



Light from the Word

Walking in Humility (Part 1)

“Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.”¹

To understand humility, we should consider its opposite. It is clear from the very beginning of Scripture that humankind struggles with pride. Our first parents, Adam and Eve, were lured by and succumbed to the same pride of life that caused Satan to be cast from Heaven.² Eve was tempted with the one thing that God had forbidden—partaking of the tree of knowledge of good and evil—and in her (and our) desire to gain knowledge and *“be as gods, knowing good and evil,”³* she ate the fruit—forever changing the course of history.⁴

Pride is listed among the things God hates⁵ and is always referenced in a negative sense in the Bible. This fundamental human flaw is revealed by teaching and example throughout God's Word. *“Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the LORD pondereth the hearts... An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin.”⁶*

Pride is sin and we know that sin separates us from God—and will eternally if we are not justified through faith in Christ's shed blood.⁷ Isaiah records the judgment of God upon pride, *“For the day of the LORD of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low.”⁸*

What is it about pride that is so wicked and leads to such destruction? While there are many effects of pride—and all sin—perhaps the most basic problem with pride is its affront to the very Person of God. He is unequivocal that there can be no substitute for Him in our hearts. *“I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.”⁹*

Pride is a swelling of one's image in our own minds. It's a worldly condition, listed along with

“the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes” in John's description of that which is *“not of the Father, but... of the world.”¹⁰* It comes out of a man and defiles him.¹¹ It presents a stumbling block to others and the work of God,¹² and is ultimately resisted by God, *“Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.”¹³*

There are many scriptural examples of the downfall of men through pride. Israel's first king lost the kingdom through his pride and self-focus. Saul became jealous of David¹⁴ and took things into his own hands, even that which should have been left to the prophet of God. Samuel's rebuke spoke of Saul's former humility and subsequent fall into pride and rebellion against God, *“When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD anointed thee king over Israel?... For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.”¹⁵*

Given Saul's example, it's ironic that David's own son fell prey to that same pride and lust for power and position. Absalom plotted against his own father to win the hearts of the people over to himself; using worldly ways of craft, artfulness, and deceit, he maneuvered in a political sense to overthrow David.¹⁶ In the end he was caught in a tree by his head—evidently he was also very proud of his appearance¹⁷—and slain by Joab and his men.¹⁸

What then is humility? While answering that question involves a lifetime of learning and growth through experience, at its simplest, humility is lowliness of mind. Scripture describes it as similar to clothing,¹⁹ something we can put on. *“Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one*

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Walking in Humility

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another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.²⁰

Humility arises from a sense of who God is and who we are in comparison to Him. He is the Creator, we the created.²¹ He is omnipresent and sovereign, we are constrained by time and place. He is eternal, we are mortal (though we possess an eternal soul which may live eternally with Him). He is all righteousness and holiness, we are born in sin²² and likewise have sinned in our own right.²³

As sinners saved by grace, we find no worthiness of our own—only Christ can justify men. But also, as those who have had our redemption purchased by Christ, we recognize that we are *“bought with a price: (and) therefore (we desire to) glorify God in (our) body, and in (our) spirit, which are God’s.²⁴”* We are not worthy but, by God’s grace, we can *“walk worthy of the vocation wherewith (we) are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love.²⁵”*

And in all of this, we have Christ as our example, in his stunning pattern of humility—as God Himself came into this world to save mankind. *“Let this mind*

be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God (did not consider equality with God as something to cling to selfishly or to use for his own advantage): But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.²⁶” Humility, indeed.

Note: In the next issue, we will look at how humility affects our relationship with God and others as we are called to walk in broken-heartedness.

(Footnotes)

- ¹ 1 Pet. 5:5
- ² Isaiah 14:12-15
- ³ Gen. 3:5
- ⁴ Gen. 3:7-24
- ⁵ Prov. 6:16-19
- ⁶ Prov. 21:2, 4
- ⁷ Rom. 3:23, 6:23
- ⁸ Isaiah 2:12
- ⁹ Isaiah 42:8
- ¹⁰ 1 John 2:16
- ¹¹ Mark 7:20-23
- ¹² 1 Tim. 3:6, 6:4
- ¹³ James 4:6
- ¹⁴ 1 Sam. 18:7-9
- ¹⁵ 1 Sam. 15: 17, 23
- ¹⁶ 2 Sam. 15:1-6
- ¹⁷ 2 Sam. 14:25-26
- ¹⁸ 2 Sam. 18:8-15
- ¹⁹ 1 Pet. 5:5

²⁰ Col. 3:12

²¹ Rom. 9:20

²² Psalm 51:5

²³ Isaiah 53:6

²⁴ 1 Cor. 6:20

²⁵ Eph. 4:1-2

²⁶ Phil. 2:5-8

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need to hear that. Sometimes we can say life is hard, marriage is hard, or maybe raising a family. Let’s talk about the blessings. It will be an encouragement to our younger brothers and sisters, those to follow. We speak about the blessings, count our blessings, name them one by one. Oh, we realize God has been so good to us! May He continue to bless you. It’s been a blessing to gather with you here this morning and feel your love and feel your encouragement.