

Healing from Pride

The Lord would have me speak to you about the sin of spiritual pride. While most pastors and church leaders have turned their backs on the patterns of the flesh which are common in the world, they may develop new and sublimated patterns of sin which are largely unconscious but extremely destructive, spiritually. Everyone appointed to serve the Lord's people is thereby put into the place of great temptation. Pride is the greatest single cause of problems within churches, and the lack of spiritual and numerical growth within congregations. It is the root of every sin and evil. It is the gate and the birth, and the curse of hell. All the evils of fallen angels and men have their birth in the pride of self.

This is the main door by which the devil comes into the hearts of those who are zealous for the advancement of religion . . . the chief inlet of smoke from the bottomless pit, to darken the mind and mislead the judgment . . . , the main handle by which the devil has hold of religious persons and the chief source of all the mischief that he introduces, to clog and hinder the work of God.

Pride drastically hinders the work of God because it padlocks the spirit, shutting the soul off in its own darkness and blocking it from dealing with pride itself. Because spiritual pride is so secretive, it is hard to detect. Pride must die in you, or nothing of heaven can live in you.

How may we know spiritual pride? One of the most serious problems is that those who have spiritual pride very rarely are aware of it. Sometimes pride is like bad breath – we are the last one to know we have it. Those with pride sometimes have forms of godliness which not only deceive others, but deceive themselves and hinder them from seeing the spiritual pride which is working and which others may more readily see. Pride works hand in hand with legalism and religious spirits, to make the pastor and the congregation have only a form of Godliness. Pastors and ministers will allow themselves to be lifted up as ministers, and spiritual fathers. They preach from raised platforms, and sometimes sit in ornate high backed chairs. They eat a church dinners in special places and are always served first. If they suffer from the spirit of rejection, they will seek to fill that void with sermons and ministry that makes those in their congregations feel they have a spirituality that is above the rest. They tend to take some of the glory and honor due the Father unto themselves. During extended ministry times they sometimes push parishioners on the head to make them “fall in the spirit”. They want others to think they have increased spiritual power. The result is self-aggrandizement, which is pride in its original form.

Humanly speaking, we derive great amounts of emotional and physical energy from these subtle forms of self-directed praise. Pride is very dangerous because it makes you appear holy when you are not, and results in deceit, lying and fraudulent behavior. It comes from the insatiable quest for recognition and acceptance.

Remember the sin of pride got Lucifer kicked out of heaven. Even the Apostles had pride in their hearts on several occasions. (Luke 9:46, Luke 22:24, Mat 20:20).

If you don't humble yourself, God will eventually humble you, and afterward your ministry will never be the same. See the story of David. Triumphs (chap 1-10), Transgressions (Chap 11), Troubles (Chap 12-24). See King Uzziah (2 Chron 26:16) and King Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 5:)

Christ showed his disciples the evidence of pride in how the Pharisees loved the chief places at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues. Is this so different than the “high tables”

and ornate high backed seats and tables for pastors and bishops in some churches today? In contrast, Jesus gave them this example of being a servant, and washing the feet of others. It is only by the indwelling of Christ in His divine humility that we become truly humble. We originally got our pride from Adam. But we need to get our humility from Jesus. A humble man feels no jealousy – or envy. He can praise God when others are preferred and blessed before him. He can bear to hear others praised and himself forgotten, because in God’s presence he has learned to say with Jesus & Paul, “I am nothing.” He has received the spirit of Jesus, who pleased not Himself, and sought not His own honor. He knows that any spiritual gift or power he/she may have comes only from God. (John 3:27)

What the Bible says About Pride, Humility, and Servanthood

Read what the Bible says about pride and being proud. You will find that the Lord does not hear the proud. It is a curse (Ps 119:21), an abomination (Prov 16:5), and is one of the seven sins God hates. (Prov 6:7). It is categorized along with the sins of fornication, unrighteousness and wickedness (Rom 1:29-30, 2 Tim 3:2-3). See also: (Psa 9:12, 74:14, 104:24-25, , Prov, 15:25, 16:19, 21:4, 28:25, Is 27:1, Jer 50:32, James 4:6, I Peter 5:6.)

Manifestations of Pride Read through the following list and see if the Lord “stops” you on any of them. Use it as a checklist.

Anger	Intellectualism	Self importance
Anti-submissiveness	Intolerance	Selfishness
Arrogance	Lofty	Shame of others
Boasting	Lying	Strife
Conceit	Manipulation	Stubbornness
Control	Mockery	Unbending
Contention	Obstinate	Unteachable
Cursing	Perfection	Unwillingness to admit wrong
Defiance	Prejudice	Unwillingness to apologize
Destruction	Pride of knowledge	Unwillingness to change
Disobedience	Puffed up	Unyielding
Domination	Rage	Vanity
Ego	Rebellion	Wrath
Hardness of heart	Scorn	Witchcraft
Haughtiness	Self centeredness	Unyielding
Independence	Self exaltation	

Five Signposts along the road of PRIDE

1. **Yearning** for praise and human accolades, trophy rooms, “ego walls” with all your honors, concern about titles. Feels God answers their prayers more often and that their prayers have more power. Want to do all the praying for people who come for healing. Want to do all the preaching as they think they have more skill.

2. **Comparisons** of your ministry with others, “keeping score”. One-upmanship. Feel they are more spiritually mature than others. Boasts of spiritual accomplishments, & long hours in prayer and fasting.
3. **Gift projection** – thinking everyone should be able to do what you do. If they don’t do it your way, they are inferior. Evaluating the worth and dignity of others by how closely they match your own examples. Coveting the Spiritual Gifts of others. Criticizing the efforts of others.
4. **Resenting** other’s successes and rejoicing in their failures. Feelings of jealousy or envy or irritation when someone else does well.
5. **Defending** yourself against criticism, not listening. Always thinking your ideas/ways are the right ones. You are never wrong. Unwillingness to change your mind. Compulsive interrupting.

Other indicators of Spiritual Pride:

- Feel they know more because they have been to Bible school.
- If God speaks to them prophetically, they feel they are privileged.
- Wants others to know they are pastors (wear 3 piece suits on hot days)
- Feels their time is more important.
- Is first in line to eat at church dinners.
- Eats at a “high table” sometimes in a private place.
- Sits in high backed chairs, or has a table in front of their chair.
- Criticizes others and notes their deficiencies
- Generally proud of their inflexibility, mistaking it for conviction
- Does not pray much

Scriptures that define humility and pride.

Matt 5:3-5	Blessed are the meek (humble) . . .
Matt 11:29	Learn from Me for I am gentle (meek, humble) . . .
Matt 18:4	Whoever humbles himself as this little child is greatest . . .
Matt 20:26-27	Whoever desires to become great among you let him be your servant.
Matt 23:11	He who is greatest among you shall be your servant. .
Matt 23:12	Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted (by God)
Luke 6:26	Woe to you when all men speak well of you. . .
Luke 14:11, 18:14	Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled . . .
Luke 16:15	And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.
Luke 22:26-27	He who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger .
John 5:44	How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?
John 13:14	If I then, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash others feet

Gal 1:10 Gal 1:10 For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men?
for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.
James 4:16 But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil.

Eleven times in the book of John, Jesus expresses humility and dependence upon doing only the will of the Father. (John 5:41, John 5:30, John 5:41, John 6:38, John 7:16, John 7:28, John 8:28, John 8:42, John 8:50, John 14:10, John 14:24) As our model, shouldn't we do the same?

Sign Posts on the Road to Humility

1. **Ask** the Holy Spirit about any pride and receive the conviction.
2. **Discover** your spiritual gifts, but do not take pride in them. You didn't develop them, God gave them to you.
3. **Know** your place in the Body and realize you need others. Others will be more gifted in some areas than you. (1 Cor 12)
4. **Know** your strengths and weaknesses, and be willing to admit both. Knowing what you don't know.
5. **Be realistic** about your successes and failures. Don't hesitate to admit you are wrong.
6. **Accept** praise, but reject flattery.
7. **Avoid** living in the achievements of the past.
8. **Esteem** others better than yourself. Don't be concerned who gets the credit.

Manifestations of Humbleness:

Consider these attributes of the humble:

- clothed with lowliness, mildness, meekness, gentleness of spirit and behavior,
- soft, sweet, condescending, winning air and deportment; these things are just like garments to him, he is clothed all over with them.
- has no such thing as roughness, or contempt, or fierceness, or bitterness in its nature;
- makes a person like a little child, harmless and innocent, that none need to be afraid of; or like a lamb, destitute of all bitterness, wrath, anger
- conversation is nothing but lowliness and good-will, love and pity to all mankind;
- apt to esteem others better than himself
- full of thankfulness
- humbleness is not thinking less of oneself, it is thinking of oneself less

Healing from the Sin of Pride

When those with pride fail to evaluate themselves and repent, the Lord will chasten the individual for His good, either in his finances, his health, or his relationships. There are several ways that pastors and church leaders can guard against pride.

1. Continually examine your heart honestly and sincerely. Several scriptures command us to do so. (Ps 19:12, 13, Ps 51:10, Ps 139:23, Ps 141:4)
2. When it is recognized, confess to others and repent.
3. Regularly ask God to show you any pride or self-aggrandizement.
4. Be accountable to someone who will honestly tell you when you are getting out of line. It is much easier for others to see pride in you, than for you to see it in yourself.

Resources

C. Peter Wagner, *Humility*, (Regal books, 2002), ISBN 0-8307-3057-5

Andrew Murray, *Humility* (Whitaker House 1982) ISBN 10: 1-60459-306-7,
13: 978-1-60459-306-8

Anderson, Mark , *Humility* (Destiny Image Publishers 2010), ISBN 13:978-0-7684-3425-7