

1 Humility

- The Sign of True Greatness
- (Part 2)

2 Review of Humility

- The most astonishing thing we learned about humility last week is that is always gets the attention of God.
- “This is the one I esteem: he who is humble (unpretentious, meek, and submissive) and contrite in spirit (remorseful for their sins), and trembles at my word.” (Is 66:2 NIV)
- 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)

3 Review of Humility

- Like a magnet, God’s attention and active involvement is decisively drawn to the humble.
- In other words, a person who is humble is one who draws God’s attention and also attracts His grace and kindness.
- As it says in Scripture, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” (James 4:6 NIV)

4 Pride

- Pride is not only the first sin, but according to the Bible the worst sin—as it always leads to rebellion and arrogant behavior.
- It was what led an archangel by the name of Lucifer to rebel against God where he convinced a third of the angels to rebel with him.
- In essence, pride is the attitude that we are better and more superior than others.
- So we demand and manipulate people to serve us and our wants and desires.
- In other words, pride seeks worship and self-glorification.

5 What is Pride?

- Pride also produces an attitude of self-sufficiency and independence, when someone concludes they are more special or better than others.
- This can take place through . . .
 - Accomplishments
 - Gifts and Talents
 - Wealth and Status
 - Education
 - Prejudice and Bigotry
 - Our mother, our friends, or our own egos.

6 What is Pride?

- It can be expressed as . . .

- Self-righteousness
- Boasting/Bragging/Taunting
- Stubbornness/Unwilling to admit mistakes.
- Critical of others—especially those in authority.
- Easily angered and frustrated.
- Highly competitive and is usually a poor sport.
- Envy the success of others.
- However, our biggest problem with pride is not found in admitting we have pride. Our biggest problem lies in taking it seriously.

7 The Great Sin

- C. S. Lewis, called pride the “Great Sin” and argued that there is no sin that is not somehow rooted in pride.
 - Sexual immorality: “I deserve to have my pleasure, and I should not have to worry about the consequences.”
 - Lying: “I do not trust that God can work through the truth. I have more confidence in my ability to deceive and to distort the facts.”
 - Hatred: “I am better than you are, and I have a right to despise you for what you have done or what you are.”
 - Rebellion: “I know better than my leader, and I can accomplish better things by doing what I want to do.”

8

- Ignoring the needs of others: “My life is the most important thing: accomplishing my goals, getting my pleasure, fulfilling my needs.”
- Ingratitude: “I have what I have because I worked for it, or at least because I deserve it. Plus, there are other things that I deserve to have.
- Disobedience: “I know that the Bible says this, but I have a better way that’s not so old-fashioned.”
- Discord: “I have no need for a relationship with you. I will be able to accomplish what I need to without unity.”
- Prejudice & Racism: “Those people just aren’t as good as we are.”

9 True Greatness Defined

- Charles Spurgeon once preached on the foolishness of pride, calling it “a groundless thing” and “a brainless thing” as well as “the maddest thing that can exist.”
- However, despite the sheer folly and unreasonableness of pride, it manifests its stubborn ways within all of us.
- Even the disciples of Jesus weren’t immune; in fact, they were the prime offenders.

10 Who’s The Greatest?

- Pride was evident and well documented in Jesus' disciples, as they consistently sought and worried about personal greatness and recognition.
- While the pursuit was often subtle, it was continuous and at times very pronounced.
- In Mark, when the disciples and Jesus were traveling together. They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, "What were you arguing about on the road?" (Mark 9:33 NIV)
 - What did Jesus' disciples do?
 - According to the Bible, . . . they kept quiet . . . (Mark 9:34 NIV)
 - So what do we have here? Men who being intensively trained by the ultimate example of humility and servanthood, were embroiled in a full-scale dispute about their relative superiority to each other.

11 

- Jesus knew their hearts, just as he knows ours.
- So He immediately and insightfully addressed their selfish ambition.
- Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all." (Mark 9:35 NIV)
- Jesus was radically redefining greatness and his disciples never ever had another problem with pride again. Right?

12  A Bold Question

- In Mark 10, we find the brothers James and John approaching Jesus apart from their fellow disciples.
- Apparently James and John felt Jesus shared their lofty assessment of themselves, so they said to Him . . .
- "Teacher," they said, "we want you to do for us whatever we ask." "What do you want me to do for you?" he asked. They replied, "Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory." (Mark 10:35-37 NIV)
- Previously Jesus had told his disciples that He would be going to Jerusalem and then would enter His "glory."
- No doubt, James and John wanted a prominent place in Jesus' Kingdom and were willing to be as bold as necessary to get it.

13 

- When the news gets back to the other disciples, what happens?
- The Bible says, they became indignant with James and John. (Mark 10:41 NIV)
- Not because they knew James and John were defining greatness wrong, but probably because they felt betrayed that James and John were trying to put one past them.
- They too were revealing the presence in their own hearts not only of selfish ambition but also of self-righteousness.

- How dare James and John seeking positions of honor! Who do they think they are?

14 Redefinition

- Before they have a church split, Jesus calls them together and teaches them what they so desperately need to relearn.
- Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them.” (Mark 10:42 NIV)
- Then Jesus sets down a contrast: Not so with you. (Mark 10:43 NIV)

15

- What is fascinating and instructive is what Jesus goes on to say about greatness.
- He doesn’t categorically criticize or forbid the desire and ambition to be great.
- Instead, He clearly redirects that ambition, redefines it, and purifies it.
- Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. (Mark 10:43–44 NIV)

16

- When the Bible uses the word “must” we ought to pay attention as it points us to something that is required and perhaps is also indispensable.
- Jesus wants us to be great. But we must listen to Him on how to be great. It comes by being a servant—to all.
- Not just those you like but also your enemies.
- Jesus says and makes clear, For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:45 NIV)
- According to William Lane, who wrote a commentary on this passage, he says that Jesus is referring to “the reversal of all human ideas of greatness and rank.”
- In other words, a profound and historical reversal is taking place where becoming truly great in God’s eyes is completely upside down from the world’s definition of greatness.

17 The Last Lesson

- After they had finished their Passover Meal, [Jesus] poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. (John 13:5 NIV)
- Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. (John 13:14 NIV)
- I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them. (John 13:15–17 NIV)

18 Simon Peter

- “Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.”
- But he replied, “Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death.”
- Jesus answered, “I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know me.” (Luke 22:31–34 NIV)

19 Simon Peter

- Satan had permission to destroy Peter because Peter had issues with pride and selfish ambition.
- Jesus knew too that Peter needed humbling, so he didn’t try to stop Satan.
- Instead, Jesus prayed that when Peter was tested he would recover and use the experience to help encourage the brothers.

20 Conclusion

- In Proverbs 8:13, God says, “I hate pride and arrogance.”
- In fact, according to Proverbs 6:16–17, pride is an abomination to the Lord.
 - “Everyone who is arrogant in heart is an abomination to the LORD; be assured, he will not go unpunished.” (Proverbs 16:5)
- So then let us make humility out to be our best friend.
- Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment. (Rom 12:3 NIV).
- Because God’s eyes are going back and forth all of the earth searching to bless those with humble hearts—who are fully committed in serving him.

21 Exhortation

- All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.
- Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, . . . (1 Pet 5:5–9 NIV)