

## 1 Humility

- The Sign of True Greatness
- (Part 1)

## 2 Keys to Greatness

- In Jim Collins's book, Good to Great, a surprising discover was made about CEOs of great companies.
  - Possessed incredible professional will and drive.
  - Willing to endure anything to succeed.
  - Surprisingly, they were self-effacing and modest.
  - Consistently pointed to the contribution of others.
  - Didn't like drawing attention to themselves.

## 3 Keys to Greatness

- When Jim Collins interviewed people who worked for these leaders, he says they continually used words like . . .
  - quiet, humble, modest, reserved,
  - shy, gracious, mild-mannered,
  - self-effacing, understated,
  - did not believe his own clippings; and so forth.

## 4 Humility Gets Attention

- So then in a culture that often rewards the proud, we find out that humility is a key ingredient of the successful and is now starting to get the attention of the business and management community.
- However, there is something also very interesting about humility—which is very astonishing.
- Humility always gets the attention of God!

## 5 Isaiah 66:2

- “This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word.” (Is 66:2 NIV)
- According to the context, Israel had everything going for her.
- As the Apostle Paul explains, theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. (Rom 9:4 NIV)
- However, instead of considering their special place in God's plan was a privilege and not a right, they became arrogant and prideful and no longer trembled at God's word.
- Even though they were very religious, their lack of humility caused them to be targets of God's wrath instead of His grace.

## 6 God Helps Those . . .

- For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.  
(2 Chr 16:9 NIV)
- God is always searching the earth. But who is he searching for?
- Like a magnet, God’s attention and active involvement is decisively drawn to the humble.
- In other words, a person who is humble is also one who draws God’s attention and also attracts His grace and kindness.

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## 8 The First Sin

- Where was the first sin committed? Was it on the earth or in heaven?
- According to Isaiah 14:3, it was when Lucifer—a powerful archangel who possessed beauty and glory far above his peers said, I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God [and] will set my throne on high.
- In other words, because of pride Lucifer sought recognition and status equal to God Himself.
- Led by the arrogance of this prideful archangel, now known as Satan, ⅓ of the other angels of God, changed their allegiance and followed in rebellion against their creator.
- In response, God swiftly and severely judged them and will throw them, as well as all who believe Satan’s lies, into a lake of fire when Satan’s appeals against God’s goodness are finally exhausted.

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## 10 The Worst Sin

- Pride not only appears to be the earliest sin, but it is at the core of all sin.
- "Pride," John Stott writes, "is more than the first of the seven deadly sins; it is itself the essence of all sin."
- Indeed, from God's perspective, pride seems to be the most serious sin.
- God righteously hates all sin, of course, but biblical evidence abounds for the conclusion that there's no sin more offensive to Him than pride.

## 11 The Worst Sin

- When His Word reveals those things "that the LORD hates" and "that are an abomination to him," it's the proud man's "haughty eyes" that heads up the list (Proverbs 6:16–17).
- When the personified wisdom of God speaks out, these clear words are emphasized: "I hate pride and arrogance" (Proverbs 8:13, NIV)
- And consider the divine perspective on pride revealed in Proverbs 16:5: "Everyone who is arrogant in heart is an abomination to the LORD; be assured, he will not go unpunished."
- Stronger language for sin simply cannot be found in Scripture.

## 12 Contending With God

- Why does God hate pride so passionately?
- Because there is no basis for it! No one in all creation is perfect, except God himself.
- "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good — except God alone." (Mark 10:18 NIV)
- So when a person possesses pride they are in reality liars—and can easily move to the next step and declare themselves special with special rights and privileges.
- Then, as so often is the case, we become rebellious justifying our actions and making ourselves free from all accountability—even God's.

## 13 The Goal of Pride

- While pride's ambition is to be free from accountability, its goal is for self-glorification.
- That's the motive and ultimate purpose of pride—to rob God of legitimate glory and to pursue self-glorification—contending for supremacy with Him.
- The proud person seeks to glorify himself and not God, thereby attempting in effect to deprive God of something only He is worthy to receive.
- No wonder God opposes and hates pride as it robs Him of his rightful glory.

## 14 God Opposes Pride

- You and I hate nothing to the degree that God hates pride.

- And because God cannot bear with this arrogance, He reveals Himself in Scripture as actively opposed to pride.
- “God opposes the proud” (James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5).
  - “Opposes” in this statement is an active, present-tense verb, showing us that God’s opposition to pride is an immediate and constant activity.
  - In other words, the proud will not indefinitely escape His discipline.

## 15 Jonathan Edwards

- To understand more of God’s perspective on pride, we would do well to note its peculiarly destructive power.
- Jonathan Edwards called pride “the worst viper that is in the heart” and “the greatest disturber of the soul’s peace and sweet communion with Christ;”
  - he ranked pride as the most difficult sin to root out, and
  - the most hidden, secret and deceitful of all lusts.
- However, Edwards once wrote, “What a foolish, silly, miserable, blind, deceived poor worm am I, when pride works in me.”

## 16 Jonathan Edwards

- In his sermons and in his vast writings, Edwards constantly warned against pride, especially spiritual pride, which he viewed as the greatest cause of the premature ending of the Great Awakening.
- Pride also undermines unity and can ultimately divide a church.
- Show me a church where there’s division, where there’s quarreling, and I’ll show you a church where there’s pride.

## 17 Pride Goes Before the Fall!

- Pride also brings down leaders. “Pride ruins pastors and churches more than any other thing,”
- According to Mike Renihan, PhD.
  - “It is more insidious in the church than radon in the home.”
  - When you read about the next public figure to fall, remember Proverbs 16:18—“Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.”
  - That person’s situation might appear circumstantially complicated, but at root it’s not complicated: Pride goes before a fall.

## 18 Pride

- Pride occurs when we fail to judge ourselves correctly in view of God’s truth where we develop too high of an opinion of ourselves that then leads to arrogant behavior.
- When we do this we are actually emulating Satan and thus following and worshipping him as we are believing his lie—“I am more special than God and justified in being free from his controls.”

- Pride (thinking more highly of ourselves than we should) leads to arrogant attitudes, and arrogant attitudes lead to arrogant behavior, which is rebellion.

## 19 Effects of Pride

- Pride is usually the true explanation of
  - why we get our feelings hurt,
  - why we hate being passed over for the wonderful invitation,
  - why we feel rejection,
  - why we get into trouble,
  - why we won't admit to a mistake,
  - why we want to be seen with certain people,
  - why we are afraid we won't get credit for what we did,
  - why we are jealous and envy others, and yes,
  - why we stay angry and hold on to resentments,

## 20 Review

- In our culture, it is the proud who are usually honored and esteemed.
- However, it is humility that gets God's attention and blessing.
- Pride is not only the first sin, but also the worst sin as it always lead to opinions of ourselves that are inaccurate and so promote arrogant behavior and rebellion living.
- It is also a sin that is very prevalent, deceitful and hard to root out.
- Yet God—through His mercies, helps us to unmask pride and introduces us to our great friend, which was also displayed in Jesus Christ—humility.
- This we will do next week, when we will examine the lives of Jesus' disciples and how easy it was for them to be tempted by pride and seek special honor and positions of power.