

A Beautiful Mess

1 CORINTHIANS

- Somehow this group thinks that the goal of spiritual maturity is to be SEEN as better than others
 - Their worldview needed a radical change
 - Away from how awesome we are and how we exist unto ourselves
- The Gospel tells us quite the opposite—that we are to seek and work toward meekness as a virtue!
- Paul says God intends to move us out of pride and selfishness and into a great purpose for life that he has called us into

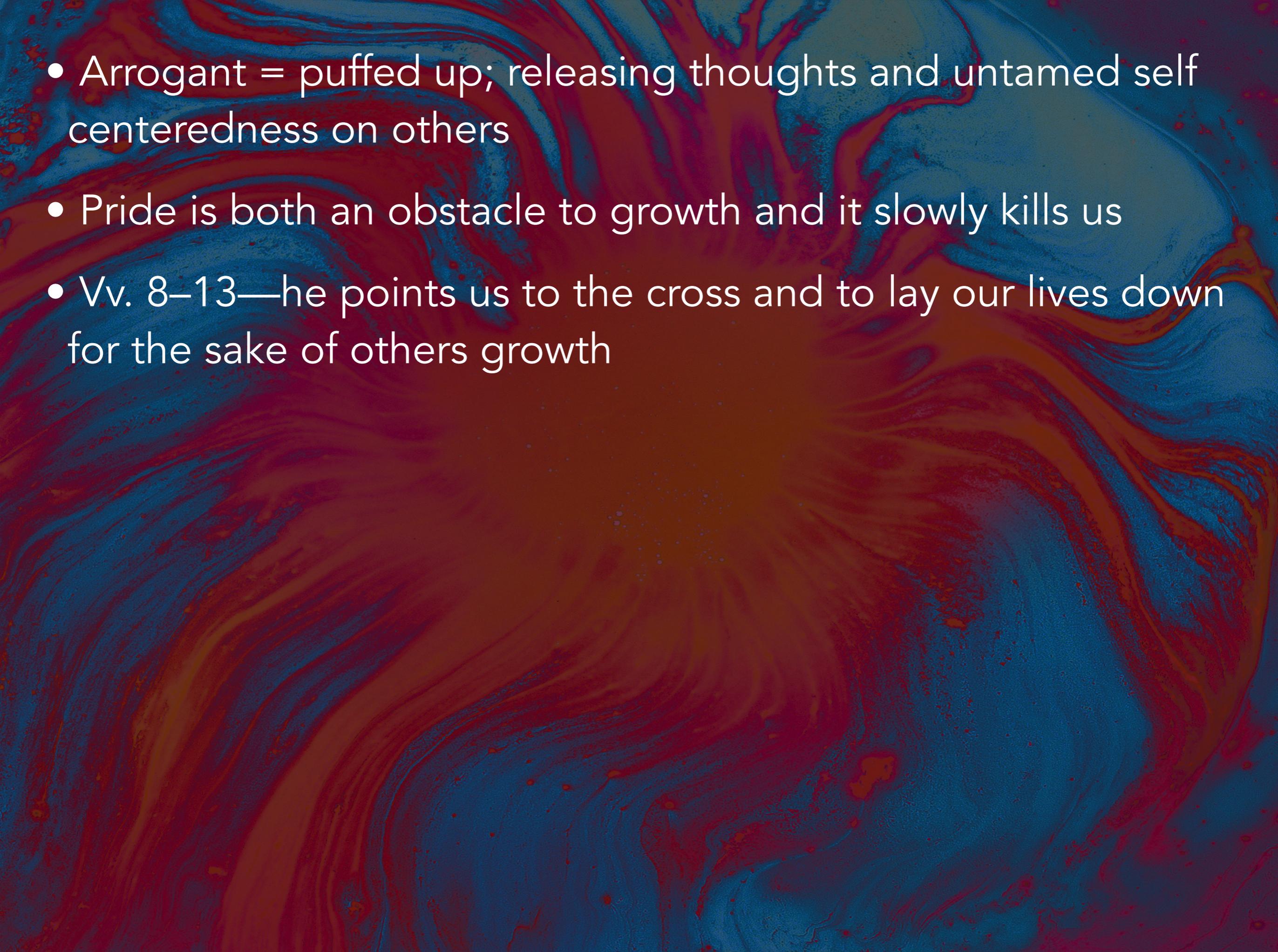
1 Corinthians 4:1–5 (NASB)

1 This, then, is how you ought to regard us: as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the mysteries God has revealed. 2 Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful. 3 I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. 4 My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me. 5 Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart. At that time each will receive their praise from God.

- We have a new identity (1–5), a right place (6–13) and a loving family (14–21)
- Corinthians serves to correct us, to recenter us around the cross and right thinking
- The Corinthians were living in half-truths, working against what God is intending to do in them
- Paul says we are servants and stewards, begins to explain our new identity
- Who are you?
 - Not what you do or love to do or dream about doing
 - These things flow out of who you are—servants of God, stewards of his mysteries
- This eternal, God-given truth allows you to pursue excellence in all things without becoming their slave

1 Corinthians 4:6–7 (NASB)

6 Now, brothers and sisters, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the meaning of the saying, "Do not go beyond what is written." Then you will not be puffed up in being a follower of one of us over against the other. 7 For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?

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- Arrogant = puffed up; releasing thoughts and untamed self centeredness on others
 - Pride is both an obstacle to growth and it slowly kills us
 - Vv. 8–13—he points us to the cross and to lay our lives down for the sake of others growth

1 Corinthians 4:14–17 (NASB)

14 I am writing this not to shame you but to warn you as my dear children. 15 Even if you had ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. 16 Therefore I urge you to imitate me. 17 For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church.

1 Corinthians 4:18–21 (NASB)

18 Some of you have become arrogant, as if I were not coming to you. 19 But I will come to you very soon, if the Lord is willing, and then I will find out not only how these arrogant people are talking, but what power they have. 20 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power. 21 What do you prefer? Shall I come to you with a rod of discipline, or shall I come in love and with a gentle spirit?

- Paul's correction comes within intentional relationship (discipleship) and spiritual parenthood
 - Be engaged (15)
 - Correct with love (14)
 - Model the way (16)
- Be engaged—you have a lot of instruction; who are you submitted to as your parent?
 - What are you leading as a spiritual parent?
- Tutors give us info; fathers know us, see us, correct us, and encourage us along the way





- Loving correction
- Admonish= to supply doctrine and spiritual pressure to urge someone to choose to turn to God's best
- We must put the health of the church above all
 - To call people we love back to the center of faith and trust in Jesus
 - Who can admonish you? Who can you admonish?

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 - With love!!

- Model the way
- This is the way of humility, exposure, risk and personal involvement
 - And its the way of the GREATEST REWARD—but not 100% success
- It's intimidating to think we have to be perfect and show everyone exactly how Christianity is done
- We say, "I'm desperate for the power of God in my life. I'm on this journey of following Jesus—will you come with me?"

- This puts us on the road to what we were meant for, our purpose
 - Live raw and real and completely relying on the power of the Spirit
 - So people can see the power of the Gospel at work in our beautiful messes
- Find a spiritual father
- Be like your spiritual fathers
- Be a spiritual father to someone
 - So we can all be like our Heavenly Father