

## Pride and Humility

“Pride is your greatest enemy, humility is your greatest friend,” so said the late John R. W. Stott, a remarkable humble man of great ability and accomplishments, who is often said to have made the greatest impact for Christ of anyone in the twentieth century. His succinct statement about pride and humility goes straight to the heart of what the Bible teaches about the deadly root of our sins and sorrows.

C.S. Lewis, another top contender for having had the greatest impact for Christ in the twentieth century, called pride “the greatest sin”. In his book by the title of *Mere Christianity* he said: “According to Christian teachers, the essential vice, the utmost evil, is pride. Unchastity, anger, greed, drunkenness, and all that, are mere flea bites 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. It is pride which has been the chief cause of misery in every nation and every family since the world began.”

“Make no mistake about it: pride is the great sin. It is the devil’s most effective and destructive tool.” If this sounds like exaggeration, it will help us to know that C.S. Lewis is not simply giving us his private opinion but summarizing the thinking of great saints through the ages.

Augustine and Aquinas both taught that pride was the root of sin. Likewise, Calvin, Luther, and many others. Why do the great spiritual leaders, Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Protestant alike, unite around this conviction? Because it is so clearly and solidly taught in Scripture.

While the word Ego does not appear in the Bible, concepts and principles regarding the ego certainly do. The word ego generally refers to an exaggerated sense of self-importance, which usually results in an excessive preoccupation with “self”.

God gives Satan an interesting title in Job 41:34 “He is king over all the children (sons) of pride.” James 4:6 and 1 Peter 5:5 both quote a version of Proverbs 3:34 “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” The king of pride is Satan, and his children are those who show his characteristics (John 8:44) “You

are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies."

Consider this in the light of Proverbs 13:10 "By pride comes only contention, but with the well-advised is wisdom." Satan means "Adversary". He is against others, an opponent, the adversary of God and he is even the adversary of all the children of pride, the very ones he is king over! The leader (king) is the adversary of his own children! Revelation 9:11 adds two additional names "And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon". Abaddon means Destruction and Apollyon means Destroyer. The king of pride is a destructive and destroying adversary.

What is Pride? Pride is the father of all other sins. Hebrew, Greek, and English all share the sense of the word's basic meaning: to be lifted up; to have an undue sense of one's importance or superiority.

Pride motivates us to exaggerate the value of our thoughts. It causes us to elevate our opinion and raises the importance of the fulfillment of what we perceive as our needs even above God's and, of course, decidedly higher than our fellowmen's.

In the context of the relationship between God and man, the overwhelming number of usages of the six Hebrew words and four Greek words translated as "pride" in the Bible are negative and damning. These words are translated into such terms as: arrogance, presumptuous, proud, lifted up, loftiness, proudly, exalted, haughty, scornful, contemptuous, overbearing, superior, boasting, condescending, disdainful, self-esteem.

King James version and various modern translations use them depending on the context.

Pride carries, not only a lofty self-centeredness, but also a lively competitiveness against others that easily becomes a lustful, destroying enmity. It is highly critical, envious, and impatient, and it can be effortlessly stirred to anger, possessiveness, and suspicion of being taken advantage of. These characteristics

are part of Satan's spirit. Each of them is destructive to loving family unity within the church.

Pride and ego generally refer to an exaggerated sense of self-importance, which usually results in an excessive preoccupation with self. But dying to self, the polar opposite of ego, is the biblical model for Christians. The Bible is filled with admonitions against the self because of man's inherent desire to be worshiped. In fact, all the various forms of modern idolatry have self at their very core. The dark forces of this age (Satan's influence) have convinced many that contentment is achieved only by satisfying the urges of the self. And we can trace all the way back to the Garden of Eden.

Genesis 3:5 In the original sin of Adam and Eve, Satan held out to them the promise of attainments beyond what they had experienced to that point in the Garden of Eden. Tempting them he said, "You will be like God knowing good and evil." (Genesis 3:5) This helped motivate them to become greater than what God, their Creator, had assigned to them.

In Genesis 1:31 When God saw everything He had created, He declared it to be "very good". Pride is not "very good." It was not in them as God created them, but it entered into their thinking in Satan's presence. The very first exercise of that pride earned them death and ejection from God's presence and the Garden of Eden.

At some time following his creation by God, pride arose in Satan, and he uttered this desire, as written in Isaiah 14:13-14. For you have said in your heart: "I will ascend into heaven. I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds. I will be like the Most High."

His devious offer to Adam and Eve in the Garden is an echo of his challenge against God. This exercise of pride separated him from God.

Pride, Satan's lofty feeling of superiority regarding his beauty corrupted him. It deceived him into wanting even greater power to complement his splendor. After all, he deserved it. Notice how great he was in his own eyes!

Exodus 3:10-11. Exodus chapter 2 Moses was saved by Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son. He struck down an Egyptian because he was beating a

Hebrew. When Pharaoh heard of it, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh and stayed in the land of Midian. There he spent 40 years learning humility. The arrogant son of Pharaoh's daughter, the victorious general and would be successor of Pharaoh's throne but now says "God, who am I? that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?" What a change took place in his thinking! He not only hesitated about going, but he almost petrified about the prospects of seeing Pharaoh again. This is a true principle of those who have been humbled in their field of expertise.

A young man may have graduated from high school, then from college, and medical school; after 6-8 years more of post-graduation training, he finally can call himself a specialist of the specialty. When he encounters his first difficult critically ill patient, he realizes there is a great deal more that he does not know.

That is what has happened to Moses. In those 40 years his impetuous spirit had been dissolved, and he saw his weakness and the power of Egypt in its true light. God has to overcome Moses' resistance. What a change! Moses was going to do it on his own before but God now has to overcome his resistance. All of the testing God had put Moses through produces right faith and right conviction.

Numbers 14:41-45 Presumption or Presumptuous

When the twelve spies, each representing a tribe of Israel, return back to Paran at Kadesh, they brought back bad report of the land that they had spied out. "The land is a land that devours its inhabitants." "All the people are of great height." "The sons of Anak are giants." "We seemed like grasshoppers to them."

Except for Joshua and Caleb, all the other ten spies died by plague before the LORD. The LORD God also told them that all those in the congregation that are older than 20 years will die in the wilderness, not one shall enter the promised land.

The next morning, they rose early and went up to the height of the hill country preparing to attack their enemies. Moses told them not to go up for the LORD is not among them. But they presumed to go up to the heights of the hill country, although neither the ark of the covenant of the LORD nor Moses departed out of the camp. (Numbers 14:44) Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites came down and defeated them and pursued them, even to Hormah.

There was no mercy from God for this presumptuous sin. These people were warned. They were told explicitly that what they were doing was a sin, what would happen, and that God would not be with them. But they went anyway! They presumed to go up to the mountaintop. So, another thing about presumptuous sin is that it is continuing proudly in the face of advice, warning. What we see here is that presumptuousness can be rash on one hand and quite premeditated on the other. But the constant concept behind these things is pride, arrogance, defiance, self-importance, and self-reliance. Their rebellion is remarkable in that they just witnessed the 10 spies were killed by plague right in front of their eyes and just heard God told them anyone over 20 years will not be allowed to enter the promised land due to their arrogant, rebellious and defiance.

Genesis Chapter 3. Let us go back to the beginning! When pride first appears in the Bible in Genesis 3, we see the devil “that proud spirit” using pride as the avenue by which to seduce our first parents. Taking the form of a serpent, his approach was simple yet deadly. First, he arrogantly contradicted what God had said to Eve about eating the forbidden fruit and charged God with lying.

The shocking rejection of God’s word introduced Eve to the unknown possibility of unbelief and was intended to arouse doubt in her mind about the truthfulness and reliability of God. In the next breath, the devil drew her into deeper deception by contending that God’s reason for lying was to keep her from enjoying all the possibilities inherent in being Godlike. This clever ploy was aimed at undermining her confidence in the goodness and love of God and arousing the desire to become as God.

The desire to lift up and exalt ourselves beyond our place as God’s creature lies at the heart of pride. As Eve in her now confused and deceived state of mind considered the possibilities, her desire to become Godlike grew stronger. She began to look at the forbidden fruit in a new light, as something attractive to the eyes and pleasant to the touch and delightful to the smell. Desire increased, giving rise to rationalization and a corresponding erosion of the will to resist the temptation and the fear of the Lord was vanishing from her conscience!

Finally, weakened by unbelief enticed by pride, and ensnared by self-deception, she opted for autonomy and disobeyed God’s command. In just a few deft moves, the devil was able to use pride to bring about Eve’s downfall and plunge

the human race into spiritual ruin. This ancient but all-too-familiar process confronts each of us daily. "Each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire (pride). The desire when it has conceived give birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death." (James 1:14-15)

From this point on in the Bible, we see the outworking of pride and unbelief in the affairs of individuals, families, nations, and cultures. As people lose or suppress the knowledge of God, spiritual darkness grows and a psychological inversion occurs: in their thinking God becomes smaller and they become larger. The center of gravity in their mental lives shifts from God to themselves. They occupy the center of their world, and God is conveniently moved to the periphery, either through denial of His existence or distortion of His character. Self-importance and godless self-confidence grow stronger. The cycle that follows is familiar: people exalt themselves against God and over others. Pride increases, arrogant and abusive behavior ensues, and people suffer.

On a national level, this is writ large in the history of Israel and surrounding nations, especially in the indictments delivered by the prophets of the eighth and sixth centuries BC. Blinded by power and the unprecedented affluence of the eighth century, prideful leaders in Israel embraced a corrupted view of God, trusted in their own wisdom and power, oppressed their people, ignored His call to repent, and thereby invited His judgment, which fell with disastrous results.

There are many biblical examples of pride and its consequences in the lives of individuals, and they offer valuable lessons for our own lives.

One of the more notable examples from the Old Testament is that of Uzziah, king of Judah. He became king at the young age of sixteen. He set his heart to seek God and put himself under the spiritual mentorship of Zechariah. And as long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper (2 Chronicles 26:5). As a result, he acquired wealth and also became politically and militarily powerful. Then things changed. "His fame spread far, for he was marvelously helped, till he was strong. But when he was strong, he grew proud, to his destruction." (2 Chron 26:15-16)

What happened? There are hints in the text that at some point on his road to the top, he stopped seeking the LORD and the spiritual mentoring of Zechariah. This suggests a lessening dependence on God and a growing reliance upon himself and his own strength and wisdom. History shows at every point how easy it is for

pride to increase as we become stronger, more successful, more prosperous, and more recognized in our endeavors. In fact, anything, real or imagined, that elevate us above others can be a platform for pride. Ironically, this is true even when these things come as a result of God's blessing.

As a result of all his blessings, Uzziah, rather than humbling himself in thanksgiving to God, began to think more highly of himself than he should have and developed an exaggerated sense of his own importance and abilities. This pride of heart led to presumption before God and brought very serious consequences upon him, illustrating the biblical warnings that pride leads to disgrace (Proverbs 11:2) and that "pride goes before destruction" (Prov. 16:18).

In 2 Chronicles 26:16-17 But when he was strong, he grew proud to his destruction. He went into the temple to burn incense on the altar. The chief priest and 80 priests stopped him. When he became angry with the priests he broke out in leprosy and eventually died from the disease. And Jotham his son took over his throne.

### Spiritual Pride

Few people today seem to be aware of the danger of spiritual pride, but spiritual leaders throughout the history of the church have always seen it as a great plague and tool of the devil. Even in the times of revival, it is a danger. Commenting on the revival in Northampton, Massachusetts in 1717, Jonathan Edwards said: "The first and worst cause of errors that abound in our day and age is spiritual pride. This is the main door by which the devil comes into the hearts of those who are zealous for the advancement of Christ. It is the chief inlet of smoke from the bottomless pit to darken the mind and mislead the judgment. Pride is the main handle by which the devil has hold of Christian persons and the chief source of all the mischief that he introduces to clog and hinder a work of God. Spiritual pride is the main spring or at least the main support of all other errors. Until this disease is cured, medicines are applied in vain to heal all other diseases."

An instructive lesson on religious pride or spiritual pride from the New Testament is found in the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector (Luke 18:9-14). Jesus taught this parable and it is aimed at those "who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt." It addresses spiritual pride,

an especially subtle and dangerous temptation of religious people and leaders, which has been very much in evidence in our time.

The well-known story of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector can help us recognize our own spiritual pride. It tells of a much-despised tax collector and a self-righteous Pharisee who went up to the temple to pray. The Pharisee proceeds to commend himself to God because of his careful observance of the Law and to look down with scornful contempt on the sinful tax collector. “God, I thank you that I am not like other man, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I get.” His prayer is not focus on God but on how good he is and how bad others are. Here is pride wrapped in the cloak of religion and giving it a bad name.

The Tax Collector is so painfully aware of his sins and unworthiness before God that he cannot even lift up his eyes as he stands in the back of the temple, far from the altar, pounding his breast in sorrowful contrition over his sins, he can manage only the desperate plea “God, have mercy on me, a sinner.”

In a surprising reversal of expectation, Jesus says that God answered the tax collector’s prayer, not the Pharisee’s. Then he concluded with His main point. “Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humble himself will be exalted.” (Luke 18:14)

### Ingratitude and Pride

In Numbers 15:32, a Sabbath breaker was caught gathering sticks on the Sabbath. He was brought before Moses and Aaron. The LORD told Moses to put the Sabbath breaker to death by stoning by the congregation.

Now Korah, Dathan and Abiram recruited 250 chiefs of the congregation to challenge Moses and Aaron. They said “You have gone too far! For all in the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them. Why do you exalt yourself above the assembly of the LORD.” (Numbers 16:3)

Moses fell on his face. He said to Korah “Hear now, you sons of Levi. Is it too small a thing for you that the God of Israel has separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to Himself, to do service in the tabernacle of the Lord and to stand before the congregation to minister to them,

and that He has brought you near Him, and all your brothers the sons of Levi with you? And would you seek the priesthood also?" (Numbers 16:8-10)

Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and all the other two hundred and fifty men were not content with what God had given them to do in the church of the wilderness. They did not want to be porters and bearers. They did not want to be the setup crew or the take-down crew. Instead, in their ingratitude and pride, they want to be the mediator between God and man, the one that had the most authority. The end result was Numbers 16:32-33. "And the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all the people who belonged to Korah and all their goods. So, they and all that belonged to them went down alive into Sheol, and the earth closed over them, and they perished from the midst of the assembly." The same happened to Dathan and Abiram. And fire came out from the LORD and consumed the 250 men offering the incense. The LORD sent a plague and killed 14,700 of the congregation for grumbling against Moses and Aaron.

This is where pride and ingratitude can ultimately lead a person into total rebellion against God. It leads to an individual feeling a false sense of worth, that he deserves more. If not checked, it becomes a plague of discontent and arrogance that soon infects others. Thus Satan's ingratitude and pride spread to 1/3 of heavenly angels.

Job 9:32-35 "For He is not a man, as I am, that I might answer Him, that we should come to trial together. There is no arbitrator between us, who might lay his hand on us both. Let Him take His rod away from me, and let not dread of Him terrify me. Then I would speak without fear of Him, for I am not so in myself."

Here in the early stage of debate, Job was complaining that he is enduring, is completely and totally unfair, and that God is wrong in permitting it to occur. Despite being aware that a vast difference exists between God and man, Job is nonetheless unaware of how immeasurably different the reality is, shown in his willingness to stand with God in a court of Law before an umpire who would hear both sides of the case! Out of pain and trial, Job wants to be heard, not realizing or ignoring he has no case to argue at all before God! At this point, Job is disturbed that God has not intervened and vindicated him before his accusing friends.

Job's complaint also reveals that he thought of sin merely in terms of an unrighteous act. He does not yet grasp that sin is more than a transgression of a code or commandment; it is a breaking of our covenant relationship with God that distort life itself. Sin is the distortion and whether it is an act visible on the outside or one of heart and motivation, the relationship with God is damaged because all sin is against God. Jeremiah 17:9 reads "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?"

To commit a sin as though it is of no account to God, as though He is indifferent to it, to disclaim responsibility, strikes at the very core of our relationship with Him. This is what Job was doing at this stage of debate, in claiming that God does not care about him. The reality is that God was putting through this rigorous trial because He did care and did not want to lose the relationship with him.

Job's trial thus becomes a witness to us of the vast difference between God and us. Besides God's being eternal spirit, and we being flesh, the greatest difference between Him and us is in our hearts. Our hearts are "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" because our hearts are filled with pride, jealousy, and arrogance.

Matthew 15:18-20 Jesus points out: "But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone." For one thing, the pride from the heart needs to be wrought from it.

Job 41:34 "He (Leviathan) sees everything that is high, he is king over all the sons of pride." This verse portrays God speaking of Leviathan, which clearly represents a being of awesome power and influence over mankind. God's description of Leviathan must not be misunderstood by focusing merely on its monstrous physical appearance, but rather on its reality as a living being, possessing strong leadership qualities and powerful influence. It has many other titles in the Bible:

1. Satan (Job 1:6)
2. God of this age (2 Corinthians 4:4)
3. Angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14)
4. Ruler of the authority of the air (Ephesians 2:2)
5. Ruler of this world (John 14:30)

6. The Devil (Matthew 4:1)
7. The Anointed Cherub (Ezekiel 28:14)
8. Tempter (Matthew 4:3)
9. The Evil one (Matthew 13:19)
10. Father of lies (John 8:44)
11. Roaring Lion (1 Peter 5:8)
12. The Angel of the Abyss (Revelation 9:11)
13. The old Serpent (Revelation 12:9)
14. Accuser of God's people (Revelations 12:10)

Leviathan (Satan) strikes fear into men to bring about submitting to him and thus control of them. He is the king of the Pride, and he rules "the children of pride", who are the overwhelming masses of unconverted people, those not submissive to God. They, like their spiritual father and their leaders, are enemies of God. Whether his mass of followers is aware of it or not, they have been forcibly inducted into his service. This is the same being of which Jesus informed of the Jews in John 8:44 "You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it."

The one who became Satan is a powerful and dominating creation of Almighty God. He was created, not as an enemy of God, but as a powerful Cherub to serve Him in His purpose by leading other angels in their service to God. Jude 6 discloses that the place of their service was on Planet Earth before mankind was created. But, as Ezekiel 28:14-17 shows, he turned his heart against God to become an enemy of God, influencing the angels under his charge to rebel with him against God. (Revelations 12:9; Isaiah 14:12-14)

God defeated him and his angels; and they were cast back to earth. Satan and his minions are still here, continuing their war against God and His creation, especially man. Ephesians 2:1-3 informs us about how this warfare is being carried out. "And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience, among whom

we all once lived in the passion of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.”

Satan’s influence is worldwide: “We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.” (1 John 5:19) His ultimate object is to destroy God, but along the way he also strives to destroy any aspect of God’s creation, most especially - man. He is doing this through inducing human beings to sin in order to bring upon them the wages of sin – death.

His basic tool for accomplishing this is by means of his spirit. The driving forces of his prideful, deceitful mind and those of his demon companions are deceit, hatred, anger, competition, and destruction, all encompassed within an overweening (overconfident, conceited) presumptuous pride. People absorb (infected) them into their thinking processes, becoming like him in attitude and conduct. These characteristics lodge into human hearts and generate resistance to God’s word, His Law, His purpose and God Himself.

It would be incomplete without learning from the Psalms and Proverbs.

Psalms 10:3 For the wicked boasts of the desires of his soul, and the one greedy for gain curses and renounces the LORD.

Psalms 10:4 In the pride of his face the wicked does not seek God; all his thoughts are “There is no God.”

Psalms 10:7 His mouth is filled with cursing and deceit and oppression, under his tongue are mischief and iniquity.

Psalms 10:8 He sits in ambush in the villages; in hiding places he murders the innocent. His eyes stealthily watch for the helpless.

Psalms 10:9 He lurks in ambush like a lion in his thicket; he lurks that he may seize the poor; he seizes the poor when he draws him into his net.

Psalms 10:10 The helpless are crushed, sink down, and fall by his might.

Here we see Pride as a form of idolatry. “In the pride of his face the wicked does not seek God”. It generates boasting of self – the proud brags about his heart’s desire. He vaunts himself and drives himself toward what he covets. Consider this in relation to Helel, the being who became Satan. (God reveals to us the

Hebrew names of three great and powerful angels. They are Michael, Gabriel and Helel. Helel became Satan after he rebelled.) In Ezekiel 28:12-15 God reveals to us the original nature of Helel – the anointed cherub “You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created.” (Ezekiel 28:15)

By his pride Satan drove himself to make war against God, a war that anybody in his right mind could see he could not possibly win. But Satan, his pride obliterated his ability to see the reality of his actions. And if it affected Helel that way, who could see God with his own eyes, what will pride do to a human? In the same way, pride will drive any man or woman toward what he/she covets and against God.

Clearly, what they seek is material things – mammon- and Jesus said you cannot serve God and mammon. The proud person actually serves the mammon; it has become his god. One cannot serve both God and mammon because they are opposites. Pride, then, drives a wedge between a man and God. It plows the way before the proud person, opening up an easy path in the wrong direction – success in the world. Ultimately, the proud person renounces or defies God while elevating himself and his desires. Therefore, he puts inordinate confidence in himself and his ability, but he plows on without seeking God’s counsel through prayer, study, or the counsel of others.

“In the pride of his face, the wicked does not seek God.” The question is: Is that means the wicked is an atheist? Or does the proud person deny the existence of God? Commentators insist that even though these verses say God is not in the thoughts, the proud person is not really an atheist. This idea comes from example like the Parable of the Publican and the Pharisee. The proud Pharisee vaunted and exalted himself, yet where was he? In the temple praying! Did he believe in God? Yes, he did. Thus, commentators concluded that the proud person does not totally dismiss God. They are in the churches all over America.

He (They) is not really an atheist, but he has a perverted conception of God. He renounces God, though perhaps not verbally, in what he does and in his attitude toward himself and others, in the church and outside the church. These show that he is really not seeking God. The proud person may openly express belief in God but choose not to have God present in his life. He is thus selective in

applying the Word of God to himself, ignoring anything that would reduce his self-esteem and self-righteousness.

All his thoughts are “there is no God.” (Psalms 10:4) Pride colors all his thinking concerning morals and ethics. His thoughts are on the greatness of man. Because his thoughts are inclined to glorify man, he does not consider that there might be someone greater to whom he is responsible.

Pride resists God rather than seeking Him. It is impossible to be with God without seeking Him. This lay bare the central issue here. Psalms 14:1 The fool says in his heart “There is no God.” They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds, there is none who does good. When a proud fool decided in his heart “There is no God”, then it follows that all his deeds are abominable in God’s sight. His proud thoughts are of the greatness of man because he perceives that man has accomplished all of this, not God. In the minds of those who believe man is so great, considering all of his vaunted achievements, there is room for none greater, because that person cannot see anything greater. “There is no God.”

We can see in this why God has such a strong issue with pride: because pride generates the sense of self-sufficiency, and such people think they are all right the way they are. Pride blinds people to their desperate needs of God.

Psalms 10:7 His mouth is filled with cursing and deceit and oppression; under his tongue are mischief and iniquity.

Psalms 10:8 He sits in ambush in the villages; in hiding places he murders the innocent. His eyes stealthily watch for the helpless.

Psalms 10:10 The helpless are crushed, sink down, and fall by his might.

The proud person uses his tongue (power) to put down and to play a game of one-upmanship. His cutting remarks may be funny but full of pride in putting down somebody’s looks, opinions, and habits. The objective is, as he puts the other down, he elevates himself. The proud uses his tongue to make himself look good, or come out on top, even if he has to lie, or hurt others, or to distort to do so. “In hiding places, he murders the innocent. The helpless are crushed by his might.” The proud people are hypocrites. They hide and murder innocent people by their tongue and hidden actions. They are coward and always prey upon the helpless and the innocent and taking advantage of people.

Proverbs 16:16 How much better to wisdom than gold! To get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver.

Proverbs 16:17 The highway of the upright turns aside from evil; whoever guards his way preserves his life.

Proverbs 16:18 Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.

Proverbs 16:19 It is better to be of a lowly spirit with the poor than to divide the spoil with the proud.

Proverbs 16:20 Whoever gives thought to the word will discover good, and blessed is he who trust in the LORD.

Regarding Pride, God gives some strong warning. It must definitely be eradicated from our character. Pride has many manifestations, but it almost always starts when a person makes perverted comparisons, elevating one thing above another, making the self feels more deserving than another. Pride may well be the father of all other sins. God says that pride leads the way to destruction (Proverbs 11:2; 17:19; 18:12) which is a product of sin.

The natural corollary of pride is prejudice, which is all about perverse comparisons. Prejudice falls on the heels of pride because of the perverted judgment that is the root of it.

Pride begets numerous emotional disorders because it brings people into conflict either openly or internally. Whenever the emotional discord is held within long enough, it will manifest itself as mental disorders. Pride brings in conflict with someone close at home or at work. Wherever it may occur, good personal relationship is almost impossible where pride and its firstborn, prejudice, exist.

Another more damaging and dangerous children of pride is intellectual arrogance. It produces an inability to learn either from one's own experiences or those of others. It also spawns a hatred of criticism and disdain for others.

The greater the pride, the more dangerous the consequences to the relationship, whether in marriage, a partnership, or politics or church. It is a major cause of war between couples, within companies, within churches, or between nations.

In American culture the big rewards go to the arrogant and not to the modesty or moderation. Thus, we produce a competitive and violent, divided society that rides on the coattails of this proud and arrogant attitude. Now the icons of the entertainment world and politics are the arrogant, the smug, the aggressive, the abusers.

Pride has its roots in a sense or feeling of strength, wealth, prosperity or accomplishment. Sometime these things are imagined, and sometime they are real, but whatever the case, misplaced confidence in self, producing a “better than you” attitude. The perverted comparison emerges. Perfect ground for Satan to plant the seed of arrogance and heading for destruction.

There is nothing wrong with having confidence in one’s ability to perform something. That is the talents God has given him. However, an ability to perform well should bring humility and attitude of gratitude to God who created him. It does not make a person intrinsically better than another. All the individual has done is to develop a skill that he already had a talent (gift) from God to perform. In the eyes of God, he was expected to perform well with that talent (gift from God), but does not make one better than another. We should strive to develop skill for it is a gift from God, but always understand that skill does not intrinsically equate with “I am better than you.” If we fail to understand this, there will be no worship, no thanksgiving to God and no love for fellow believers. We will be perverted children of Pride, the father of all sin.

It would be easy to conclude that pride is the special problem of those who are rich, powerful, successful, famous or self-righteous. But that is wrong. It takes many shapes and forms and affects all of us to some degree. The widespread chronic preoccupation with self in American Culture is rooted in pride and causing most of the ills in our society.

Pride can be summarized as an attitude of self-sufficiency, self-importance, self-exaltation and self-righteousness in relation to God. Toward others, it is an attitude of contempt and indifference. As C.S. Lewis observed “Pride is spiritual cancer: it eats up the very possibility of love, or contentment, or even common sense.” The depth of pride can vary from one person to the next and can be obvious or concealed. In the Old and New Testaments, it is a truism that God will

not suffer the creature to exalt itself against the Creator. Pride provoke God's displeasure, and He has committed Himself to oppose it.

If your pride causes you to exalt yourself, you are painting a target on your back inviting God to open fire. And He will. Obviously, He does not need your target to open fire on you. For He has declared His determination to bring it low wherever and whenever He finds it. Because He loves you and He knows that you are heading for disaster if He does not intervene. It was pride that caused Lucifer to be cast out of heaven and Adam and Eve to be cast out of Eden. And it is pride that will be our undoing if we tolerate it in our lives. The danger of pride is a sobering reality that each of us needs to ponder. Truly, it is our greatest enemy.

However, tragically, most of us do not see pride in our lives. For while it is easy to see pride in others, it is very difficult to see it in ourselves. C.S. Lewis observed that "there is no fault which make a man more unpopular and no fault which we are more unconscious of in ourselves. And the more we have pride in ourselves, the more we dislike it in others."

But C.S. Lewis does suggest a couple of ways to detect the presence of pride in our lives. First, Lewis quoted William Law from chapter fifteen of *A Serious Call of a Devout and Holy Life*. "There can be no surer proof of a confirmed pride than a belief that one is sufficiently humble." Also "If you want to find out how proud you are, the easiest way is to ask yourself: How much do I dislike it when other people snub me, or refuse to take any notice of me, or shove their oar in, or patronize me, or show off? Because it is so tricky to recognize, we are perhaps best off to earnestly seek God in prayer and ask Him to reveal to us any sinful pride in our lives so we can repent and forsake it. Another step we might take is to ask those who live or work with us if they see significant expression of sinful pride or arrogance in our life."

There is, of course, a good type of pride. Paul, for example, was proud of the churches he had established. But this was not arrogant or self-exalting pride. He made clear that his accomplishments were the fruit of God's grace to him and through him (Romans 15:17-19). Occasionally Paul mentions boasting, but this is a matter of highlight what God has done by His grace, either through Paul or in those in the churches. It is never self-exalting. These days most of us say that we are proud of our children or our favorite sports team or perhaps something

we have accomplished. In cases like this, we are saying that we are really pleased about something good and are not engaging in the sinful type of pride and arrogance the Bible condemns, understanding and accepting that all glory belongs to our God Almighty.

### Humility

John Chrysostom once remarked “Humility is the root, mother, nurse, foundation, and bond of all virtue.”

Pride is a universal human problem. Everyone suffers from it to some degree. When we have exalted ourselves in pride, God does not want to punish us and bring us low but rather to forgive and restore us. God repeated it many times in the Scripture - humble yourselves and I will exalt you. This gives us hope and encouragement. God takes pleasure in our efforts to humble ourselves, and He loves to bless and exalt the humble.

Admittedly, humility and the humbling of oneself is out of fashion in today’s world and seems unappealing to most of us. However, as Jonathan Edwards said “We must view humility as one of the most essential things that characterizes true Christianity.”

The greatest example of humility in human history is our Lord Jesus Christ. Our perspective on humility can be radically changed if we will ponder and meditate on His great example: By the very act of leaving heaven, coming to earth, and taking the form of man, He demonstrated an unfathomable humbling of Himself. Throughout His life on earth, Jesus demonstrated a spirit of profound humility, saying that he came “not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28). On His last night with the disciples, he took a towel and basin and washed their dirty feet (John 13:1-11), instructing them to follow his example of servanthood with one another (John 13:12-17). Andrew Murray captured it well “Christ is the humility of God embodied in human nature, the Eternal Love humbling itself, clothing itself in the garb of meekness and gentleness, to win, serve and save us.”

The apostle Paul may well have been thinking of this very scene in the Upper Room, when he urged the believers in Philippi: “Have this mind among yourselves which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not

count equality with God, a thing to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” (Philippians 2:5-8)

Paul is here encouraging ordinary believers in a local church, who apparently have some measure of sinful pride in their hearts and relationships, to reflect on and adopt the attitude and actions of Jesus their LORD and follow His example of humility.

The consequences of such an attitude may give us pause. Humbling ourselves could be costly in the workplace, in the community, or in other ways. However, that is a short sighted, worldly perspective. For the passage continues:

“Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the glory of God the Father.” (Philippians 2:9-11)

In our LORD Jesus we have the “example of all examples”: those who humble themselves will be exalted by God! And this is meant to guide our lives in this world. If we will take care of humbling ourselves, we can trust God take care of exalting us.

How do we gain the mind of Christ and humble ourselves? To put on the mind of Christ, we will need to make a firm decision to ponder, understand, and adopt Jesus’ way of thinking; His values and attitudes must become ours. His strong emphasis on humility and meekness and his example of it must take hold of our thinking, our desires and our conduct. We must admire His humility and want it for ourselves. For this to happen, we need to earnestly and regularly pray for the Holy spirit to change our hearts, for it is impossible to do it in our own strength. We will also need to understand what Jesus meant when He called men and women to humble themselves. We discover that from the Greek word Jesus and His apostles used, tapeinos, which convey the idea of having a right view of ourselves before God and others. If Pride is an exalted sense of who we are in relation to God and others, humility is having a realistic right sense of who we are before God and others. We must not think too highly (or too lowly) of ourselves. Rather, we must be honest and realistic about who and what we are.

This lies behind Paul's thinking when he tells the Romans in Romans 12:3 "For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment."

He then proceeds to instruct the believers in how to use the spiritual gifts God has imparted to them to serve one another (Romans 12:4-8). In other words, humility is having a right view of ourselves in relation to God and others and acting accordingly.

What is a right view of ourselves? Specifics will vary from person to person, but certain things are common to us all.

- We are God's creature: small, finite, dependent, limited intelligence and ability, prone to sin, and soon to die and face God's judgment (Hebrews 9:27)
- We are God's children: created in God's image, loved by God, and redeemed by God's grace alone, not by anything in or of ourselves.
- We are gifted by God with certain unique gifts, abilities, resources, and advantages which are to be used for His glory.
- As Paul reminds the Corinthians "What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?" (1 Corinthians 4:7) Frequently reminding ourselves of those things is important and crucial.

Having a right view of God and ourselves has a profound effect on our relationships with others. As Paul goes on to say in Romans "Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly." (Romans 12:16) And as Paul said to the Philippians "Do nothing from rivalry and conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interest, but also to the interest of others" (Philippians 2:3-4). As we refused to be preoccupied with ourselves and our own importance and seek to love and serve others, it will reorient us from self-centeredness to other-centeredness – to serving and caring for others just as Jesus did for us. In the narcissistic culture of contemporary America, this is particularly powerful counter-cultural witness of Christ's presence and Lordship in our lives.

Truly, humility is our greatest friend. It increases our hunger for God's Word and open our hearts to His Holy spirit. It leads to intimacy with God, who knows the

proud from afar, but dwells with him “who is of a contrite and lowly spirit” (Isaiah 57:15). It imparts the aroma of Christ to all whom we encounter. It is a sign of greatness in the kingdom of God (Luke 22:24-27).

Developing the identity, attitude, and conduct of a humble servant does not happen overnight. It is rather like peeling an onion: you cut away one layer only to find another beneath it. But it will happen. It does happen. As we forsake pride and seek to humble ourselves by daily deliberate choices in dependence upon the Holy Spirit, humility grows in our soul. Humility is a grace that is precious in the sight of God Almighty, who in due course will exalt all who embrace it.

“They that know God will be humble; they that know themselves cannot be proud.” John Flavel.

#### Isaiah 2:10-22 Preaching Against Pride

##### Prophecy of disaster (740 BC)

Pride, self-reliance, and false gods face a day of terror when God reveals His majesty and splendor.

2:10 Enter into the Rock and hide in the dust from before the terror of the LORD, and from the splendor of His majesty.

2:11 The haughty looks of man shall be brought low, and the lofty pride of men shall be humbled, and the LORD alone will be exalted in that day.

Isaiah caught the people’s attention quickly as he exhorted the people to hide from God’s terror. The irony is that they might try to hide but there is no escape from God. Israel had gloried in God’s majesty, the beauty and splendor that revealed Him to be greater than anything in nature and superior to any of the gods so gloriously decorated by human hands. But sinful Israel could not enjoy that splendor. It blinded them and destroyed them. They had to run for the rocks to hide from their own God. Only a redeemed Israel could look on God’s majesty. (Isaiah 35:2)

2:11 The oracle points back (in that day) to the opening of chapter 2 to remind the readers that no one is guaranteed a part in the “Latter day” or “the last day”

(verse 2). God is the only one sure to be exalted then. A disobedient people may exalt themselves in pride now, but they will finally be brought low.

Israel had everything that would make them great according to human wisdom, but it all led to pride. God will therefore humble them.

“The haughty looks of man shall be brought low.” “Looks of man” indicate mankind in general. But in verse 11 “the lofty pride of men shall be humbled” indicate individuals. Therefore, haughty mankind and prideful individuals will be humbled and brought low, in contrast to “The LORD alone will be exalted in that day.”

#### What is “that day” or “Day of the LORD” (13:6)

The day of the LORD is an Old Testament concept with complex history and meaning. Even in Isaiah’s day and beyond, people debated its meaning and taught opposing viewpoints about it. E.g. Amos 5:18-20 “Let Justice Roll down”

5:18 Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD! Why would you have the day of the LORD? It is darkness, and not light,

5:19 as if a man fled from a lion and a bear met him, or went into the house and leaned his hand against the wall and a serpent bit him.

5:20 Is not the day of the LORD darkness, and not light, and gloom with no brightness in it?

The day of the Lord will bring exaltation and praise to God and not to human (2:17). It is a day when God reveals His majestic power, causing people to fall on their knees in worship and a day when He reveals His terrifying power, causing people to fall on their face in fear (Joel 1:15). It is a day of decision when people show whether they are on God’s side or not (Joel 3:14), a day retribution for the deeds a people have done (Obadiah 15). It is a day of God’s wrath against sinners and those who have not trusted Him (Zephaniah 1:14-15). It is particularly a day when God defeats human pride (Isaiah 2:12).

#### The Day of the LORD in the Prophets

(1) Isaiah 13:6,9

13:6 “Wail, for the day of the LORD is near; as destruction from the Almighty it will come!”

13:9 “Behold, the day of the Lord comes, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger, to make the land a desolation and to destroy its sinner from it.”

Using an image of battle. Judgment of Babylon to bring wrath.

(2) Jeremiah 46:10

“That day is the day of the LORD God of hosts, a day of vengeance, to avenge Himself on His foes. The sword shall devour and be sated and drink its fill of their blood. For the LORD God of hosts holds a sacrifice in the north country by the river Euphrates.”

Using an image of a devouring sword representing the judgment of Egypt and promises of the LORD’s vengeance.

(3) Ezekiel 13:5; 30:3

13:5 “You have not gone up into the breaches, or built up a wall for the house of Israel, that it might stand in battle in the day of the LORD.”

30:3 “For the day is near, the day of the LORD is near; it will be a day of clouds, a time of doom for the nations.”

13:5 False prophets have not prepared Israel for “the day of the LORD”.

30:3 Resulting in a “day of clouds” and a “time of doom”.

(4) Joel 1:15; 2:1, 11, 31; 3:14

1:15 “Alas for the day! For the day of the LORD is near, and as destruction from the Almighty it comes.”

2:1 Blow a trumpet in Zion; sound an alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming; it is near.

2:11 The LORD utters His voice before His army, for His camp is exceedingly great; He who executes His Word is powerful. For the day of the LORD is great and very awesome; who can endure it?

2:31 The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.

With broad usage “the day of the Lord” brings a locust invasion, judgment of Israel and the nations, or final vindication of God and His people.

(5) Amos 5:18 (x2); 20

5:18 “Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD! Why should you have the day of the Lord? It is darkness, and not light.”

5:20 Is not the day of the LORD darkness, and not light, and gloom with no brightness in it?

Using several metaphors, “the day of the LORD” refers to the darkness of judgment – by the hand of the Assyrians – upon the northern kingdom – Israel.

(6) Obadiah 15

“For the day of the LORD is near upon all the nations. As you have done, it shall be done to you; your deeds shall return on your own head.”

Using the image of drinking continually, verse 16 “the day of the LORD” refers to coming judgment upon Edom and the nations but salvation for God’s people.

(7) Zephaniah 1:7; 14 (x2) (The Day of the LORD is near.)

1:7 Be silent before the LORD God! For the day of the LORD is near; The LORD has prepared a sacrifice and consecrated His guests.

1:8 And on the day of the LORD’s sacrifice – I will punish the officials and the king’s sons and all who array themselves in foreign attire.

1:14 The great day of the LORD is near, near and hastening fast; the sound of the day of the LORD is bitter, the mighty man cries aloud there.

(8) Malachi 4:5

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.” Here “The day of the Lord” refers to the coming of the LORD Himself, the “messenger of the covenant (3:17) who brings justice, purifies worship, and claims those who are His.”

In general, the day of the LORD, means for the LORD to visit His people. It means judgment upon them if they are unfaithful:

- In Amos: it means the coming judgment on the northern kingdom, Israel at the hands of the Assyrians (Amos 5:27).
- In Zephaniah: it means the coming judgment on Judah at the hands of the Babylonians.
- In Isaiah 13:6,9 refers to the judgment of Babylon.
- In Jeremiah 46:10 refers to the judgment of Egypt.
- In Malachi 4:5 denote something further off in the future, the coming of the Lord Himself.

In the New Testament, the day of the Lord refers to the return of Jesus Christ Himself. (1 Corinthians 1:8; 2 Peter 3:10)

The Day of the LORD is particularly a day when God defeats human pride

Isaiah 2:12 For the LORD of Hosts has a day against all that is proud and lofty, against all that is lifted up – and it shall be brought low,

2:13 against all the cedars of Lebanon, lofty and lifted up; and against all the oaks of Bashan;

2:14 against all the lofty mountains, and against all the uplifted hills,

2:15 against every high tower, and against every fortified wall;

2:16 against all the ship of Tarshish, and against all the beautiful craft.

2:17 And the haughtiness of man should be humbled, and the lofty pride of men shall be brought low, and the LORD alone will be exalted in that day.

2:18 And the idols shall utterly pass away.

Ten times Isaiah asserts God's settled opposition to all human pride using the strong word "against all" that represent human pride and arrogance.

- (1) Against all that is proud and lofty (human success).
- (2) Against all that is lifted up by human standard.
- (3) Against all the cedars of Lebanon. Cedars of Lebanon is a large evergreen conifer. It is the national emblem of Lebanon.

- King Solomon procured cedar of Lebanon to build the Temple in Jerusalem.
  - Moses ordered the priests to use the bark of the Lebanon cedar to treat leprosy.
  - Cedars of Lebanon are examples of loftiness as a metaphor for the pride of the world. It is displayed on the flag of Lebanon.
- (4) Against all the oaks of Bashan – metaphor for the pride of the world.  
Bashan was the northernmost of the three ancient divisions of eastern Palestine. In the OT it was proverbial for its rich pastures and thick forest, and the oaks of Bashan was the best. In the NT times, Bashan numbered as one of the great granaries (storehouse for threshed grain) of Roman empire.
  - (5) Against all the lofty mountains.
  - (6) Against all the uplifted hills. It was on top of these lofty mountains and hills that the idol worship took place.
  - (7) Against all the ships of Tarshish. Human ingenuity in building the best ocean worthy ships in Tarshish.
  - (8) Against all the beautify craft. Human ingenuity and creativity.
  - (9) Against all (every) fortified wall, depending on human engineering to defend themselves.
  - (10) Against every high tower. Trusting human ingenuity and strength to protect themselves.

God said, “The haughtiness of man shall be humbled, and the lofty pride of men shall be brought low, and the LORD alone will be exalted in that day.” (v. 17)

People, particularly those who participate in the worship of the one true God (believers), may expect the day of the LORD (that day) to be a day of victory and reward, but they may well be surprised (Amos 5:18). Human strength cannot survive God’s Day (Joel 2:11). The day of the LORD is the day God has chosen in His universal plan to show the world that He is King of the universe and that no one has power to oppose Him.

Such a day may be directed against one enemy such as Babylonia (Isaiah 13; Ezekiel 30:2-4), or even against God’s own people (Isaiah 22:5; Zechariah 14:1-5). Such a day calls for mourning, not celebration. It can also be a day when God

takes his vengeance on people who have mistreated his chosen nation (Isaiah 34:8). Wealth and resources will not matter in that day. Only humble people seeking to worship God have a chance to escape (Zephaniah 2:3).

The historical day of the LORD can occur many times against different enemies of God. Each instance points beyond itself to a final day of the LORD (Malachi 4:5) when God will reward His people and punish His enemies for the final time. This is what Revelation describes so vividly (Matthew 23-25; Luke 21).

The marvels of creation and of human handiwork represent the most magnificent realities the human eye can see and thus blurring the vision of God's majesty. The pride and arrogance arising from these false assumptions will lead to disastrous end. Each of these splendid objects will vanish from sight on God's Day of judgment.

"The LORD alone will be exalted in that day."

Isaiah sees "the haughty looks and haughtiness of man" as central to what is wrong with the world and the root of all sins. Exclusive exaltation of the LORD as the only remedy.

God uses images of high and lofty things to impress upon the Israelites that He has no equal – he can humble them all. When the day of the LORD comes, humankind will clearly see the power and majesty of God and attempt to flee from Him. The climax is reached when the prophet charges the Israelites to stop fearing human whose next breath is uncertain, and rely instead upon God who control the universe. There will be an awe-inspiring correction of power and authority when God takes His throne.

2:18 And the idols shall utterly pass away.

2:19 And people shall enter the caves of the rocks and the holes of the ground, from before the terror of the LORD, and from the splendor of His majesty when He rises to terrify the earth.

The good days of prosperity will soon give way to economic disaster. Human pride and achievement will vanish. Only God will remain high and lifted, exalted above this world. The idols so valued (2:6) will disappear. The arrogant and proud will have to follow the prophet's advice (v.10) and flee to caves in the

rocks. Why? Because as men are brought low, God rises to shake the earth. The splendor of His majesty will dominate the universe! The fear of the LORD will overshadow any pride and arrogance of man!

The exact words in verse 19 are repetition from verse 10 and will be repeated again in verse 21. The theme is clear: when God shows up with His splendor of majesty, the earth will be terrified, and all the idols shall utterly pass away, and the proud and arrogant people will hide in the caves of the rocks and the holes of the ground; only the Almighty God will be exalted above all idols and all haughty human beings!

2:20 In that day mankind will cast away their idols of silver and their idols of gold, which they made for themselves to worship, to the moles and to the bats,

2:21 to enter the caverns of the rocks and the clefts of the cliffs from before the terror of the LORD, and from the splendor of His majesty, when He rises to terrify the earth.

2:22 Stop regarding man in whose nostrils is breath, for of what account is he?

As God shakes the earth in judgment, the idols people fashioned for the purpose of worship will be fit only for the animals who inhabited the darkest places of the earth – moles and bats – and who could not appreciate their beauty. So again, the refrain: “flee to caverns in the rocks”. Those who did not fear the LORD will now stand in dread of Him. Those who did not praise His majesty will shrink away from it in horror.

“Their idols of silver and their idols of gold – to the moles and to the bats”. The precious but fraudulent ideals of the present world will be seen for the contemptible things they are and acted upon accordingly.

The prophet concluded with another curse, calling upon his faithful followers not to put their confidence in arrogant human beings – “stop regarding man”.

Humans are only dust, given the breath of life by God (Genesis 2:7). A sarcastic rhetorical question is a fitting conclusion people have to basis for pride and arrogance. In the end they will crawl trembling into the caves to finish their days. The proud and arrogant will have to admit they are worth no more than the dust of the ground. Isaiah urges a realistic assessment of the weakness of human power and pride, and trust and rely upon God who control the universe!

## Landmines in the Path of the Believers

### The consequences of pride in the life of a believer

1. Pride hinders our fellowship with God. We cannot be loyal to Him and be self-centered and self-serving. Only one person is worthy of all our praise and that is Jesus Christ.
2. Pride leads to broken relationships with others. Instead of thinking about what they can do to help and serve others, prideful individuals think only about how they can benefit from a relationship.  
From God's perspective, no one is greater than someone else. We are all standing on equal ground. God loves each one of us equally and He wants us to love one another with the same type of love. God saved us from sin, and He is the source of our total worth. Take God out of our lives, and we have nothing of eternal value. Our success and the opportunity to live it abundantly is a gift of grace from God.
3. Pride blocks God's blessings and often cause us to lose our rewards. The goodness and rewards God has stored up for us is beyond our comprehension. We miss that on earth and spend all our time striving and accumulating the transient earthly material.  
God's blessings offer a sense of fulfillment and peace that you will never be able to achieve on your own. His call for us is to be faithful in what we have been given to do. There will be many people who are heart broken in heaven because they will look at what they have wasted a lifetime and collecting wood, hay, and stubble next to the blessings God had prepared for them.
4. Pride lessens the fullness of relationship with God. Pride darkens our hearts to the light of God's truth and keeps us from experiencing the joy and hope that come from living fully free in Him. Pride tie us to Satan's lies and his earthbound limitations that we have to have more of everything to be happy.  
When we joyfully give up our rights to a life we choose in order to know Christ and to make Him known to others, the tendency to be prideful diminishes. This is the bottom line to experience true contentment and fulfillment.
5. Pride decreases our effectiveness as a leader

Prideful leaders are focused on what they can gain. They fail to see objectives clearly because they are wrapped up in their own dreams, goals, and desires. Instead of thanking God for their success, they step back and think, "They are right. Look what I have done. I am important. I am successful."

God hates pride because it shifts the glory from Him to the prideful person.

6. Pride entices us to favor people who build up our egos. Everyone wants to feel accepted and loved. The best way to rid your life of pride is to surround yourself with people who care for you for the right reasons and not just to stroke your ego. Pride is a stumbling block for many leaders because there is a tendency to be surrounded by those who say what they believe the leader wants to hear. We need to encourage friends and family member to provide honest, healthy feedback on our character and the roles we play in their lives.
7. Pride sets the stage for us to make foolish mistakes  
The enemy is waiting for the right opportunity to tempt us to venture away from God's principles with words of pride and self-reliance. The prideful person will cease to seek God and godly wisdom and advice. Satan wants you to be on your own doing what you think only you can do. He knows when you make a mistake you would begin to crush around you with no godly support. You will be alone in your pride.
8. Pride shut down the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives  
When we become prideful, God's discernment within our lives fade. We begin to make horrendous decisions because we no longer have God's wisdom available to us. It is as if we are spoiled children demanding our ways until finally our mother tells us, "Fine. Do it your way." When we do, we usually end up making foolish decision and reaping the consequences. Prideful people never give an ear to God's instruction and runs head long into trouble. He has no time for prayer, no time to ask God or any wise people's opinion.  
If we are true believer, the Holy Spirit indwells us, resides in us and whisper to us especially when we are praying. A prideful heart will drown out any whisper or even shouting from the Holy Spirit.
9. Pride breeds prayerlessness

The prideful people do not want to connect or commune with God – through worship or prayer. We may attend church for appearance's sake, but actual devotion and spirit of true worship is missing. Prayer keeps us in line with God's will. In His presence there is fullness of joy. It is one place we can sense His unconditional love toward us. It is the only channel by which you and I can communicate with Him. It also is the channel through which He reaffirm His way to us. Diligent and earnest prayer consist of adoration, confession, thanksgiving and supplication. A prideful person can only think of asking God to perform miracle for him, nothing else.

10. Pride causes us to emphasize self more than God

We begin to view ourselves as being important. A little popularity, a few compliment, and we forget who has given us the ability to achieve our goals or see our dreams become a reality. Often when this happens God will step into our lives and, if necessary, place us on "the shelf" for a season. God is not going to honor our work when pride is involved. We also need to remember that Satan is never complacent. He is relentless in his approach and will continue to pursue us with the goal of destroying our witness and testimony for the LORD. The evidences of pride in one's life are obvious.

- (1) The desire to be number one always
- (2) Continual reference to oneself
- (3) The longing to be the center of attention
- (4) A need to seek the praise and compliments from others
- (5) A desire to dress in such a way as to gain the attention of others
- (6) A need to be seen in prominent places
- (7) Unwillingness to help people who are less fortunate
- (8) A desire to elevate oneself and talk down other people
- (9) A desire to win every debate in all subject
- (10) Easily upset when desires are not met
- (11) A rebellious spirit
- (12) A tendency to take credit for something that someone else did
- (13) Refusal to do menial tasks
- (14) Refusal to apologize when wrong
- (15) An attitude of self-sufficiency and self-righteousness

11. Pride prevents us from experiencing a personal, intimate relationship with the Savior

Jesus tells us in His own Words that there is only one way to the Father and that is through Him. He commands us to be humble before Him. Pride, however, encourages us to exalt ourselves and ignore the Savior. Peter wrote in 1 Peter 5:5-6 "Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble. Therefore, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time. Pride literally erects an emotional wall between the Savior and us.

Seven steps to successfully Dealing with Pride

Charles F. Stanley.

1. To realize that pride is present in your life. The acknowledgement is critical in dealing with pride. We need to confess that we have a problem in this area. That confession will remove the wall that is separating us from our merciful and gracious God. The genuine confession will lead us to repent from that sin and draw us closer to God and seek His restoration and forgiveness. However, many people find this very hard to do. Pride has so captured their hearts and possessed their soul that they refuse to admit there is a problem.
2. Ask God to forgive us for being prideful. Ask God to remove anything that would separate us from Him or prevent us from experiencing His best. Sometime that can be painful.
3. Pray that God will give us the ability to turn away from pride before it is taking root in our lives. It is one thing to confess pride, but it is another thing to ask God for the strength to lay aside any pride that we may have in our lives. Realize that there will be times that God removes pride by allowing us to face disappointment, brokenness, or separation from what we desire. Remember that He break us only in order to bless us. Brokenness is the beginning of blessing and healing in God's plan.
4. Pray that God will set (build) a hedge around our life to protect us. Also ask God to give us the discernment to detect the landmines of pride and arrogance before we approach it. One of the best ways to defuse conceit

and arrogance is to serve someone else. To learn humility and the goodness that comes from being submitted to the LORD fully and completely. God rewards obedience. His greatest desire is for us to obey Him so we can experience all that He has prepared for us.

5. Remember where we came from and how far God has brought us. Over time, many of us forget the foundation of our salvation. We overlook the fact that we once yielded to sin, slave to sin and continue to do so even now through judging others. In 1 Corinthians 6:11, the apostle Paul wrote “You were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the LORD Jesus Christ and in the Holy spirit of our God.” He admonished us never to forget that Christ died for us, for our sins. Pride beckons us to look down on those who are trapped in sin; yet God calls us to pray even harder for those who have drifted in their devotion or never made a commitment to Christ.

The moment we allow ingratitude to grow within our hearts, we are on the verge of stepping on the landmine of pride. Avoid it, and keep our hearts turned toward God and He will keep us safe and fill our hearts with joy that exceeds anything we can remotely imagine.

6. Ask God to help us recall the good things that He had done in our lives, and stop comparing ourselves to someone else. He created us in love and He has a plan just for you and me and that only we can fulfill. No one else is exactly like you. You are precious in His sight, and He loves you more than anyone else possibly can or ever will. When you draw comparisons between yourself and another person, you open a door for pride to enter, coveting what others have – whether it is personality trait, a life position, a material possession or success in life – is dangerous. It fosters pride and erases any gratitude we may have toward God for the good things He has given. Therefore, be faithful right where you are. Praise Him for what He has done in your life.
7. Be willing to experience adversity. None of us would raise our hands and volunteer to experience disappointment or sorrow. However, God does His greatest work in us and through us during our hard time if we remember who He really is. This is when we need to remember that whatever drives us to God is always good for us. Nothing does this more

effectively than trouble, heartache and adversity, which are mighty tools in God's hands.

If life is running really well and smoothly, we may not think seriously about how God views us. But if we are confronted with a deep disappointment or a resounding sorrow or unimaginable pain, we will respond by crying out to Him from the bottom of our hearts. When we do, a wondrous thing happens: He turns in our direction – open His arms and comfort us and draw us close.

“The Eternal God is our dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms. And He thrust out the enemy before you and said “Destroy”.

Deuteronomy 33:27

“I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you.” Jeremiah 31:36

“For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angel nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our LORD.” Romans 8:38-39

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16

“Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for He has said “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

The landmine of pride is one of the most-deadly weapons in Satan's arsenal. It is the very landmines that caused Satan's fall from heaven, and it can certainly wreak havoc in our life. Once we allow our life to be prideful, we will experience the absence of God in our life – the most empty and lonely life we can expect. Once we understand that God loves us deeply, we will want to return to God, turn away from the very pride that separates us from Him. The best way to avoid pride and the other landmines that Satan has placed along our path is to surrender our life to Christ. As long as pride holds a prominent place in our heart, Christ is not LORD. He cannot have a prominent place in your heart and life. Even if we have accepted Him as our Savior, we still must choose to submit every aspect of our life over to Him and allow Him to live His life through us.

When we do, pride will have no place to hide and Christ will be our true LORD and Savior and He will bless us in ways we never thought possible.