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DeYoung's "Vainglory: The Forgotten Vice" (Book Review)

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and possibly one day becoming a chosen Hand, is all that Eamon has ever aspired to; however, when the time comes for him to swear allegiance he hesitates – but why? Faltering for an instant and ignoring his misgivings, Eamon swears allegiance to the Master thus opening his mind and will to that of the Master. Subsequently, however, everything he has trusted from childhood is then turned upside down when he meets the true king and swears allegiance to him. Eamon soon learns that it is impossible to serve two masters.

Vainglory: The Forgotten Vice,

by Rebecca Konyndyk DeYoung. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014.

157 pp. \$14.00. ISBN 9780802871299

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In *Vainglory: The Forgotten Vice*, Rebecca Konyndyk DeYoung, professor of philosophy at Calvin College, expands upon one vice she discussed in *Glittering Vices: A New Look at the Seven Deadly Sins and Their Remedies*. As in *Glittering Vices*, *Vainglory* focuses on why learning about vices is important and what a person can do to combat them. She writes, “There’s no point in pointing out our moral defects if we don’t care, or if we do care but don’t know what to do about them” (6). *Vainglory* is dangerous for Christians in two ways: first, one may fall into the vice of vainglory by doing good things; second, a person may also be vainglorious by attempting to appear better than she is. Evagrius, one of the desert fathers DeYoung cites in this work, says of vainglory: “It is difficult to escape the thought of vainglory, for what you do to rid yourself of it becomes a new source of vainglory” (p. 31). DeYoung describes it in this way: if a person does good things, others recognize it. If others recognize it, the do-gooder is buoyed by the accolades. If one is not very careful, one may begin to care more about the *recognition* of doing good than in doing good itself. What, then, is a person to do? DeYoung agrees with Richard Foster and others: the spiritual disciplines that will help ward off vainglory are silence and solitude. Another means by which a person avoids vainglory is to remember the true source of glory: God and God’s action in the world. Overall, *Vainglory* is an accessible read. That is not to say it is easy reading; rather, it is a challenging but not impossible read for a non-philosopher. Highly recommended, along with her previous work, *Glittering Vices*.