

Pride and Humility

I Introductory Matters.

A The Importance of Character in the Life of the Leader.

B Objectives for this morning.

C Truths that inform a Biblical definition of pride and humility.

1 Pride draws attention away from God to self.

- a Charles Bridges in *A Commentary on Proverbs* (Banner of Truth, p. 228).

“Men see no abomination in this spirit [of pride]. It brings no disgrace. Nay, it is often thought to be high-minded. But it keeps back the heart from God. It lifts up the heart against God. It contends for supremacy with God. When it thus strikes at God, what wonder that God strikes at it as an abomination. How unseemly moreover is this sin! A creature so utterly dependent, so fearfully guilty, yet proud in heart! A true child of a fallen parent, who, in dreaming to be as God, made himself like the devil. Many are the form of this hateful spirit [of pride]. Some are proud of their beauty, some of their talents, some of their rank, some of their goodness – yet, all forgetting that they have nothing which they have not received; all unconscious, that they are an abomination to the Lord.”

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- b Stuart Scott in *“Pursue the Servant’s Mindset”* (JBC, Vol. 17, No. 3, p. 10).

If we could sum it up, it’s the mindset of *self*, the pursuit of *self*-exaltation, a focus on the desire to control all things for *self*. In exalting himself, the person actually believes, “I am valuable and worthy. I am the source of anything good or wise or successful. I *deserve* the credit for whatever I achieve or acquire. I *deserve* love, admiration, and respect. All good things are *from* me, *through* me, and *to* me. All honor and glory should go to me for my enjoyment and pleasure.”

2 Humility draws attention to God and away from self.

- a Charles Bridges in *A Commentary on Proverbs* (Banner of Truth, p. 223).

“In the daily walk of life, the lowest place is the pathway to honor. Indeed, without humility, honor would be our temptation, rather than our glory. The same principle obtains from the dispensation of grace. “He that humbleth himself shall be exalted – in due time.” True humility, which realizes our vileness, casts us most simply upon the full resources of the gospel, so that the most humble is the most triumphant believer. ‘The lower that any descend in humiliation, the higher they shall ascend in exaltation. The lower this foundation of humility is laid, the higher shall be the roof of honor overlaid. And was not this the track of our beloved Lord – before honor, humility – the cross before the crown? How deep was that descent, by which he, who was infinitely more than man, became a worm and no man! And yet the honor, which rewarded this humility, what tongue can tell! We must not disdain to follow Jesus Christ.”

- b Stuart Scott in *“Pursue the Servant’s Mindset”* (JBC, Vol. 17, No. 3, p. 12).

“Humility is an attitude of heart. It’s the real you. It means to bring low, to yield, to give way to God’s way. Humility is the pursuit to magnify Christ by bowing low in complete adoration and obedience. It’s the pursuit of magnifying Christ, not self, realizing that all goodness, honor, and glory comes from God and needs to go to God. It confesses that anything good, wise, or helpful comes *from* Him and is done *by* Him or *through* Him, and the goal is *for* Him. Such a mind is what Christ displayed when He was here.”

3 Godly leaders point others to Christ.

1Cor 11:1 (NIV) Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

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D Working Definitions

1 *Pride*

Pride is self-exalting. It seeks glory for self over and above glory for God. It is motivated by an over estimation of self.

2 *Humility*

Humility is God-exalting. It recognizes our sinful nature, our need for a Savior, and our need for God's transforming grace. It is motivated by a right understanding of God.

“Humility is honestly assessing ourselves in light of God's holiness and our sinfulness.” –C.J. Mahaney, Humility: True Greatness, p. 22.

E Self-Evaluation

- 1 What patterns of pride continue unabated, with little or no change, in your life? Be specific in how pride manifests itself in your life.

- 2 How is pride most often manifested in your relationship with your wife? Be specific.

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II A Biblical Survey.

A True humility starts with a high view of God and a sober assessment of ourselves.

B God Opposes The Proud.

1 *Pride is sin against God.*

- a 2Kin. 19:22 Who is it you have insulted and blasphemed? Against whom have you raised your voice and lifted your eyes in **pride**? Against the Holy One of Israel! (cf. Isa. 37:23).

2 *Pride is the mark of the godless.*

- a Psalm 10:4 In his **pride** the wicked does not seek him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God.
- b 2Tim 3:2 People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, **proud**, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy. (cf. Psalm 73:6).

3 *The proud will be humbled.*

- a Zeph 3:11 On that day you will not be put to shame for all the wrongs you have done to me, because I will remove from this city those who rejoice in their **pride**. Never again will you be haughty on my holy hill.
- b Isaiah 2:12 The LORD Almighty has a day in store for all the **proud** and lofty, for all that is exalted (and they will be humbled).
- c Isaiah 23:9 The LORD Almighty planned it, to bring low the **pride** of all glory and to humble all who are renowned on the earth.
- d Isaiah 13:11 I will punish the world for its evil, the wicked for their sins. I will put an end to the arrogance of the haughty and will humble the **pride** of the ruthless.

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4 God will punish the proud.

- a Lev. 26:19 I will break down your stubborn **pride** and make the sky above you like iron and the ground beneath you like bronze.
- b Psalm 31:23 Love the LORD, all his saints! The LORD preserves the faithful, but the **proud** he pays back in full (cf. Psalm 94:2).
- c 2Chr 32:25 But Hezekiah's heart was **proud** and he did not respond to the kindness shown him; therefore the LORD's wrath was on him and on Judah and Jerusalem.
- d Proverbs 16:5 The LORD detests all the **proud** of heart. Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished.
- e Luke 1:51 He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are **proud** in their inmost thoughts.

C God Gives Grace to the Humble.

1 God desires that his people live in humility.

- a Micah 6:8 He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk **humbly** with your God.
- b Col. 3:12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, **humility**, gentleness and patience.
- c James 3:13 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the **humility** that comes from wisdom.

2 God saves the humble.

- a 2Chron. 7:14 If my people, who are called by my name, will **humble** themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.
- b Psalm 18:27 You save the **humble** but bring low those whose eyes are haughty (cf. 2Sam. 22:28).
- c Psalm 149:4 For the LORD takes delight in his people; he crowns the **humble** with salvation.

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3 *God watches over the humble.*

- a Psalm 25:9 He guides the **humble** in what is right and teaches them his way.
- b Psalm 147:6 The LORD sustains the **humble** but casts the wicked to the ground.
- c James 4:6 But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the **humble**."

4 *God will honor the humble.*

- a Proverbs 18:12 Before his downfall a man's heart is proud, but **humility** comes before honor.
- b James 4:10 **Humble** yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.
- c 1Peter 5:5-6 Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the **humble**." **Humble** yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.

D Summary of Biblical Survey.

"God opposes the **proud** but gives grace to the **humble**." (James 4:6)

III Manifestations of Pride.

"The Fruits of Pride" by Brent Detwiler (hand-out).

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IV Implications of the Cross on Our Pride

A The cross takes away any reason for our pride.

B The cross completely paid the price for our pride.

C The cross set us free from captivity to pride.

D The cross gives us grace to put to death indwelling pride.

“This then is the glory that has a transforming effect on us. It is the glory of Christ revealed in the gospel, the good news that Jesus died in our place as our representative to free us not only from the penalty of sin but also from its dominion. A clear understanding and appropriation of the gospel, which gives freedom from sin’s guilt and sin’s grip, is, in the hands of the Holy Spirit, a chief means of sanctification.” (**Jerry Bridges, This Discipline of Grace, p. 107**)

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V How to respond to our understanding of God and His grace.

A *Seek every opportunity remind yourself of God's character, your depravity, and God's amazing grace.*

“There are two things that are suited to humble the souls of men...A due consideration of God, and then of ourselves. Of God, in His greatness, glory, holiness, power, majesty and authority; of ourselves, in our mean, abject, and sinful condition.” –John Owen quoted from Humility: True Greatness, p. 92.

Alfred Poirier, in *The Cross and Criticism*, says, “In response to my sin, the cross has criticized me and judged me more intensely, deeply, pervasively, and truly than anyone else could. The cross of Christ reminds me that the Son of God loved me and gave Himself for me. And because of this, God has thoroughly and forever accepted me in Christ. Here is how grace works: Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: ‘Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.’”

B *Seek every opportunity to voice your dependence on God.*

- ◆ Corinthians 1:30-31 It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God--that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord."
- ◆ Galatians 6:14 May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

C *Seek every opportunity to honor and encourage others.*

- ◆ Romans 12:10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.
- ◆ Hebrews 3:13 But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

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D Seek every opportunity to position yourself as a student of others.

Stuart Scott, in *Pursue The Servant's Mindset*, says, "Humble Christians are teachable. They know how little they know, so they're eager to learn."

E Seek every opportunity to joyfully serve others.

Mark 10:45, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

F Seek every opportunity to express your gratitude to others.

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G Seek every opportunity to confess your sin to others.

Douglas Wilson, in *Reforming Marriage*, reminds us that we must keep short accounts in our marriages. He says, “Keeping short accounts means that an individual does not postpone confession of sin if confession is necessary. Sin certainly does affect the quality of the relationship. If unacknowledged sin is allowed to accumulate, it interferes with relationships more and more.”

H Seek every opportunity to learn about your sin from others.

Alfred Poirier says, “If I know myself as crucified with Christ, I can now receive another’s criticism with this attitude: ‘You have not discovered a fraction of my guilt. Christ has said more about my sin, my failings, my rebellion and my foolishness than any man can lay against me. I thank you for your corrections. They are a blessing and a kindness to me.’”

I Seek every opportunity for accountability from others.

