

The Plague of Pride

Introduction: What is the greatest danger facing God's people today?

A. Anyone who knows the history of God's people well understands that apostasy is common. **(Deut 8:11-20)**

1. The real tragedy is that we often depart from God in the midst of abundant blessings that He has given us.

2. How has the Lord blessed us? How long have we been enjoying the riches of the gospel? We are a people prime for a fall if we fail to be humble.

B. How is it possible for men and women with years of experience to leave the Lord with almost no shame?

1. As with all sin it begins in the heart.

2. Someone has said that the worst of all sins is pride. Why is that so?

I. What is Pride?

A. There are several words that indicate pride: "Haughty, vainglory, high look.."

1. Paul uses the word: "Puffed-up" - "to inflate, blow-up, blow out, to cause to swell up...fig. To make proud."

2. Have you ever said that someone is "full of hot air." **(Prov 25:14)**

B. Pride is an unrealistic view of ones abilities.

1. The scriptures clearly warn us. **(Gal 6:3; Rom 12:3)**

2. Be sure you do not confuse the Bible sin of pride with self-respect. There is a realm wherein we "ought to think".

3. An "inferiority complex" is not humility. Often these people will turn to pride as a mask of there internal insecurities.

4. "Let us make sure that the kind of pride we posses is the kind that keeps the head and chin up and not the nose!"

C. Pride comes from abundance, achievements and blessings, that is why it is so dangerous.

1. Knowledge is good, but watch for pride. **(2 Cor 8:1-2)**

2. Be careful at who you put into positions of responsibility. **(1 Tim 3:6)**

3. The apostle Paul needed help to avoid pride. **(2 Cor 12:7)**

II. The Horrors of Pride

A. Pride is a sin.

1. What does God think of pride? **(Prov 21:4; 6:16-19; 8:13; 16:5)**

2. When our God makes such statements about a sin we better flee from it!

B. Pride causes other sins. **(1 John 2:16-17)**

1. This was involved in the first sin. **(Gen 3:5)**

2. Still there is hope if one repents. Sadly pride blocks repentance because....

C. Pride causes blindness. **(Rom 1:20-22)**

1. "A man who is proud in time will be afraid to face self. Reality cannot be met."

2. Sometimes we use other words for pride such as "stubbornness".

III. Identifying Pride in our Lives

- A. Pride is essentially competitive. You have to be the best.
1. The more you have of pride, the more you notice it in others.
 2. A proud person is thin skinned. At his heart he is insecure.
 3. Pride is not satisfied with mere possession, he must have more than the other fellow.
- B. Pride looks down on others. **(Luke 18:9)**
1. They are quick to give harsh, unloving criticism. What will the proud talk about at lunch today?
 2. They often cover their own failures with attacks on others. (Ex. Personal work, “They are not sincere” or “I do not like what the brethren are doing”.)
 3. Because the proud cannot admit or look at their own weaknesses they get involved in this rationalizing, fault-finding game.
- C. Pride produces envy and jealousy.
1. “Envy is that uncomfortable feeling that one experiences over the advances or good fortunes of another. An envious person feels that any honor for another is a gauling dishonor for himself.”
 2. Pride cannot give honor when due. **(1 Cor 12:26)**
 3. Pride will cause some to use the charge of pride to destroy and minimize the influence of their “competitor”. (Ex. Korah charged Moses with pride) **(Num 16:3)**
 - a. “He is trying to run the church!”
 - b. Do not confuse conviction with pride nor compromise with humility.
 4. This is why the leaders murdered Jesus. **(Mark 15:10)**
- D. Pride seeks the praises of men. **(Matt 23:5-12)**
1. Pride may cause one to be busy with religious activity.
 2. Pride substitutes the outward service for the inward service. **(2 Cor 10:18)**
 3. Pride always compares, looks at others and as a result men become the standard. **(2 Cor 10:12)**
 4. One may be “raised in the church” but judge what is right upon the “status quo.”
 5. Pride seeks status and false symbols. **(1 Tim 6:17)**
- E. Pride produces self sufficiency.
1. The middle letter in pride and sin is “I”. Ex. “I am a self made man.”
 2. Pride causes one to be intolerant in their study of the Bible. **(1 Tim 6:3-4)**
 3. Rather than admit they are wrong they will use names and labels to attack others. **(3 John 9-10)**
 4. Pride causes men to do foolish things and never make it right. (Ex. Man who quit and briefly attended a liberal church.)
 5. Pride stifles the work of God. Proud men will pit brethren against one another in an atmosphere of suspicion. They are sensitive people! (Ex. Saul) **(1 Sam 22:8)**
- F. Pride causes men to ignore clear warnings of danger. (Ex. Dating)
- G. A Test for pride.
1. Have we ever become envious when someone out-did us, or were commended

and we were not?

2. Are we offended at constructive criticism?
3. Have we ever pushed ourselves to the breaking point because of pride?
4. Have we ever had difficulty appreciating what others have done, and expressing that appreciation, because of pride?
5. Have we ever been controlled by pride to the extent that we would not admit that the position we held on a given matter was wrong?
6. Has pride ever hindered us in responding to the invitation when we really should have done so to make things right?

IV. The Final End of the Proud

- A. God will destroy the proud in hell. (**Prov 15:25; 16:18; 1 Cor 10:12; Jas 4:6**)
- B. Please do not take this sin lightly!

Conclusion: When we are humble we can see God and then ourselves clearly.
(**1 Cor 4:6-7**)

- A. Humility may hurt, but God will heal and comfort you.
- B. Pride will cause us hurtful blows in this life and the life to come! Let us open our eyes. Where do you stand?

Pride's Connection to Envy ***Ken Marrs***

A Refusal to Rejoice

A neighbor comes over to your house to show you their new car. Your boss wants to tell you about his vacation in Hawaii. A friend tells you their daughter just received a full scholarship from three different universities. Are you happy for them? Can you "Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep" (**Rom. 12:15**)? Some can ... and some cannot.

Why is it that some of us find it difficult to genuinely feel glad for our friends and brethren when some good fortune comes to them? Could it possibly be that when we see our neighbor's new car we are really saying to ourselves: "Why can't I have a new car too?" "I deserve it just as much as they do!" or, try this one on for size: "What a shameless waste of money. Don't they have anything better to spend their money on than some fancy car/house/vacation? Why couldn't they have bought something cheaper and given the difference to the poor?" Shades of Judas.

You see, when we find ourselves criticizing someone's good fortune, it may be that we are not really critical of what has been done, but that someone else has prospered rather than us. We may even find it easier to say "I'm so sorry" to one who has experienced some misfortune, because we are in fact quietly content that someone else is suffering and not us.

The real problem here is not just a weak spirit, but a dominating sense of the flesh ... our flesh ... our welfare ... our own exclusive world of "me." When someone else prospers, it's not fair if we don't prosper also, and when another suffers, at least we are not suffering!

Few things could be as un-Christlike as the inability or unwillingness to feel and show true compassion for a brother. The humble heart will naturally empathize with a brother's lot in life,

whether prosperous or calamitous (**1 Corinthians 12:24-26**), but a proud heart will be impotent to understand another's circumstance. A Christian life without compassion is inconceivable. A Christian life without humility is impossible.

Envy

Envy is more than just wanting to have what others have or be as someone else. Envy seems to involve a measure of hatred. Paul enjoined envy with malice (**Titus 3:3**). Envy is married to resentment, and resentment is hard to hide. Pilate recognized the Jews and chief priests were moved with envy when they demanded that Jesus be crucified (**Mark 15: 10**). The chief priests and rulers were not really concerned with the truth of Jesus, but with a self-centered heart they saw our Lord as a threat to their place in the Synagogue and with the people.

Several years ago a gospel preacher was fired. Over ten years later, that same preacher received a phone call one Sunday afternoon. The man on the phone was from the congregation that had earlier "terminated" this preacher. The caller was crying as he explained that he was the reason for the preacher's dismissal. He had been a "favorite" of the congregation for several years until the new minister came. Everyone loved the new preacher and his wife, and they became the new favorites of everyone at the church. This brother couldn't stand it so he began to secretly spread false rumors among the brethren about the new preacher.

The caller had made a public confession that morning at worship services and was now asking for forgiveness from the one he had wronged. What a tragedy! What a burden to carry for over a decade of one's life! All because of selfish pride which conditioned this brother's heart to envy.

Pride is insidious. It strips us of reality ... the reality of ourselves and the reality of others. When we start comparing ourselves to others, we are faced with the never-ending task of explaining to ourselves why we don't have or didn't accomplish what others have. How torturous. How self-defeating. How foolish. Surely, selfish pride is the driving force in much of man's disapproval of other men.

Solution

The problem of envy could be solved in our lives if we would just humble ourselves toward each other as we do the Lord. just think about this for a moment; we do not envy our Lord ... why? ... because we readily see that He is greater than ourselves. Likewise, we would not envy our brother if we would "... esteem others better than himself" (**Philippians 2:3**).