am on is comfortable
- my daily routines are satisfying

e.g.?

"how are you going?"



"just great"

"everything's fine"

"not a care in the world"

A self-complacent person then starts to feel that he is ALWAYS right



there is nothing to improve on
IN FACT, there is no NEED for him to improve on anything

there is no reason to push himself

he sees no need to do things that will help him to improve spiritually

⇒ so the spiritual struggle stops being such an important aspect in such a person's life as does,

- prayer
- confession
- bible study



AND DON'T LET ANYONE POINT OUT TO HIM ANYTHING WRONG WITH HIM

-THEY CAN'T, BECAUSE THERE IS NOTHING WRONG WITH HIM



A COMPLACENT PERSON CAN BECOME

1. proud i.e. is so happy with himself
2. lazy because there is nothing to improve on
3. unrefined i.e. is happy with all his faults

and therefore a burden on others

A COMPLACENT PERSON IS ONE THAT CANNOT SEE HIS TRUE SPIRITUAL STATE

And he can then very easily become conceited!!!!!!

2.CONCEIT

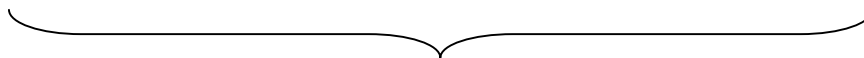
But what is conceit?

- 1. having an excessively high opinion of oneself**
- 2. having an exaggerated sense of self-importance**
- 3. having an inflated, warped, view of ones abilities**



A CONCEITED PERSON REGARDS
THEMSELVES AS NUMBER ONE

1. they are always right
2. they talk very easily about themselves and their achievements
3. they easily brag about their superiority
their power
their beauty



- *they disregard the positives in others
- *they see other peoples good points as inferior to theirs
- *they easily get bored with other peoples concerns

⇒ When someone says a story, they come up with a better one

⇒ If they hear of someone else's achievements, they are sure to surpass them.

A conceited person;

1. is stubborn
2. thinks he is knowledgeable
3. thinks he has a great personality, and is a fun person
4. cannot be regarded as being wrong in front of others
5. gets insulted easily esp.

- a) when he is ignored
- b) when people disagree with him
- c) when he is not praised and others are
- d) when +ve things are said about others



In these instances the conceited person gets moody and jealous.

A conceited person

1. lives for himself,
2. aims to satisfy himself,
3. aims to suit his every whim and desire and,
4. does NOT care too much about the other person

A conceited person does not consider



1. sacrificing himself
2. helping others unless it benefits him
3. does not try to place himself in the other persons situation

St Paul (gal 6:3) says

**“For if anyone thinks himself to be something,
when he is nothing,
he deceives himself”**

Deceives i.e. is not living reality, is living in a dream!

Now a conceited person appears and acts and presents in an ARROGANT manner.

Which brings us to the next deadly vice.

3.ARROGANCE

What is arrogance?

- 1. being too proud of oneself and too scornful of others**
- 2. displaying a sense of overbearing self-importance**
- 3. assumption of one's superiority towards others**

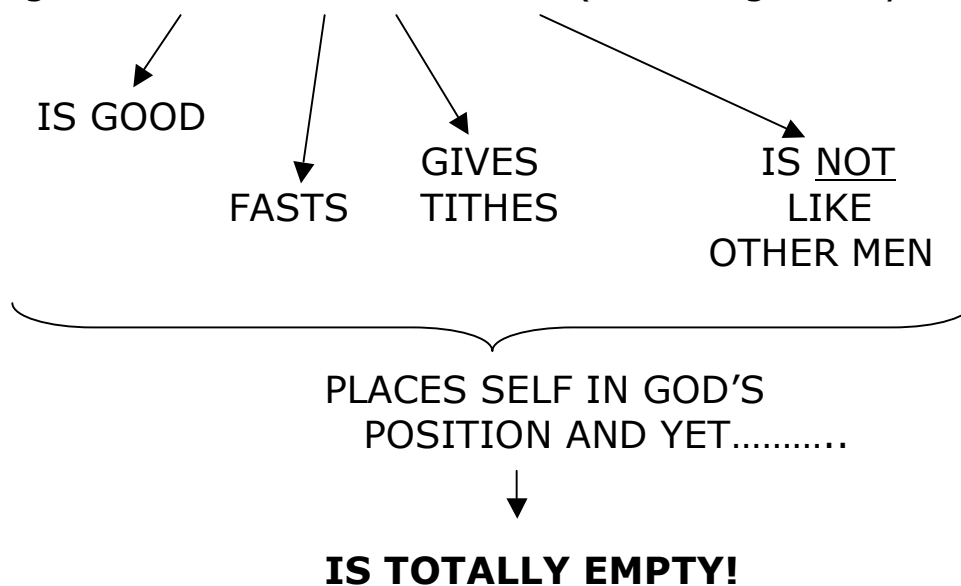
An arrogant person in fact, draws attention to himself, especially in his **mannerisms**. Such a person;

1. boasts about himself **and** treats others indifferently. (feels that they're not worth it)
2. brags about himself with audacity
3. speaks only to people that he wants to
4. is very critical of others/ very easily judges other people
5. puts other people down in order to appear good

An arrogant person aims to APPEAR **IMPORTANT**
AND
POPULAR

IN A WORD, THE ARROGANT PERSON IS A **SNOB!!**

e.g. Pharisee and tax-collector (Parable given by Christ)



AT THE END OF IT ALL,

AN ARROGANT PERSON IS NOT A VERY LIKEABLE CHARACTER.

OK. Now for the big one.

The worm that affects a lot of people, whatever their spiritual state.

It is a snare that traps both the beginners as well as the spiritually advanced.....

the second branch of egoism and self-love

4.VANITY

In the beginning God planted the seed of GLORY in us in order for us to seek out 'glory with God'.

However, our eternal enemy – the devil – twisted it and turned it into vanity!!

What is vanity?

- 1. something that is vain, is empty, or valueless**
- 2. inflated pride in oneself or one's appearance**
- 3. an excessive desire for notice or approval**

**A VAIN PERSON AIMS TO GAIN HONOUR
AND GOOD REPUTATION IN FRONT OF
PEOPLE'S EYES BY DISREGARDING
GENUINE, HUMBLE & WISE BEHAVIOUR**

A vain person YEARNS,

to be flattered and
praised by people

to be glorified
by people

to be liked
by people

A vain person makes sure that all his actions,
his words,
his appearance and generally
speaking, his whole life,

↓ is such

that he will be both
ACCEPTED AND RESPECTED
by other people.

A VAIN PERSON WOULD GO AS FAR AS CARRYING OUT

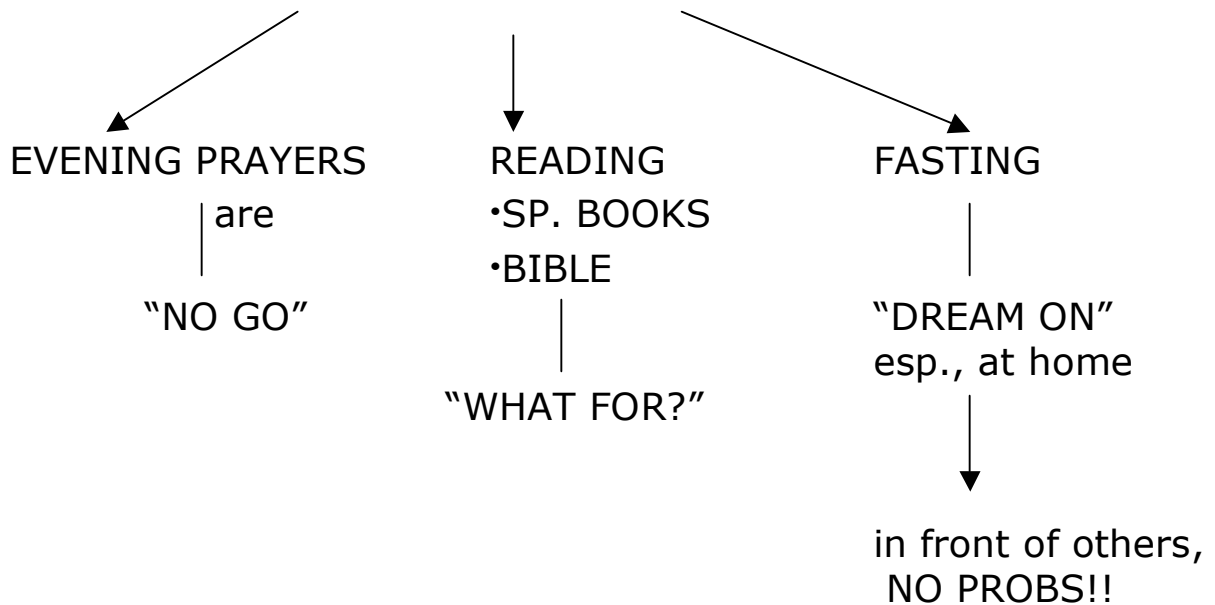
1. RESPECTED TASKS
2. HOLY TASKS
3. GOOD TASKS



FOR NO OTHER
REASON BUT TO
BE HONOURED BY PEOPLE!

Such a person

- does not do good works if no-one is around to see him and flatter him



You see a vain person pushes themselves physically, sacrifices themselves

just so other people can see his actions and praise him

A vain person falls into the proud man's trap

loves talking about self in order to gain

- honour
- respect
- sense of appeal and likeability

loves it when people say "wow" or are engrossed with his words

A vainglorious person has rather weak morals and principles.

↓
 He is very superficial
 (Such a person does not have much of a backbone)

↓ he changes like
 a chameleon

even if he knows
 that something is wrong,
 he will still go ahead with it
 for the sake of acceptance,
 and gaining honour and glory!!

VANITY

▲takes our attention away from

important and essential } aspects of life and degrades us to
 1. insignificant
 2. immature
 3. childish actions

ALSO

twists the genuine and simple character into a
 HYPOCRITICAL, SUPERFICIAL AND PROUD INDIVIDUAL!!!

VANITY GIVES RISE TO

↓
 PRETENSE

↓
 HYPOCRISY

↓
 LIES

VANITY MAKES A PERSON,

- jealous
- intense
- stressed

Why? Because "he cannot be better than me"

- cunning

Why? Because I have to find a way to be better than him

- rude
- not likeable
- conceited

Why? Because, by stepping on others I can come out on top.



This is why St Paul says
 "Let us not become conceited,
 provoking one another, envying one another" (Gal 5:26)

↓ VANITY
 ↓ MAKES A PERSON

- roll in the mud
- do things unnatural and disagreeable
 (one example of this is 'extreme
 makeover')

↙
 Where people feel it popular
 and enviable to improve
 on God's handiwork.

A vain person would even DISREGARD AND BACKSTAB
the person that cares for him and,
helps him.



esp. if this person seems to
get in his way or is not really needed.

A vain person would even deny God in front of others
e.g.

- not do cross
- not admit going to church on a Sunday
- not confess being an active Christian

St John 12: 42,43

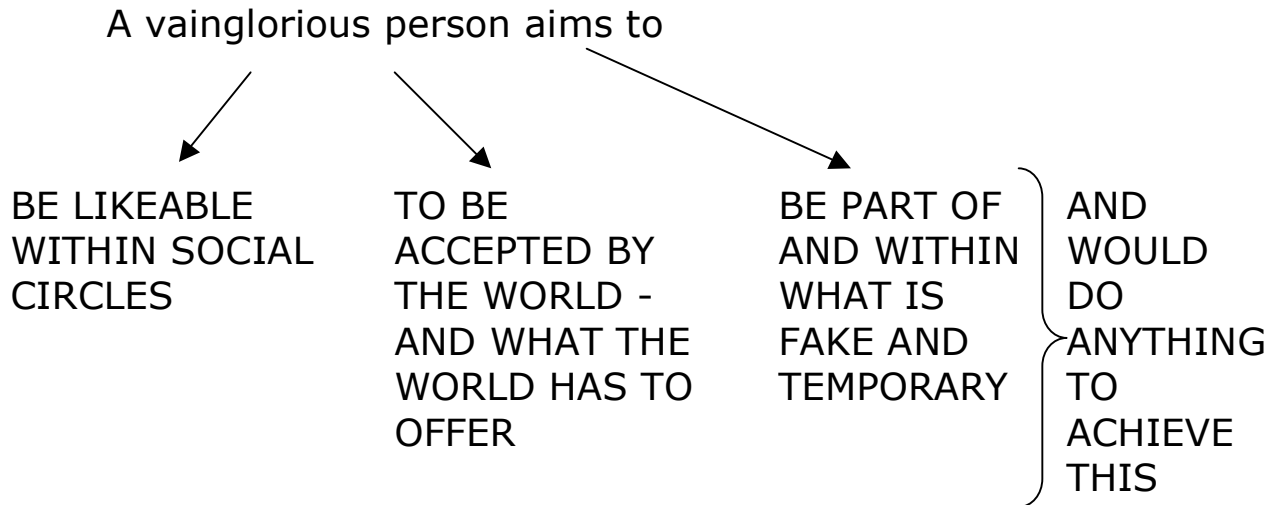
**“they did not confess Him, lest they should be put
out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of
men more than the praise of God”**



such a soul

- is infected with spiritual cancer,
- denies its own creator
- disregards God

AND FOR WHAT PURPOSE? in order to be liked by men



THEREFORE, such a person becomes enslaved and bound to
WHAT OTHERS THINK OF HIM

St Paul Gal 1:10

“Do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ”

St Paul here clearly states that I should live my life either for God **OR** for men. I cannot please both!!!

And since egoism and self-love is so contrary to the most blessed virtue of HUMILITY, Christ uses it in explanation and description of true blessedness.

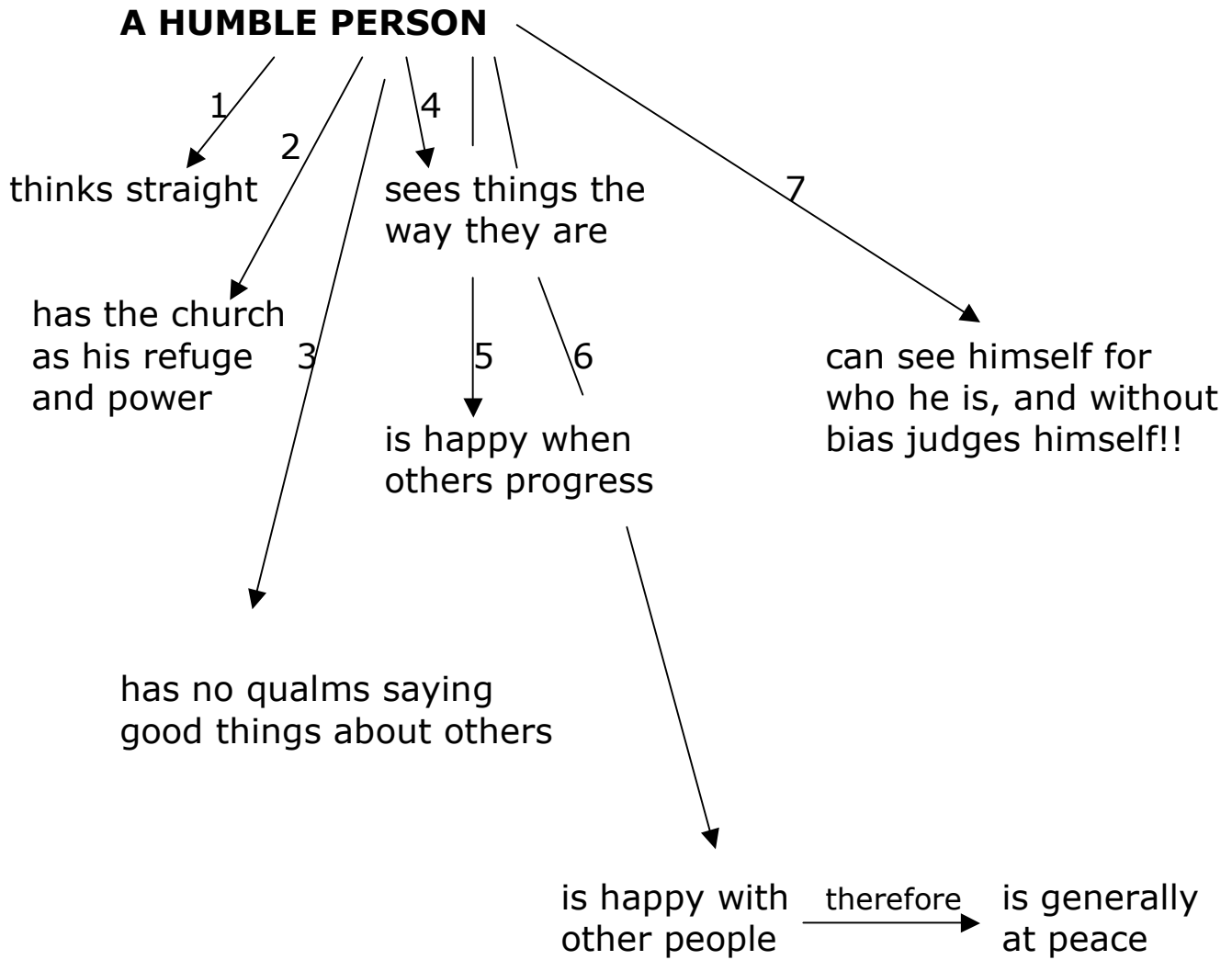
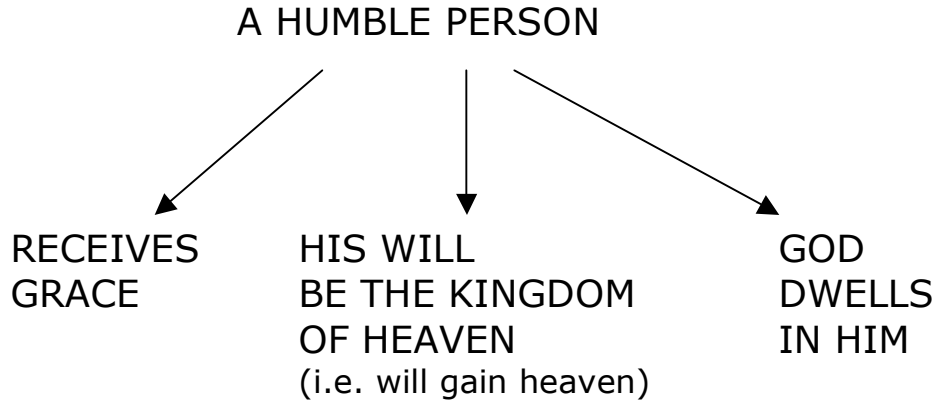
“Everyone proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord”

Prov. 16:5

“for whoever exalts himself will be humbled” Luke 14:11

“God resists the proud, but gives Grace to the humble”

James 4:6



HIS ONLY CONCERNS ARE

- HIS SINS
- HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD
- SERVING OTHERS

AS A CONCLUSION

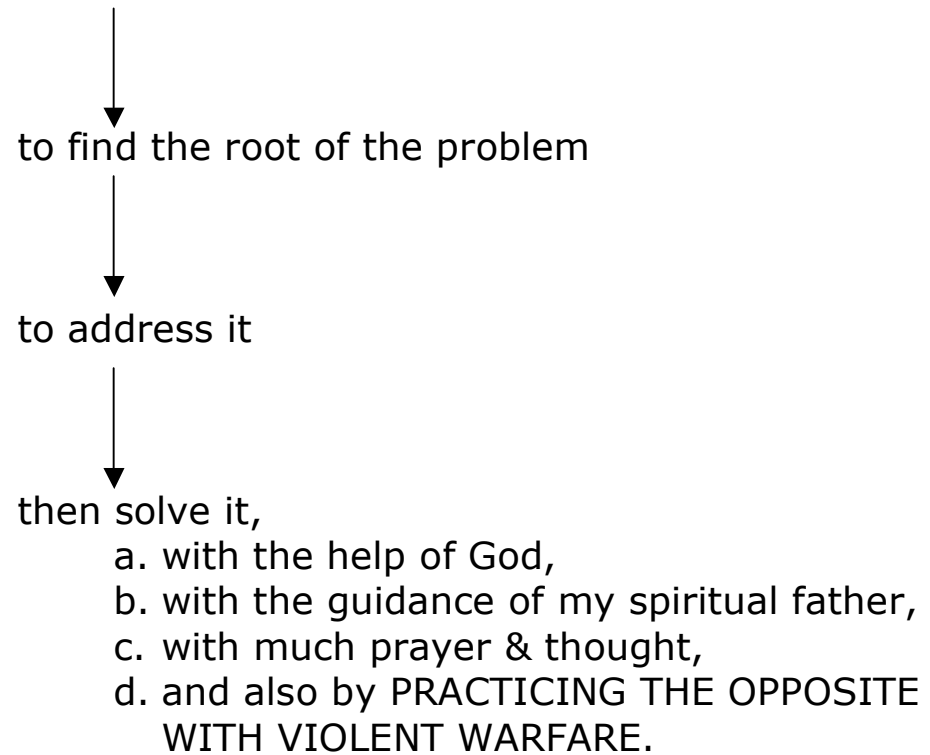
1. There are many different deadly paths towards

- LOVE OF SELF
- HAVING ME AS THE CENTRE

2. I need to consider:

- I. How do I treat people? Am I conceited?
- II. How do I see myself? Am I complacent?
- III. Do I see my faults? Am I arrogant?
- IV. What moves me? Am I vain?
- V. Do I aim to please God **OR**
do I aim to please men?

3. These are key questions I need to ask myself in order to unravel the snake of pride



**“For the Kingdom of Heaven
suffers violence
and the violent take it by force”**