

Text

Passages to read: Dan 4:28-37 & Philippians 2

Please turn with me to 2 Cor 5:15

*¹⁵ and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for **him** who for their sake died and was raised.*

Pray

Main Point

The Evil of Pride and the Good of Humility

Introduction (300)

Hook

If you had to pick one characteristic excel in in order to please God what would it be?

This is a good thing to think about as we begin a new year.

What character trait do you want to excel in in order to be the best follower of Christ you can be?

What do you need to:

- approach God,
- love God,
- love others,

- witness well,
- lead well,
- communicate,
- resolve conflict and
- resist sin?

I am sure there are many things you can think of, but one characteristic that comes up again and again in the bible that we must have in order to please God is **humility**.

We are to embrace humility if we are to be and act as God wants.

The enemy of humility is pride.

If we think too much about ourselves and of ourselves, we cannot please God.

If we have a high view of ourselves we cannot please God.

Story of Nebuchadnezzar

Do you remember the story of Nebuchadnezzar? He had a high view of himself. We read about him in Daniel chapter 4.

There he was, on the roof of his palace, looking out at the great city of Babylon. And he is full of pride. Do you remember his words:

*“Is not this great Babylon, which **I** have built by **my** mighty power as a royal residence and **for the glory of my majesty**?”* Dan 4:30

The king is full of pride.

- He is proud of his achievements.
- Proud of his wisdom.
- Proud of his knowledge.

It is all about:

- his might,
- his power,
- his glory and
- his majesty.

What did God do?

God humbled him until he became humble.

God humbled him to the core to the point where this mighty king recognised his place as a humble servant before God. It was a long and strange journey for Nebuchadnezzar, seven years of acting like an animal. But when the seven year are up he was restored to his kingdom.

In Dan 4:37 we hear his conclusion of this fascinating story. He had turned to God in humility.

*³⁷ Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all **his works** are right and **his ways** are just; and those who walk in pride **he is able to humble**.*

Nebuchadnezzar went from Pride to Humility. He was saved from his pride and able to praise and extol and honour the king of heaven.

Outline

But why is pride such a big deal?

- Why is it such an evil in God's eyes?
- Why is it such a barrier to our relationship with God?
- A blockade to our worship of God?

Today I want us to explore this exact question:

What is the problem with Pride?

And even more specifically: What is the problem with the pride in your heart?

1. To do that we will first look at **the evil of pride**,
2. Then secondly, we will contrast it with **the goodness of humility**
3. And finally, I want us to think a bit of what it takes to go **from pride to humility**. (The ordinary means is not to eat grass for 7 years like king Nebuchadnezzar)

Examples of pride

We all have pride in our hearts. The question is not if, where is it?

- Pride of ability (Fastest worker or skilled piano player)
- Pride of achievement (Winning a gold medal or memorizing all the book of psalms)
- Of possession (your car or new item of clothing)
- Of knowledge (able to explain the order of salvation or how the solar system works)
- Of being liked (knowing you have lots of friends)
- And the list could go on.

Pride is everywhere. And to please God we must go from pride to humility.

So let us begin with our first point: The evil of pride.

Part 1 – The evil of Pride

God hates the proud

What does the bible tell us about pride? We have already seen that Nebuchadnezzar is rebuked for his pride, but what more does the bible tell us about pride? How does God assess proud people?

Let me read just three verses, which will give you an indication.

Prov 16:5

*Everyone who is arrogant in heart is an abomination to the Lord;
be assured, he will not go unpunished.*

Prov 8:13

*¹³ The fear of the Lord is hatred of evil.
Pride and arrogance and the way of evil
and perverted speech I hate.*

James 4:6

⁶ ~~But he gives more grace.~~ Therefore, it says, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

The proud are an abomination, worthy of punishment, hated by God and opposed by God.

Pride is evil, but why?

Satan in the Garden

To understand why pride is so evil I want us to go back to when man committed the first evil. The first sin. There we will see pride in the very nature of evil. Pride is part of the very mechanics of sin.

Turn with me to Gen 3:1-5.

God has created the heavens and the earth. His creation was “very good”. He has given a beautiful garden for Adam and Eve to tend. They only had one rule. *“do not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil”*

Now I’m sure you are very familiar with this passage, and a lot can be said about it. For today I want you to notice three things specifically about sin.

So our passage begins:

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made.

He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You^[a] shall not eat of any tree in the garden’?”

There is the first thing. Satan questioned God. “Did God actually say...” To question God is to put yourself as an authority over God. This is pride.

² And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ³ but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’”

⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die.

There is the second thing to notice. Satan contradicts God. He says *“You will not surely die”* when God had clearly said they would die. This is to think yourself more wise than God. This is pride.

And Satan Continues

⁵ For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

And then the third thing to notice, the appeal to sin is to be like God. *“your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God”*. To want to be like God is the ultimate elevation of yourself. This is pride.

So from this very quick overview we see that the very DNA of sin is

- questioning God,
- contradicting God and
- wanting to be God.

The very DNA of sin is Pride.

Pride seeks to ungod God

Are you starting to see why pride is so evil?

A proud person believes that they are the source, accomplisher and benefactor of all things that is good right and praiseworthy.

But God is the source, accomplisher, and benefactor of all things that is good, right and praiseworthy.

Rom 11:36 tells us

³⁶ For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

But a proud person says “for from me and through me and to me are all things. To me be the glory forever. Amen.

Pride is not just a rude behaviour. Pride is worship of yourself.

An English Puritan, Thomas Watson, put it this way:
Pride seeks to ungod God .

Or in other words: Pride puts you on the throne of your life instead of God.

- Pride is idolatry.
- Pride is rebellion against God.
- Pride is sin.
- Pride seeks to rob God of his glory and take it for yourself.

Isa 42:8

*I am the Lord; that is my name;
my glory I give to no other,
nor my praise to carved idols.*

Do you see why Pride is so evil?

Manifestation of pride

I want us to do a bit of heart searching together. Not for the sake of showing how bad we are, but for the sake of identifying pride in order to eradicate it.

So where does pride show up in your life?

(These examples are based on a book by Stewart Scott, and there are many more)

1 - Complaining against God

So a first possible display of pride in your life is **Complaining against God**. A proud person in any sort of difficulty situation thinks “Look what God has done to me after all I have done for Him.

- How can God let me get sick like this.
- How can God put me through financial difficulty

Complaining against God is a manifestation of Pride.

And do you know what God's response is to such complaints? He pulls us down from our lofty view of ourselves:

In Rom 9:20 we read ²⁰ *But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?"*

2 - Talking too much.

A second possible display of pride in your life could be **Talking too much.**

When you talk too much, you show that you think what they have to say is more important than what anyone else has to say. This is pride.

All the more so when you are talking too much about yourself. If you find the things you talk about always centre on you, you know you are prideful. Are you always sharing personal accomplishments and a stories that put you in the lime light?

Do you talk too much? and too much about yourself?

3 - Being consumed with what others think

A third example of pride in your life is **Being consumed with what others think of you.**

Concerned about the opinions of others. You make decisions based on what others may think, instead of what pleases God.

Do you find yourself being a man-pleasers rather than God pleasers?

Seeking to please people rather than God is a sin driven by pride.

4 – Minimizing your own sin

What about this fourth example? **Minimizing your sins and short comings and maximising the sins and shortcomings of others.** Proud people believe their sins are not a big deal, but become angry when others sin against them.

Do you find yourself noticing how others can improve their own Christian walk?

While at the same time do you find yourself wondering how you could ever improve? Is your own sin in the background, while the sin of others in the foreground? Are you failing to see the log in your own eye?

This is a display of pride.

Summary

Friends, these are but four ways that pride can manifest itself. There are many more. Things like,

- resisting authority
- a lack of gratitude,
- anger,
- seeing yourself better than others,
- perfectionism¹
- being devastated by criticism,
- being jealous or envious,
- and many other things.

The point is pride manifests itself in many ways. And if you want to live in a way that pleases God you must identify that pride. Identify it so that you can repent of it and be rid of pride, not just the manifestation of pride.

¹ (doing it to feel good and get recognition, making things less important over important) Matt 23:24-28

We will talk more about ridding ourselves of Pride soon, but first let me ask you this:

The right view of self is key/ Link

If being proud of ourselves is so bad, what **is** the right view to have of ourselves?

We must view ourselves as we actually are! We must view ourselves consistent with the truth.

In short we should view ourselves **well below God and no better or worse than others.**

We only have value given by God and that value is to the Glory of God.

Please turn with me to Eph 2:4-7 and notice how this passage is all about God working and we are receiving.

*⁴ But^[c] God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which **he** loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the coming ages **he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.***

We get some benefits, but it is all about Him!

So we must live in humility, which brings us to the second point: The Good of Humility

Part 2 – The Good of Humility

Our aim is to be like Christ

God's will for your life is your sanctification. His will is that you would become more and more like Jesus Christ.

As Christians, our aim is

- to be motivated by the same things our Lord Jesus is motivated by.
- To think in the same way Jesus would think.
- And of course to act in the same way our Lord Jesus would act.

Now I want to show you that being humble is one of the fundamental ways of imitating Christ.

If you want to be motivated, think and act like Christ you must be humble.

Intro Philippians 2

Please turn with me to Phil 2. I want to look at verses 6-8 with you

There is so much in this verse, but let us pull out a few things that show us how Jesus was humble, which shows us how we should be humble too.

Jesus was God

Looking at verse 6.

⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped as

This sets the tone as to what Jesus was humbled form.

- Jesus Christ is God.

- The Lord Jesus Christ is the second person of the Trinity.
- He was in existence before the beginning of time and was active in the creation of the world.
- He is very God of very God deserving all worship and adoration.

Did not Grasp equality with God

Jesus Christ is God, and yet he does not hold on to his equality with God.

That is, he chose to not use his equality with God for his own advantage. He chose to let go of that position and not cling to it.

Taking the form of a servant

Imagine Elon Musk giving up his position in his company to take on the job of cleaning the toilets in one of his office buildings. But of course, he would not be recognised. And as the new guy on the job he is given all the worst of jobs.

Would he choose to go from CEO to toilet Cleaner. Who would do that?

We can't imagine Elon Musk doing that, yet Jesus Christ gave up his glorious position in heaven, far better than any CEO, for a far worst job than cleaning toilets.

Notice the start of verse 7: *but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, born in the likeness of men.*

A Servant owns nothing, not even the clothes on his back, not even his own time or his own life.

Jesus was not just a man among men, but he was a servant of servants.

Are you starting to get a sense of the extent of his humility? The second person of the Trinity took the form of a servant, the likeness of man, but he went further than that.

Humbled to death

He humbled himself to the point of death, and the worst kind of death, death on the cross.

look at verse 8.

⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Our Lord was falsely accused, imprisoned, condemned to death, insulted, humiliated, beaten and crucified. He suffered beyond what we could ever imagine.

- Are you ready to imitate Christ?
- Are you ready to give up your life to serve Him?
- Are you ready to be humble to the same extent that he showed?
- Are you ready to stop living for yourself and to start living for God?

To follow Christ is to be humble

That is what it meant to follow Christ. To stop living for yourself and to Live for Him. That is what it meant to be humble.

2 Cor 5:15 makes that very clear for us too.

*¹⁵ and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for **him** who for their sake died and was raised.*

To be a Christian is to no longer live for yourself. To be a Christian is to be humble.

Manifestations

Now opportunities to be humble can come up in many ways. The question is do you take those opportunities. Do you see humility manifest itself in your life?

Like we did with displays of Pride, I want to highlight 4 ways you might see humility in your life, (these are also examples from Stewart Scott.)

You can also think of these as things you can work towards.

1 - No right to question God

So first off, a humble person sees themselves as having **no right to question or judge God**. A humble person thinks of God as their creator and themselves as God's creation.

They do not see themselves as even remotely qualified to pass judgement on God or what God does.

They know that God is perfect and all-wise. They know that God can do whatever He pleases and it will be the best for the person .

Psalm 145:7

*¹⁷ The Lord is righteous in all his ways
and kind in all his works.*

Do you find yourself accepting God's ways and purposes? This is humility.

2 - Admitting when you are wrong

A second manifestation of humility is being **quick to admit when you are wrong**. Humble people have no problem when saying "I was wrong. You are right. Thank you for telling me"

How do you react when you know you are wrong? Are you happy to own it? This is humility.

3 - Seeing other better

Thirdly a humble person **sees themselves as no better than others**. A humble person understands the sinfulness in his own heart. They never see themselves as better than others.

A humble person understands that they are capable of the worst kind of sin. They know that if it was not for God's grace, they too would sin in terrible ways.

Rom 12:16 says

¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly.^[a] Never be wise in your own sight.

4 - Being thankful for criticism or reproof

A fourth example of humility is **being thankful for criticism or reproof**. Have you ever thanked someone for correcting you? Or for giving you feedback?

Humble people view reproof as good for them. Humble people consider that God may be trying to teach them something in that reproof.

Prov 9:8

*⁸ Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you;
reprove a wise man, and he will love you.*

Summary

Friends, we imitate Christ in the way that he humbled himself.

We will never pay for the sins of others, but we are told to pick up our cross and follow him.

We imitate him in the way that he gave up all rights he deserved to obey God and serve others.

We have looked at just four simple ways that humility may be displayed but there are so many other ways.

Other ways like,

- serving,
- praying,
- being thankful,
- being gentle and patient,
- being a good listener,
- being submissive to authority,
- being teachable,
- being quick to forgive,
- rejoicing for others,
- being honest with your own sins
- and so many other ways.

These are all ways to think and act like our Lord Jesus Christ thinks and acts.

Link

Humility is what we are aiming for, yet as we have seen, we know we are so full of pride.

How do we get from pride to humility?

Well, that is the key question, which brings us to our third section:

Part 3 – From Pride to Humility

Salvation

Going from pride to humility has to begin with being made right before God. Remember, pride at its core is rebellion against God.

That broken relationship with God is only restored if you turn to Jesus Christ as your saviour.

You must first recognise that your sins condemn you to eternity in Hell.

And then cling to the fact that Jesus died on the cross in order to pay for the sins of sinners.

If you believe that Jesus died for your sins, God promises you that you will be saved. By his grace you can be changed.

And from **that** point on you can live a life to please God. From that point on you can live a life of humility. Thanks to the work of Grace in your life, you can live a life pleasing to God.

So if you truly want to go from pride to humility you have to start by accepting Jesus as your saviour and choosing to follow him as your Lord. Only He can give you the life, strength and wisdom you need.

Now if that is true of you, the bible tells us you go from being a rebel to being a son or daughter of God. That is your legal status. You become adopted into the Family of the King. All by God's grace.

But the reality is you still act like a rebel. You still have prideful tendencies.

Ongoing repentance

And so an ongoing process of repentance is necessary as you seek to put off the ways of the rebel and put on the ways of a child of God.

You must constantly put off pride and put on humility.

That is why identifying those manifestations of pride and humility is so important. These are the things you need to stop and the things you need to nurture.

But remember pride is not just bad behaviour. It is sin against God. It is morally wrong. And so we must repent of it. We must deal with it as sin. It must be dealt with by Christ.

CAR

I want to give you an acronym for godly repentance. Three simple ingredients if you like of true repentance which takes you from pride to humility. The acronym is CAR.

Confess. Affirm and Request. (This acronym is not my own work but developed by Heath Lambert.)

First we need to **confess**. We need to recognise and admit our sin. We need to recognise and admit our pride to God. We need to call pride for the sin that it is. The rebellion against God that it is. If you never see it as sin, you will never change.

Second is to **affirm Christ's work to cover for that sin** This is incredibly important. Your pride caused Jesus to suffer and die. He died for your sins. This should repulse you at the thought of sinning again.

But affirming Christ 's work on the cross also reminds you that the price has been paid. You no longer need to carry the guilt for that sin. Jesus has paid for it in full and there is no debt left to pay. You do not need to atone for your sin in any way. Jesus paid it in full.

And the final one is **Request Jesus's grace to change**. We don't change in our own strength. We don't overcome pride by self-control. We ask for grace to change. We ask for grace to be humble and to take every opportunity to manifest humility in all areas of our life.

Any good change in our lives is by his grace, so when we repent, we must ask for his grace to change.

Friends, Ongoing repentance in the life of a Christian is so important. That is how we change. That is how we go from pride to humility. That is how we grow to become more like Christ.

So remember CAR – Confess, Affirm, and Request.

Conclusion - Live to serve God

To conclude I want us to think about a key verse that talks of going from pride to humility.

Turn with me again to 2 Cor 5:15.

Pride

We have seen the evil of pride. How pride is seeking to ungod God. That pride is rebellion and competition against God. We have seen that God hates the proud, the arrogant and those who think too highly of themselves.

And tragically we have seen that pride is in all of our hearts and manifests itself in so many ways. We all have this problem of pride.

Humility

And in contrast we have seen that to please God we must be humble. We must be humble as Jesus Christ is humble.

- He did not hold on to his rights.
- He became a slave.
- He endured great injustice and great suffering.
- He showed us what it means to be humble.

Humility is foundational to please God and serve God, and yet humility is so removed from our nature.

Change

And so to go from pride to humility we need Jesus to rescue us.

We need to be made right before God.

And from that position of being saved we seek to remove our old habits.

We seek to put off pride and put on humility. We repent of our pride and seek to live for him.

This is what 2 Cor 5:15 tells us.

*¹⁵ and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for **him** who for their sake died and was raised.*

Pray