

A STUDY OF PRIDE

FROM A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

When pride cometh, then cometh shame:

but with the lowly is wisdom. Proverbs 11:2 KJV

Turn your Bibles to I Corinthians, Chapter 4

It is portrayed as a necklace, a crown and fruit in the Bible. It is also said to persecute, testify, deceive, and bring low. It is often seen as the first sin. It is the sin which caused the Devil to fall from his privileged position as an angel of light. He then uses the *same* sin to tempt Adam and Eve away from their fellowship with the Almighty God. Satan still tempts us today with the same sin. I know I have often been and am tempted by it, and if you don't admit you were (or are) tempted by it, you may already have fallen to it.

In his epic poem *The Divine Comedy*, Dante lists this sin along with six other "deadly" sins -- lust, gluttony, greed, sloth, wrath, and envy. The great Christian writer C.S. Lewis wrote of this sin in his classic *Mere Christianity*. The title of the work is *The Great Sin*. He points out that it tempts us all and yet we despise it in all others. He went on to state that it cannot exist without competition because it is essentially competitive.

So what is this Great Sin you may be wondering . . . Does anyone know? It is PRIDE.

Daniel Webster provides six definitions but let me tell you about three of them:

First, it is the quality or state of being proud, as in inordinate self-esteem or conceit, or a reasonable or justifiable self-respect or delight or elation arising from some act, possession, or relationship (such as parental pride).

Secondly, pride is also defined as proud or disdainful behavior or treatment.

A third definition is an ostentatious display.

And now in I Corinthians, Chapter 4, verse 6 we read:

Now, brothers, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the meaning of the saying, "Do not go beyond what is written." Then you will not take *pride* in one man over against another.

Now turn to Galatians Chapter 6, **(Pause)** We read in verse 4:

Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else,

What do these verses tell us about pride?

The lesson from these 2 verses is that pride relies on competition, and without competition there is no pride.

Now turn this time to II Corinthians. **(Pause)**

Turn to Chapter 5 where we read in verse 12:

We are not trying to commend ourselves to you again, but are giving you an opportunity to take *pride* in us, so that you can answer those who take *pride* in what is seen rather than in what is in the heart.

What does this verse teach us about pride?

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- Pride in another is not necessarily evil and that we should be proud of those who are steadfastly in God's will (I Cor 5:12, II Cor 7:4, II Cor 8:24).
 - You can be proud of someone else and still be in God's will.
 - When we are outside of God's will can take pride in what is seen (the physical aspects of life) as opposed to the spiritual.
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In I Corinthians Chapter 13, in verse 4 the Bible tells us:

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not ***proud***.

Pride is not lovely to God. Pride is not love, therefore, pride is sinful.

Let me ask you a question – Can a proud man or woman be saved?

No, because one has to repent and claim Jesus Christ as Lord to be saved

Now I'm going to read some of the passages in the Bible that talk about pride and we can see what God says about pride. Please listen to what God says about pride or if you wish read along but I'm going to move along pretty quickly. Let's see if there is a verse in the Bible that says 'pride is sin'?

Psalm 138, verse 6:

Though the LORD is on high, he looks upon the lowly, but the proud he knows from afar.

Proverbs 8, verses 12 and 13:

I, wisdom, dwell together with prudence; I possess knowledge and discretion.

To fear the LORD is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech.

Proverbs 16, verse 5:

The LORD detests all the proud of heart. Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished.

Proverbs 18, verse 12:

Before his downfall a man's heart is proud, but humility comes before honor.

Proverbs 21, verse 4 and verse 24:

Haughty eyes and a proud heart, the lamp of the wicked, are sin!

The proud and arrogant man--"Mocker" is his name; he behaves with overweening pride.

Romans 12, verse 16:

Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

2 Timothy 3, verses 1 through 5:

But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form

of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.

James 4, verse 6:

But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says:

"God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

1 John 2, verses 15 through 17:

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

Did anybody hear a verse where God tells us that pride is sin? Which one was it?

It was Proverbs 21:4

Turn to Luke 9:37-48

(Pause)

The setting for this incident is shortly after Jesus sent the twelve disciples out to minister to the Jews, it is shortly after the miracle of feeding of the 5,000, and it's the day after the transfiguration. Remember that occurred on a mountain. Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and they saw Jesus appear with Moses and Elijah were up on the mountain there and they heard God speak audibly. So the record here picks up as they come down from the mountain the next day.

Let's read in verse 37:

37 The next day, when they came down from the mountain, a large crowd met him.

38 A man in the crowd called out, "Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child.

39 A spirit seizes him and he suddenly screams; it throws him into convulsions so that he foams at the mouth. It scarcely ever leaves him and is destroying him.

40 I begged your disciples to drive it out, but they could not."

41 "O unbelieving and perverse generation," Jesus replied, "how long shall I stay with you and put up with you? Bring your son here."

42 Even while the boy was coming, the demon threw him to the ground in a convulsion. But Jesus rebuked the evil spirit, healed the boy and gave him back to his father.

43 And they were all amazed at the greatness of God. While everyone was marveling at all that Jesus did, he said to his disciples,

44 "Listen carefully to what I am about to tell you: The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men."

45 But they did not understand what this meant. It was hidden from them, so that they did not grasp it, and they were afraid to ask him about it.

46 An argument started among the disciples as to which of them would be the greatest.

47 Jesus, knowing their thoughts, took a little child and had him stand beside him.

48 Then he said to them, "Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. For he who is least among you all-he is the greatest." (NIV)

This wasn't the only occurrence of this problem where the disciples argue about who should be the greatest; turn to the 22nd Chapter of Luke.

(Pause)

This story takes place the night Jesus was betrayed and occurs just after he reveals this fact to his Apostles.

Let's read verses 20 through 30:

20 In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.

21 But the hand of him who is going to betray me is with mine on the table.

22 The Son of Man will go as it has been decreed, but woe to that man who betrays him."

23 They began to question among themselves which of them it might be who would do this.

24 Also a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest.

25 Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors.

26 But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves.

27 For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.

28 You are those who have stood by me in my trials.

29 And I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me,

30 so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (NIV)

Yet another record is found in Mark 10 just after Jesus tells his disciples that he is going to be betrayed and killed, the Bible tells us that James and John ask Jesus if he would allow them to sit on his right and left hand in his glory. As you may know Jesus tells them that those places belong to those for whom they are being prepared.

Isn't it remarkable that the 12 disciples would argue about who would be the greatest? Why do you think this occurred?

It seems to me that there is a pattern to this:

In Luke 22 where we read the story of the last supper, the dispute about who would be greatest among them arose just after Jesus revealed that he would be betrayed.

In Luke 9 the same argument again follows Jesus' revelation that he would be betrayed, and we see the same pattern in Mark 10 when James and John ask to sit at Jesus' side when he tells them he would be betrayed.

I believe this pattern reveals that the Apostles lack an understanding of:

- **What type of kingdom Jesus was referring to (spiritual not earthly)**
- **That Jesus would still be their leader**
- **That servant leadership is the model**

Considering who these men had for a teacher or personal spiritual trainer for three years, what does this say about mankind in general?

If any group of people in the past should have been able to resist the devil's temptation of pride you would think Adam and Eve or perhaps the 12 Apostles would have been able to resist – but once sin came into the world, all of mankind has been tempted by pride.

What does this lesson tells us about ourselves?

Our sin nature tempts us to give in to pride; we are no different than our common ancestors – Adam and Eve – or the 12 Apostles. We are all susceptible to falling to the sin of pride.

Allow me to summarize the main points of this message on pride:

- It is sin
- It relies on competition or comparing one to another
- One can be proud or a righteous believers walk
- All are tempted by pride
- Servant leadership is the model Christ portrayed for us

Pride was the first sin and it brought mankind great sorrow. Sadly, it may be the last sin for many who deny Christ and refuse to surrender to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

I would like the lesson with a review of Philippians Chapter 2, because I believe we can find an antidote for our pride there. Please turn there with me:

(Pause)

When we forget that we are just sinners, when we forget we have done nothing, and can never pay the price for our salvation, when we forget that the great love God has for us, we should read verses 5 through 11:

5 Your attitude (**OUR ATTITUDE**) should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,

7 but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant,

being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled

himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!

9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every

name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under

the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the

Father.

(PRAY)