

## Lessons in Pride and Humility

Now as we have considered at some length the **mortification of sin**, no discussion would be complete if we did not mention the relation of **pride** and **humility** to **mortification**. Indeed the relation of pride and humility to **Sanctification** and **Bearing the Image** is of paramount importance. This is because **pride is the motivation and/or disposition of every sin** and **humility is the well spring of all virtue**. These heart attitudes are the very basis for how we live our lives and view our world. And the eyes of the Lord are peering into our hearts and lives to see if we have an arrogant heart of pride or a humble heart of gratitude. Consider 1 Peter 5:5-6...

**1 Peter 5:5-6** - 5 You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, **clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.** 6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, NASB

You see the matter of **pride** and **humility** is something that **God is paying attention to**. And here Peter describes that **God is actively responding** to both the **proud** and the **humble**. You see **“God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”** The prideful person may not be at war with God, but God is opposed to them! God actively seeks to make their life difficult.

**Proverbs 16:5** - **Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord;** Assuredly, he will not be unpunished. NASB

When we exalt ourselves against God and proudly disregard His authority, we make Him our enemy and He is the most fierce of all enemies. Let us not be found warring with God or we will find ourselves frustrated, downcast or even ultimately destroyed! In contrast here the Scripture says, He **“gives grace to the humble.”** **God actively seeks to bless those who are humble.** In fact, He exalts them and lifts the up. He sees to it that things go well, and graciously overlooks their many failures and instead turns things for their good.

**Isaiah 57:15** - 15 For thus says the high and exalted One Who lives forever, whose name is Holy, "I dwell on a high and holy place, And also with the contrite and lowly of spirit In order **to revive the spirit of the lowly And to revive the heart of the contrite.** NASB

Learn here about the central issues of the spiritual warfare for Sanctification in the Christian life. More than this, these matters are directly related to God's disposition toward us. These **heart attitudes** of **pride** and **humility** are indeed the very foundation for a life of holiness and the nitty gritty of how this war is waged.

**Luke 18:10** - 14 "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; **for everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, but he who humbles himself shall be exalted.**" NASB

## Defining Biblical Pride and Humility

Now let us briefly define **pride** and **humility** in **the Bible**. I will start with the definition from the little booklet, **“From Pride to Humility”** by Stuart Scott.

**Pride** – The mindset of self, a focus on self and the service of self, a pursuit of self-recognition and self-exaltation, and a desire to control and use all things for self.

**Humility** – The mindset of Christ, a focus on God and others, a pursuit of the recognition and the exaltation of God, and a desire to glorify and please God in all things and by all things He has given.

These definitions indeed get to the heart of pride and humility but I think we should add a few things to highlight the nature of these two heart attitudes. Indeed **pride and humility are polar**

**opposites.** They are the antithesis of each other. They also have to do with **spiritual awareness.** Pride is a spiritual blindness to true reality and humility is an ability to see true spiritual reality. An excellent example of this is the fact that the proud person thinks he/she is a humble person and the humble person thinks there are few people as proud as themselves. The proud person is oblivious to the fact that they are proud and the humble person thinks themselves proud for sure.

This is because the **nature of pride** itself is a **spiritual blindness**, an **inability to discern** the true reality of **spiritual things**, including and most importantly its **relation to God and others.**

**James 3:14-16** - 14 But if you have **bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth.** 15 This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. 16 For where **jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.** NASB

**Selfish ambition** is a prideful disposition which *“lies against the truth.”* It cannot see true reality. And where *“selfish ambition”* exists, *“there you have disorder and every evil thing.”* This is because this pride of selfish ambition views everything according to its own inflated view of self and appraises little according to what is right and true. The proud person is not aware of themselves and how proud they really are, looking down on others and appraising them according to an **inflated view of self.** They have a twisted view of others because they view everything in relation to themselves, and appraise others in view of themselves and often completely misunderstand others because of this condition. They many times are guilty of the very thing they accuse or think of others because **pride** is also the very **nature of hypocrisy.** The **proud person thinks more highly of themselves** than is true or than they should. The thing to which they are blind the most is their own pride and arrogance. Being so charmed by their own inflated self-respect, they make a wrong appraisal of themselves, God and others. Bill Farley comments, *“We cannot see pride, even though it is our most grievous, disabling sin, because its very nature is blindness, and the first thing to which it is blind is its own existence... the proud person has a high view of self, but a low view of God and his brother... the proud man is completely unaware of his pride, of all men he is convinced he is humble.”* from Gospel Powered Humility page 25. Pride is **self-righteous**, thinking itself more righteous than others. Pride is **self-exalting** seeking to be noticed, appreciated and recognized. Pride is **self-willed** going its own way without the input of God or others thinking to highly of its own wisdom. Pride **self-reliant** thinking it can handle any situation and can do everything on its own, not recognizing its total dependence of God for strength and resources. Pride can also be **self-pitying** having an inflated view of oneself that is always introspective and therefore consumed with self and wanting to be accepted, recognized and the center of attention. Biblical examples of pride can be seen in the characters of Jacob, Pharaoh, Korah, Saul, Uzziah, Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and others. Other biblical terms for this blinding inflated view of self we call pride are; vainglory, conceit, boasting, arrogance, loftiness, presumption, haughty, puffed up, scoffing or self-seeking. One last important point is that **every person is proud**, in some degree. None of us are without pride, including all born-again Christians. We all, to some degree are infected with this vicious blindness and affected by our own pride. We will also never in this life be completely delivered from this spiritual disease for it is the nature of the sinful nature we will all struggle with until we are glorified at the resurrection. Let us see in this that **pride** is indeed the most **“grievous and disabling sin,”** and the life of the proud person is sure to be a constantly painful and difficult struggle ending in disaster. This of course is because **“God is opposed to the proud,”** (Jam 4:6).

**Proverbs 26:12** - 12 Do you see a man **wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool** than for him. NASB