

# Pride— Then Destruction!

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*Pride is our worst enemy; humility is our best friend!* Pride is a very effective and destructive tool of the devil—it made the devil the devil. We *know* when we are angry, envious, or greedy—but too often do *not* know when we are proud, conceited, or haughty.

Pride always looks *down* on others and thinks *too much* of one's self—it is a *deadly* sin that must be admitted, confessed, and repented of before God. We *must* say Luke 18:13 “*God be merciful to me a sinner.*” When we can see *our* blessings as much as we see the blessings of *others*, *pride* and *envy* changes to *humility* and *gratitude*.

Pride appears Genesis 3:1 “*Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?*”—the devil uses *pride* to seduce the first humans. He contradicts what God said to cause *doubt* in Eve's mind about the faithfulness and truthfulness of God's Word. The devil suggests that she is *denied* the fruit because she would be *like God*. The desire to *exalt* ourselves is the *foundation* of pride.

*Weakened* by unbelief; *enticed* by pride; and *ensnared* by self-deception, Eve opted for freedom and disobeys God's command. The devil used *pride* to plunge mankind into spiritual ruin. This ancient, but familiar process, confronts us each

day. James 1:14 “*Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. 15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.*”

Throughout the Bible, pride and unbelief in the affairs of individuals, families, and nations, can be seen. As they suppress the knowledge of God, spiritual darkness increases, and their focus shifts *away* from God *to* themselves. *They* become the center of their world, and *God* is moved further outside. The cycle is familiar—when people exalt themselves, *pride* increases, and *abusive* behavior results.

Proud leaders of Israel had a *wrong* view of God; they trusted their *own* wisdom and power; oppressed the people; and ignored His call to repent, so judgment fell with disastrous results. There are many examples of pride and its consequences in Scripture.

Uzziah became king of Judah at age sixteen and was under the mentorship of Zechariah. It says 2 Chronicles 26:5 “*He sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God: and as long as he sought the LORD, God made him to prosper.*” As a result, he was prosperous and achieved much military power.

Then, 2 Chronicles 26:15 “*His name spread far abroad; for he was marvelously helped, till he was strong. 16 But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the LORD his God, and went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense.*”

King Uzziah stopped seeking *God* and the spiritual *advice* of Zechariah; he depended *less* on God and *more* on himself. History shows that pride increases when people become more successful and more prosperous. Anything that elevates us above others, can be a *platform* for pride. Rather than humbling himself in thanksgiving to *God*, the king began to think highly of *himself*—more than

he should have—he had an exaggerated sense of his own importance and ability.

Proverbs 11:2 “*When pride cometh, then cometh shame.*” Proverbs 16:18 “*Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.*” We can learn much from Uzziah's story 2 Chronicles 26; Haman's downfall Esther 3-7; and King Nebuchadnezzar's arrogance Daniel 4. They offer valuable insights on *pride* that can help us see the *deadliness* of that sin.

It was said: *Some never get started on their destiny because they cannot humble themselves to learn, grow, and change.* Much pride is seen in society and in business today. A thoughtful article in the Wall Street Journal, after the WorldCom and Enron debacles, attributed the financial problems to *pride, greed, and lack of accountability.* Pride has caused widespread *problems* in society when government leaders are corrupted by it.

*Spiritual* pride is *very* dangerous, as it can affect many others. It would be easy to conclude that the rich, powerful, and famous are the only ones that have to deal with pride, but pride can take many shapes and forms, and it can affect *anyone.* The preoccupation with self in American culture is rooted in pride and has caused a multitude of problems for millions of people.

Pride can be summarized as an attitude of self-importance and self-exaltation in relation to God. Concerning others, it is an attitude of contempt and indifference toward them. The *depth* of pride can vary, and it can be obvious or concealed. In the Old and New Testaments, we see that God will *not allow* the creature to exalt himself or herself above the Creator. Pride brings God's *displeasure* and *opposition.*

If pride ever causes us to exalt *ourselves*, we are painting a *target* on our back and asking for trouble. God has said in His Word that He will bring *down* pride wherever He finds it, whether among angels or humans; believers or unbelievers. It was pride that caused Lucifer to be cast out of

heaven, and Adam and Eve to be cast out of Eden. Pride is absolutely our *worst* enemy!

Generally-speaking, we do *not* see the pride that may be in our heart. It is *easy* to see *pride* in *others*, but difficult to see in *ourselves*. A writer once said: *There is no fault which makes a man more unpopular, and no fault which we are more unconscious of in ourselves than pride.*

The more pride in *us*, the more we dislike it in *others*. A self-test we can do is to ask ourselves if we are offended when others ignore us or look down on us. Pride is tricky to recognize, so we must ask God to reveal any proud spirit in our heart; to repent of any He reveals, and then to forsake it with His help.

To a crowd, Jesus says: Luke 9:23 *“If any of you wants to be my follower, you must put aside your selfish ambition, shoulder your cross daily, and follow me.*

*24 If you try to keep your life for yourself, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for me, you will find true life. 25 And how do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose or forfeit your own soul in the process?”*

Pride begins to change to *humility* when we understand how *wicked* we are in the sight of God, without faith in the cleansing Blood of Christ. Nothing in this life is about *us*, but all about *Jesus* and His atoning sacrifice. Jesus came to serve, so *we* should too—like doing something for a person we ordinarily would avoid; or giving up something *we* want to do for the sake of another.

Humility increases our desire for God’s *Word* and opens our hearts to His *Spirit*. Humility brings us closer to God—who knows a proud person from a distance—and who says Isaiah 57:15 I dwell *“With him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit.”*

God loves to exalt and bless the *humble*. He says again and again in Scripture: *Humble yourselves and I will exalt you.* It is encouraging to

know that God takes *pleasure* in our wanting to humble ourselves. Just as *pride* is the root of all *sin*; *humility* is the root of all *virtue*. Even though humility is out of fashion today, it must *not* be with the believer.

Humility is one of the essential things that characterizes *true Christianity*. Our perspective on humility will change to a *correct* perspective when we meditate on the greatest example of humility in history—the Lord Jesus.

By the very act of *leaving* Heaven, *coming* to earth, *taking* the form of a man, and *dying* on a Cross—is evidence enough that He demonstrated an unfathomable humbling of Himself.

Throughout His life on earth, Jesus demonstrated a spirit of *profound* humility and service. He said Matthew 20:28 *“Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”*

On His last night with the disciples, He took a towel and basin and washed their feet—telling them to follow His example of servanthood toward one another. The apostle Paul may have been thinking of this *scene* in the Upper Room, when he urged the believers in Philippi:

Philippians 2:5 *“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”*

To take on the *mind of Jesus* is to adopt His *way of thinking*; His values and attitudes must become ours. His emphasis on humility and meekness is to be part of *our* thinking and *our* desires and *our* conduct. We need to pray for the Holy Spirit to *change* our hearts, as we cannot bring about this change in our *own* strength or ability.

If pride is an *exalted sense* of who we are in relation to others; humility is having a *realistic sense* of who we are before God. We come to God *empty* and asking Him to *fill us* with His Spirit, so our *proud* heart is changed to a *humble* spirit.

The apostle says Romans 12:3 *“For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.”* He then explains about spiritual *gifts* God has given us, so we can serve one another. Humility is having a *right view* of ourselves in relation to *God*—and acting accordingly.

We are all God’s *creatures*—small, finite, dependent, limited, prone to sin, and soon to be judged Hebrews 9:27. But we can be God’s *children*—forgiven, loved, delivered from sin, and redeemed by His grace.

Any *gift* or *ability* God has given, is to be used for *His* honor and glory. NLT 1 Corinthians 4:7 *“What do you have that God hasn’t given you? And if all you have is from God, why boast as though you have accomplished something on your own?”* That is why we are told AV 1 Corinthians 10:31 *“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”*

We continually *say* and *pray*: Luke 18:13 *“God be merciful to me a sinner,”* because He 1 Peter 5:5 *“Gives grace [and His kingdom] to the humble.”* NKJV Philippians 2:3 *“Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. 4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.”* It is the *path* to avoid *destruction*!



[www.fcqchurch.org](http://www.fcqchurch.org)

PO Box 24283

Philadelphia, PA 19120

[info@fcqchurch.org](mailto:info@fcqchurch.org)

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