

Vain Conceit

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit.
Rather, in humility value others above yourselves,
not looking to your own interests
but each of you to the interests of the others.

Philippians 2:3-4 (NIV)

He was one of the sad-
der men that I have
met in my lifetime.

There seemed to be some-
thing very wrong with him,
and it took me a while to de-
termine what was really going
on in his life.

The first thing I noticed about
him was the way he walked.
He seemed to strut or swag-
ger when he walked any-
where. The manner in which
he moved suggested that he
had a sense of self impor-
tance.

Then, I noticed that he had an
opinion on every topic of con-
versation. He tried to show
that he knew a lot about any
subject at all.

Yet, when you listened care-
fully to what he would say,
you soon realized that he was
mistaken about a lot of things.

What was wrong with him?
Well, he had a form of con-
ceit—to use the term Paul
does in our verses today. He
sought to portray the notion

that he was very clever and
superior to other people.

However, what I learned was
that deep down he sensed
he was very inferior and that
was the reason he tried to act
superior to others. He tried to
compensate for his inferior-
ity by pretending to be better
than others. Paul calls such
action '*vain conceit*'.

Paul gives us the cure for
"vain conceit". He tells us to
value the gifts of the other
brother or sister more than
any gifts the Lord has given
you. So the one who is able to
lead a church service, preach
a sermon or teach a large Sun-
day School class should see
that the person handing out
bulletins and greeting visitors
is also very important.

The finest sermon or the most
impressive Bible lesson can
fall on deaf ears if the visitor
has not been warmly greeted
when entering the church
building. When someone en-
ters church and has a friendly
handshake and a sincere

question about how they are
today, that person senses that
this church truly cares for
them and they want to know
more.

Examine your own heart to
see if you are among the hum-
ble whom Paul refers in our
verses. Call to mind the words
of Peter when he said in 1
Peter 5:5-6 (NIV) **"In the same
way, you who are younger,
submit yourselves to your el-
ders. All of you, clothe your-
selves with humility toward
one another, because, 'God
opposes the proud but shows
favor to the humble.' Humble
yourselves, therefore, under
God's mighty hand, that he
may lift you up in due time."**

Speak an encouraging word
to someone today that will
lift them up. Speak the truth,
and do it in love so that the
one to whom you speak will
recognize the sincerity of your
speech and be blessed.