

## Overcoming Sin (Part 12)

### Pride

Proverbs 8:13; 11:2; 29:23

#### I. Introduction: 1, 2

1. 3 The word “pride” has several meanings:

- A. One definition is “proper respect for oneself; sense of one’s own dignity or worth; self-respect” (Guralnik).
- B. Another definition is “delight or satisfaction in one’s own or another’s achievements” (*Ibid*).

2. We often use the word “pride” in this positive sense today (ok to have “pride” in this sense):

- A. We take “pride” in things like a job well done (e.g., fixing up my house).
- B. We tell our children we are “proud” of them when they do well.
- C. Everyone needs a sense of self-respect and self-worth in the proper proportion.

3. \*\* However, there is another definition of “pride” that is not as appealing:

- A. “an overly high opinion of oneself; exaggerated self-esteem; conceit; arrogance” (*Ibid*).
- B. Negative pride develops with an exaggerated view of one’s own self worth.

4. It is interesting to note that the Bible never uses the words “pride” and “proud” in a positive sense; instead the Bible warns us against the dangers of pride and encourages us to overcome it.

5. Overcoming our pride—master it instead of it mastering us—is essential if we want to please God and go to heaven (**Jas. 4:6 & 1 Pet. 5:5**: “*God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.*”).

- A. However, overcoming pride is difficult when we consider the nature of the world in which we live.
- B. We are constantly bombarded by: “enhancing one’s self-esteem,” “self-worth,” “self-image,” “self-motivation,” “learning to love ourselves,” etc. (i.e., “everyone gets a trophy society”).
- C. The world caters to our sense of pride, which can make overcoming pride an uphill battle.

6. Pride is a very deceptive and dangerous character flaw; everyone easily recognizes the ugly effects of pride in others, but very rarely do we recognize it in ourselves.

7. Today’s lesson will consider some of the serious dangers of pride and then offer some strategies we can use to overcome pride.

#### II. Discussion:

1. 4 Problems With Pride: The negative aspect of “pride” produces a lot of problems in our lives!

A. \*\* **Pride brings destruction: Prov. 16:18**: “*Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.*”

- (1) Pride leads us to act without considering the long-term consequences of our actions—only the immediate satisfaction of our selfish desires.
- (2) Pride leads us to act without considering the effect of our actions on other people; prideful people do not properly care for the needs, feelings, and welfare of others.
- (3) One motivated by pride walks into a trap! **Prov. 29:23**: “*A man’s pride will bring him low...*”

B. 5 **Pride brings strife: Prov. 13:10**: “*By pride comes nothing but strife, But with the well-advised is wisdom.*”

- (1) Since pride leads us to put our own wants and desire first before others and before God; that is a sure prescription for strife and conflict (**Lk. 22:24**: “*Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest.*”).

- (2) Paul warns us about prideful Christians who are a constant source of trouble in the church (1 **Tim. 6:3-5**: *"If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, 4 he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, 5 useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself."*).
  - (3) We cannot compromise the truth of the gospel, but there will always be strife until we all learn to be concerned for the interests of others (**Phil. 2:3-4**: *"Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. 4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others."*).
- C. 6 Pride is deceptive: Prov. 26:12:** *"Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him."*
- (1) Pride focuses on self, often at the expense of others; as such it prevents us from seeing things clearly (i.e., self-authored 'reality,' vs. what is actual reality).
  - (2) Pride deceives us about ourselves: it prevents us from seeing ourselves as we really are; it exaggerates our good qualities while minimizing, or completely blinding us concerning, our faults and weaknesses (**Rev. 3:17**: Laodiceans: *"Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' — and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked —"*).
  - (3) Pride deceives us about others:
    - (a) Because of pride, we will see others as less important than ourselves (**Phil. 2:3-4**: *"Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. 4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others."*).
    - (b) We will not care about the feelings of others nor consider the impact our words, attitudes, and actions may have upon them.
    - (c) Pride will not allow us to admit we have wronged another and seek to repair broken relationships (**Matt. 5:23-24**: *"Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift."*).
  - (4) Pride deceives us about God: (**Psa. 10:4**: *"The wicked in his proud countenance does not seek God; God is in none of his thoughts."*).
    - (a) The proud man sees himself as strong, independent, and self-sufficient (**Lk. 12:16-21; v. 19**: *"And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.'"*).
    - (b) He does not see his need for God, nor does he consider the fact he has sinned against God. He believes that his good fortune was due to his own ability and effort. It's the Frank Sinatra syndrome: "I did it my way."
    - (c) Very importantly, a prideful person may very well be a Christian, but he/she doesn't exhibit the proper humility (**Isa. 66:2**: *"But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, And who trembles at My word."*).
    - (d) In any case, the prideful person is woefully unprepared to meet God in judgment.
  - (5) Pride deceives us about the direction of our life: **Prov. 14:12**: *"There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death."*

- (a) Men who refuse to acknowledge their need for God (or complete dependence upon God) feel confident in finding their own way through life.
- (b) They bounce from one philosophy to another (Acts 17:21), calling evil good and good evil (Isa. 5:20), and end up traveling down the well-worn path to destruction (Matt. 7:13).

#### D. **7 Pride is an avenue of temptation:**

- (1) Because of its deceptive nature, pride is a perfect avenue through which Satan tempts us to sin (**1 Jn. 2:15-17**: *“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life — is not of the Father but is of the world. 17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.”*).
- (a) Temptation in this regard, comes, not just through the lust of the flesh and the eyes, but also by stroking our ego and telling us “you deserve a break today.”
- (b) This is one of the ways Satan tempted Eve to eat the forbidden fruit; he appealed to her pride when he told her, *“For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”* (Gen. 3:5)
- (c) When she saw the tree was *“desirable to make one wise”* (v. 6) she took the fruit and ate, thus sinning against God (**Gen. 3:6**: *“So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.”*).
- (2) One way or another, all sin has its roots in pride; because all sin involves what “I” want to do, satisfying self—not what God wants me to do, or what others need.

#### E. **8 Pride is a sin:** Prov. 21:4: *“A haughty look, a proud heart, And the plowing of the wicked are sin.”*

- (1) Pride is a sin because it seeks to remove man’s need for God.
  - (a) As our Creator, God has certain rights over us; pride seeks to strip God of these rights.
  - (b) Pride stands in the way of man rendering the praise and obedience due unto God and will eventually cause man to elevate himself to be his own god (**Rom. 1:25**: *“...exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator,”*; **Rom. 1:28**: *“And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind,”*).
- (2) God’s attitude toward the pride of man should alert us to the seriousness of this sin:
  - (a) God hates the proud: **Prov. 6:16-17**: *“These six things the LORD hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him: 17 A proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood,”*
  - (b) God resists the proud: **Jas. 4:6**: *“But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: ‘God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.’”* (1 Pet. 5:5)
  - (c) God finds the proud to be an abomination: **Prov. 16:5**: *“Everyone proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD; Though they join forces, none will go unpunished.”*

#### 2. **9 How to Overcome Pride:** Pride can be overcome by humility: *“God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble”* (Jas. 4:6). Humility does not come naturally or easily, especially in our self-centered society. Here are a few suggestions on how we can develop humility and thus overcome pride.

##### A. **\*\* We must have a proper estimate of ourselves:** Gal. 6:3: *“For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.”*

- (1) When we compare ourselves to ourselves, or to others around us, we can get an over-exaggerated, unrealistic view of our importance (**2 Cor. 10:12**: *“For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by*

themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.”); we also are setting ourselves up for a fall (**1 Cor. 10:12**: “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.”).

- (2) However, when we learn to compare ourselves to the glory, majesty, and holiness of God, we will take the first step in developing humility.
- (3) What we accomplish is due to the abilities and opportunities God gives us. We need to learn to take full advantage of our abilities and opportunities, but not use them for self-glorification. We certainly can rejoice in them as they are blessings from God, but they don’t make us better than anybody, they aren’t the measure of our “goodness and godliness.”

**1 Cor. 4:6-7**: “Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other. 7 For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?”

**Lk. 17:10**: “So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.’”

- (4) In the Bible, when men saw the glory of God, they were overwhelmed and confessed their own unworthiness (**Isa. 6:1-5**: **v. 5**: “Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts.”).
- (a) Abraham was a great man, but when he was in the presence of God, he referred to himself as “dust and ashes” (**Gen. 18:27**).
- (b) Jesus began the Beatitudes with “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (**Matt. 5:3**); that is—blessed is the man who realizes that, before God, he is spiritually bankrupt; such a person has taken the first step in entering the kingdom of God.
- (c) We need to develop the attitude of Job (**Job 42:1-6**).

#### **B. 10 We must realize our total dependence on God:**

- (1) We would be nothing without God! **Acts 17:24-25**: “God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. 25 Nor is He worshiped with men’s hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things.” **Acts 17:28**: “for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are also His offspring.’”
- (a) We are dependent upon God for our next meal, our next sip of water, our next breath of air! **Col. 1:15-17**; **Jas. 1:17**: “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.”
- (b) Our accomplishments are not solely due to our resources; but due to the grace of God (**Jas. 4:13-15**: “Come now, you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit’; 14 whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. 15 Instead you ought to say, ‘If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.’”).
- (c) Dependence helps us develop humility because there is no room for arrogant boasting when one is living in a state of dependence.
- (d) Recognizing our dependence we must be thankful! **Rom. 1:21**: “because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.”

### C. **11 We must pursue humility:**

- (1) Humility is more than just a feeling:
  - (a) Some people believe that just because they feel a certain way it means they are that way.
  - (b) This is not necessarily so! Things can humble us and make us feel small and insignificant, but this feeling is not humility. A very shy person can have a pride problem!
- (2) No doubt humility is a state of mind, for Paul said he served God “*with all humility of mind*” (Acts 20:19)
  - (a) So humility has to do with the way we think, not necessarily the way we feel (**Rom. 12:3:** “*For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.*”).
  - (b) Peter tells us to be “*clothed with humility*” (1 Pet. 5:5); this means humility is a state of mind we must choose to “*put on.*” (Recall what I’ve been saying about conscious effort?)
  - (c) He goes on to tell us, “*Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time*” (1 Peter 5:6).
  - (d) This is a command we must obey, because humility does not come naturally, nor will we obtain it accidentally.
- (3) Humility is an objective we must consciously pursue; we must make it our life’s aim and goal.

### D. **12 We must allow life’s trials to humble us:**

- (1) The trials of life can teach us how to be humble, if we will learn from them (**Jas. 1:2-4:** “*My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.*”).
- (2) It all has to do with how we choose to respond to these trials.
  - (a) Trials can help us see our need for God, or they can drive us away from God.
  - (b) If we allow the struggles and difficulties of life to humble and perfect us, God will exalt us (**Jas. 4:10:** “*Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.*”) The road to true exaltation is always named “humility.”
  - (c) Job allowed the trials he suffered to teach him humility (**Job 42:6:** “*Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*”).
  - (d) We will all be humble on judgment day: **Phil. 2:9-11:** “*Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*”; **Rom 14:10-11:** “*For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. 11 For it is written: ‘As I live, says the LORD, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God.’”*

### E. **13 We must possess a servant’s mind and live a servant’s life:**

- (1) Jesus is our example of achieving humility through servanthood (**Matt. 20:26-28:** mother of Zebedee’s sons, James & John: “*Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. 27 And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave — 28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.*”). The way to the top in the kingdom is to go to the bottom!
- (2) We are to have the same mind that caused Jesus to empty Himself of His own will and serve the Father for the benefit of others (**Phil. 2:5-9**).

- (a) Humility must be put into action.
- (b) We must learn to see the needs of others, but we must also learn to give ourselves to meet those needs.
- (c) Getting in the habit of serving others will help us to develop humility.

### III. Conclusion: 14

- I. The Bible spends a great deal of space warning us of the danger and seriousness of sinful pride.
  - A. God resists pride because pride resists God.
  - B. Pride elevates man to the place of God while blinding him to the destruction he will have to suffer.
2. We must overcome sinful pride in order to be pleasing to God.
  - A. The choice to overcome pride will determine our eternal destiny.
  - B. If we, in our pride, seek to save our temporal life from the restraints of God's Word, we will lose our soul (**Lk. 9:24**: *"For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it."*).
  - C. However, if we overcome pride in this physical life and abide in God's Word, we will enter heaven when this life is over. EXALTED! **Matt. 23:12**: *"And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."*; **1 Pet. 5:6**: *"Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time..."*
  - D. Overcome pride through conscious effort!

Adapted from *Overcoming Sin*, by Heath Rogers, 2013, One Stone Press, Bowling Green, KY (pp. 33-36).

### References:

Guralnik, David B. *Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language*. New York, NY: 1986.