

# THE SILENT KILLER

## 20 Signs You May Be Arrogant Without Knowing It

James 4:6

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Arrogance is a silent destroyer. It eats away at glory like cancer consumes the body. Many carry it unknowingly, thinking they are strong, successful, or wise—while God sees a heart lifted up in pride. The Bible is clear: *“Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall” (Proverbs 16:18)*. And **James 4:6** reminds us, *“God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”*

Today, by the help of the Holy Spirit, we will go through all 20 lessons carefully. This is not for judging others, but for self-examination. As we walk through each point, I will bring illumination from Scripture, cautionary tales from politics and business, and the call to humility—for humility is the best.

### SECTION 1: ARROGANCE TOWARD AUTHORITY AND CORRECTION

1. When you cannot submit yourself to higher authority.

Moses was the humblest man on earth (**Numbers 12:3**), yet he submitted to God’s authority even when it was hard. In contrast, Korah rebelled against Moses’ leadership and was swallowed by the earth (**Numbers 16**).

Aaron and Miriam, Moses’ own siblings, arrogantly challenged their brother’s God-given authority: “Has the Lord spoken only through Moses? Has he not spoken through us also?” (**Numbers 12:2**). God struck Miriam with leprosy. Only Moses’ humble intercession saved her. Moses himself was called *“very humble, more than anyone else on the face of the earth” (Numbers 12:3)*—the very opposite of arrogance.

Business: Blockbuster’s leaders could not submit to the emerging reality of streaming. They dismissed Netflix’s model arrogantly and refused to adapt under new market “authority.” The result? Bankruptcy while Netflix thrived.

2. When you find it difficult to accept corrections.

King David accepted Nathan’s correction after his sin with Bathsheba and repented deeply (**2 Samuel 12**).

Biblical: King Asa became so enraged when the prophet Hanani corrected him that he threw the man in prison (**2 Chronicles 16**).

World: The White Star Line (Titanic). Leadership was warned about icebergs, but the “unsinkable” pride of the company led them to maintain full speed despite corrections.

Politics: Former U.S. President Richard Nixon’s Watergate scandal. Instead of submitting to the rule of law and accepting correction, his administration stonewalled, covered up, and attacked critics. The arrogance led to his historic resignation in disgrace—the only president forced from office.

Business: Kodak invented digital photography but found it difficult to accept correction from the market shift. They clung to film, leading to their decline and bankruptcy.

3. When you are too big to say “sorry.”

Jesus taught us to reconcile quickly (**Matthew 5:23-24**). The prodigal son’s father welcomed him with open arms, modeling forgiveness.

4. When you think that your success or achievements are based on your own efforts.

**Deuteronomy 8:17-18** warns: “*You may say to yourself, ‘My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.’ But remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you the ability to produce wealth.*”

Consider King Nebuchadnezzar, who boasted, “*Is this not the great Babylon I have built by my mighty power?*” He was driven into the wild to eat grass like an ox (**Daniel 4**).

Another example: The rich fool in **Luke 12**. He looked at his barns full of grain and said, “I will tear these down and build bigger. I did this. I will eat, drink, and be merry.” He didn’t thank God for the rain, the sun, or his very breath. God called him a fool. That very night, his life was demanded of him.

We must recognize that every talent, every opportunity, and every breath is a gift. You are not self-made; you are God-made.

5. When you don’t have respect for people.

**James 2:1-9** condemns showing favouritism and disrespecting the poor while honouring the rich. Jesus respected the Samaritan woman and children.

Politics & Business: Bode Thomas, a brilliant Nigerian lawyer and politician, was known for his confidence and strong will, but also for his arrogance. He insulted Alaafin Adeyemi II, the king of Oyo, at a council meeting on November 22, 1953. The Alaafin cursed Thomas, and the next day, Thomas died, allegedly barking like a dog. This incident has been attributed to the consequences of Thomas’s arrogance and disrespect towards traditional authority.

## SECTION 2: ARROGANCE OF SELF-EXALTATION

6. When you are always feeling superior to others.

The Pharisee prayed, “God, I thank you that I am not like other men”

(**Luke 18:11**). He went home unjustified. The tax collector, aware of his sin, received mercy.

7. When you always want to control or dominate others.

Jesus said, *"You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them... Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant"* (**Matthew 20:25-26**).

Dictators who dominate rather than serve eventually face revolt. Abacha's hubris was the belief that fear is a sustainable form of loyalty. He built a kingdom of shadows and "yes-men," only to find that when a leader is driven by ego rather than service, the foundation rots from the inside out—until it requires only a single moment of vulnerability to collapse entirely.

8. When you think that you are better than other people.

Paul warned, *"Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought"* (**Romans 12:3**).

Bible: Satan himself fell from heaven because he said in his heart, *"I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my throne above the stars of God... I will make myself like the Most High"* (**Isaiah 14:12-15**). Lucifer's arrogance cost him everything because he wanted to be above others.

9. When you cannot work under those with lesser qualifications.

Joseph served faithfully under Potiphar and the prison warden—men of lesser destiny—before rising.

Example: Naaman the Syrian general. He was a great warrior, but he had leprosy. When Elisha told him to wash in the muddy Jordan River, Naaman got angry. He said, *"I thought he would wave his hand and call on God!"* He was too big to wash in a dirty river. His servants had to beg him, *"Father, if the prophet had told you to do something great, you would do it. Why not wash and be clean?"* When he humbled himself, his flesh was restored (**2 Kings 5**).

10. When you are always angry at those who correct you.

**Proverbs 15:10** says, *"Stern discipline awaits anyone who leaves the path."* A humble person receives correction with gratitude.

Consider Cain, whose *"countenance fell"* in anger when God corrected his offering. This anger led to the first murder (**Genesis 4**).

### SECTION 3: ARROGANCE IN RELATIONSHIPS

11. When you avoid those who criticize you for not understanding their point of view.

Wise Solomon said, *"Reprove a wise man and he will love you"* (**Proverbs 9:8**).

12. When you feel too big to learn. The disciples had to learn from Jesus daily. Even at age 12, Jesus sat with teachers, listening and asking questions (**Luke 2:46**).

Business: Blockbuster Video had the chance to buy Netflix for \$50 million but was *"too big"* to learn the future of

digital streaming. Kodak's leadership once dominated photography but arrogantly dismissed digital technology as a fad. They disrespected innovators within their own ranks and failed to honor the very inventors who built their empire. Kodak filed for bankruptcy in 2012 while the world moved on.

13. When you feel ashamed to ask questions about what you don't know.

**Proverbs 18:15:** *"The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge, for the ears of the wise seek it out."*

Consider the "quiet" students in many professional workshops who fail because they value "looking smart" over "becoming smart."

14. When you are always bragging about your achievements or connections.

Let someone else praise you, and not your own mouth" (**Proverbs 27:2**). The Pharisee bragged in the temple.

Biblical: King Herod Agrippa allowed people to call him a god. He was struck by an angel and eaten by worms (**Acts 12**).

World: Lance Armstrong, whose arrogant bragging about his "natural" ability was the shield that hid years of doping.

15. When you don't consider it necessary to say "thank you" to those who help you.

Example: The ten lepers in **Luke 17**. Jesus healed all ten, but only one came back to say thank you. Where were

the nine? They were arrogant. They felt entitled to the healing. Arrogance forgets the hands that lifted it up. If you are at the top but ignore the people who helped you climb the ladder, you are not a leader; you are a tyrant.

#### SECTION 4: ARROGANCE IN LEARNING AND GROWTH

16. When you think that nobody knows more than you.

**1 Corinthians 8:2:** *"Those who think they know something do not yet know as they ought to know."*

Business: Enron executives believed they were the smartest in the room with their complex schemes. Their arrogance led to one of the biggest corporate collapses in history, destroying lives and savings.

17. When you think that you cannot make mistakes.

*"All have sinned and fall short"* (**Romans 3:23**). Consider the Apostle Peter, who boasted he would never deny Christ, ignoring Jesus' own warning (**Matthew 26**).

Business: Mr. Bigg's suffered from a form of corporate hubris. Because they were the first and the biggest, there was an underlying assumption that Nigerians would always come back for the "Mr. Bigg's experience," regardless of whether the air conditioners worked or the meat pies had meat in them. By the time they realized they needed to change, the "invincibility" was already gone.

18. When you think that you know everything in life.

Job's friends—Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar—were convinced they knew exactly why God was punishing Job, only to be rebuked by God (**Job 38**).

### **SECTION 5: ARROGANCE IN SPEECH AND ATTITUDE**

19. When you look at those who helped you get to the top as nothing.

Example (Boxing): Mike Tyson. In the late '80s, Tyson appeared to be an unstoppable force. However, his pride led him to believe he no longer needed the rigorous discipline of his mentor, Cus D'Amato, or his long-time

trainer, Kevin Rooney. This lack of humility in his preparation culminated in the 1990 upset against Buster Douglas, widely considered the greatest shock in sports history.

20. When you refuse to appreciate those who have been a blessing to your life, even when you have more than enough.

Nebuchadnezzar failed to appreciate God and His servants until he was humbled, eating grass like an ox (Daniel 4).

### **Closing Thought:**

Arrogance destroys glory. Humility invites God's favor, lasting success, and true greatness.

If the Lord is speaking to you right now about any of these 20 points, respond in your heart: Lord, I humble myself before You."

Humility is the best. Walk in it, and watch God lift you up in due time (1 Peter 5:6). Arrogance does not only bring people down—it causes them to walk past what could have lifted them.