

Lesson 4: Pride
The Utmost Ungodliness

"The wicked in his proud countenance does not seek God; God is in none of his thoughts" (Ps. 10:4)

"The one who has a haughty look and a proud heart, him will I not endure" (Ps. 101:5)

"Though the Lord is on high, yet He regards the lowly; but the proud He knows from afar" (Ps. 138:6)

"Surely He scorns the scornful, but gives grace to the humble" (Pr. 3:34)

"These six things the Lord hates, yes, seven are an abomination to Him: a proud look..." (Pr. 6:16)

"By pride comes nothing but strife..." (Pr. 13:10)

"Everyone proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord..." (Pr. 16:5)

"Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall" (Pr. 16:18)

"For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith" (Rom. 12:3)

"Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up" (1 Cor. 13:4)

"For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself" (Gal. 6:3)

"God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble" (Jas. 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5)

Introduction

"The emphasis placed on pride, and its converse, humility, is a distinctive feature of biblical religion, unparalleled in other religious or ethical systems. Rebellious pride, which refuses to depend on God and be subject to him, but attributes to self the honour due to him, figures as the very root and essence of sin" (*The Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, Vol. III, p. 1265).

"There is one vice of which no man in the world is free; which everyone in the world loathes when he sees it in someone else; and of which hardly any people, except Christians, ever imagine that they are guilty themselves" (C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, p.106).

"According to Christian teachers, the essential vice, the utmost evil, is Pride. Unchastity, anger, greed, drunkenness, and all that, are mere fleabites in comparison: it was through Pride that the devil became the devil: Pride leads to every other vice: it is the complete anti-God state of mind" (C. S. Lewis, *ibid.*).

I. What Pride Is

A. Webster defines *pride* as "inordinate self-esteem, conceit." Synonyms are: arrogance, insolence, disdain.

Not Speaking of:

1. An innocent self-esteem or personal "pride" which is not arrogant or selfish and does not in any sense demean others. It may be had in oneself - a sense of duty and honor - or in others - a sense of joyful admiration. A Christian has a sense of duty and honor because of who he is.
2. Delight in the praise of others which gives one a sense of worth, not superiority. Christians are taught to encourage one another.

B. The New Testament *Pride* comes from the following Greek words:

1. *Huperephania* - "pride, haughtiness, arrogance, the characteristic of one who, with a swollen estimate of his own powers or merits, looks down on others and even treats them with insolence and contempt" - Thayer. Literally, it means to show oneself above, and therefore to feel contempt for others as less than oneself. Mk. 7:22 Rom. 1:30. "It does not so much mean the man who is conspicuous and to whom others look up, as the man who stands on his own little self-created pedestal and looks down." - William Barclay, *New Testament Words*, p. 134.
2. *Hubris* - "*insolence; impudence, pride, haughtiness*" - Thayer. *Hubris* goes a step beyond *huperephania*, in that it is wanton insolence, the violent overstepping of the mark, a pride which erects itself against both man and God. It is an outrageous insolence. Rom. 1:30; 1 Tim. 1:13
3. *Alazoneia* - "an insolent and empty assurance, which trusts in its own power and resources and shamefully despises and violates divine laws and human rights" - Thayer. 1 Jn. 2:16

II. Pride - the Heart of Sin

A. The Devil's Fall

Why did the devil fall into condemnation (1 Tim. 3:6)?

B. Eve's Temptation

How did the serpent tempt Eve through pride? (Gen. 3:5)

- C. Attitude of the Impenitent Sinner: *"Better to reign in hell than to serve in heaven"* Sin is rebellion against God, a desire to be above all and accountable to none.

III. Characteristics of Pride

- A. Competitive. "Pride gets no pleasure out of having something, only out of having more of it than others. Greed may drive men into competition if there is not enough to go round; but the proud man, even when he has got more than he can possibly want, will try to get still more just to assert his power. Nearly all those evils in the world which people put down to pride and selfishness are really far more the result of Pride." (C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, p. 107)
- B. Divisive The source of hatred, envy, jealousy, strife and contention (Gal. 5:19-21).
"...you may find good fellowship and jokes and friendliness among drunken people or unchaste people. But pride always means enmity - it *is* enmity. And not only enmity between man and man, but enmity to God. "In God you come up against something which is in every respect immeasurably superior to yourself. Unless you know God as that--and, therefore, know yourself as nothing in comparison - you do not know God at all. As long as you are proud you cannot know God." (C. S. Lewis, *ibid.*, 108)
- C. A Spiritual Cancer which eats up the very possibility of love, or contentment or common sense. No one is friend or brother or sister. All are rivals, and either servant or threat.
- D. Most Revealed in Those who hate it most in others.

IV. Bible Examples

- A. Herod - Acts 12:20-24

Why was Herod's life taken?

- B. The Pharisee - Luke 18:9-14

What was the cause of this Pharisee's pride - where did he think he excelled? Does the competitive nature of pride show itself here?

- C. Diotrephes - 3 John 9-11

What do you think Diotrephes' motive was for serving as a leader in the local church? Why did he reject John and resent any that had anything to do with him?

How should a "Diotrephes" be dealt with in a local church?

- D. The Rich Farmer - Luke 12:15-21

Does the character in this parable exhibit selfishness or pride, or both? Explain.

E. The Scribes and Pharisees - Matthew 23:5-7; Luke 20:46

What disposition of the Pharisees reveals their pride?

V. The Answer to Pride

A. Understanding the Power and Holiness of God Isa. 40:10-26 Isa. 6:1-8

B. Understanding our own weakness and sinfulness Luke 5:1-8 Luke 18:13