

**Joke:** A husband, so proud of the fact that his wife had given birth to 6 children, begins to call her "mother of 6" instead of by her first name. The wife was amused. . .at first.

But after a few years his wife had grown a bit tired of her husband's description. All she heard was. "Mother of 6, when's dinner, mother of 6 could you get me some water."

One day they were invited to a friends house for a party. After being there for awhile he jokingly said, "Hey mother of 6, it's time for us to go!"

The wife shouted back, "I'll be right with you - father of 4!"

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## The Enemy Within - Pride

We are in week number three of our series called, "The Enemy Within." Today we will begin in the book of Isaiah chapter 14.

And we are going to deal with the enemy within that we call pride.

And just like envy which we talked about last week we have all dealt with pride at one level or another at sometime.

Thinking you haven't, Well, then what about this you take a family picture, and who is the first person you look for in that picture? Yourself. And everything and everyone else can look incredible, but if you notice something out of place on you then what do you say or at the very least think? Ya know that's not really a good picture. On the other hand if you look good it doesn't matter what anybody else looks like the picture looks good.

So, we all deal with pride at one level or another.

And Isaiah offers us perhaps, chronologically, the first example of pride in scripture.

In fact, this event took place even before Adam and Eve were born. It was when Lucifer decided that he wanted to be like God.

Isaiah 14:13–14 (NIV) - You said in your heart, “I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of Mount Zaphon. 14 I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.”

Five times he uses a very telling phrase. . .5 times.

- I will. . .ascend to the heavens
- I will. . .raise my throne above the stars of God
- I will. . .sit enthroned on the mount of assembly
- I will. . .ascend above the tops of the clouds
- I will. . .make myself like the Most High

His most common two words, “I will” now compare that to the words of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane instead of I will he says. Thy will be done.

Here’s the thing church, is it going to be about us, or is it going to be about Him? What I want, or what He wants?

So today, we are going to do battle with the the enemy within called pride. Because I dare say most all of us deal with it.

Pride is when we think we are hot. . .but we are not.

Pride is a dangerous enemy within but what does scripture say about it?

Proverbs 16:18 (NIV) - Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.

I love how The Message Translation says it. . .

Proverbs 16:18 (MSG) - First pride, then the crash—the bigger the ego, the harder the fall.

Then in 1 Peter we read. . . ,

1 Peter 5:5–6 (NLT) - In the same way, you who are younger must accept the authority of the elders. And all of you, dress yourselves in humility as you relate to one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” 6 So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time he will lift you up in honor.

Now maybe some of you are thinking, Well, what if I’m proud of my kids?

And to that I say that is all together a different type of pride. There is absolutely nothing wrong with being proud of your kids. There is nothing wrong with being proud of the work you do.

I’m not talking about being proud to be an American, or taking pride in your neighborhood, or your lawn.

What I am talking about is the type of pride that is selfish and self-focused.

And there’s three types of pride that we are going to look at today.

The first one, if you are taking notes, is this. . .

And honestly, this is probably first what you think about pride.

And that is, I am better than you pride.

And that reminds of a story of a woman who went to her pastor and said, “Pastor I need some prayer for victory because I’m really dealing with vanity and pride. Every time I come to church and I look at all the other ladies I just have to say to myself I am so much more beautiful than they are.”

The pastor responded, “well, to be honest with you that’s not pride. That’s a mistake. You are just wrong with your assertion.”

Pride. “I am better than you,” and there are so many people who feel that way.

But how does this type of pride show itself? Because, honestly you may not recognize it in yourself.

But one of the ways it shows itself is in a critical attitude.

If you find that you are often criticizing, “Well, look at the way she does that. Look at the way he does this, and he’s not this and he’s not that.”

What that is, is a reflection of a proud heart. “I know what’s right, and you don’t. Or you don’t do it right and I do.”

Another type of the “I am better than you” pride, is a spiritual pride.

You know, “We worship God the right way, and we’ll everyone else, they’re just doing it wrong. We’ve got the corner on the truth.”

Or, you know, “I would never do what that no-good sinner is doing. I am so much better and holier than they are.”

And church can I be brutally honest for a minute. That type of attitude is not just wrong it's down right ugly.

I am better than you pride. . .

There's a story in Scripture that illustrates this type of pride it's the story that Jesus told about a tax collector and a Pharisee.

And what you need to understand about this story is that, during this time when the story is being told, the Pharisee's were known throughout the whole community as very righteous in appearance.

They would give of their finances, wear fancy religious looking robes, fast two days a week so they could pray.

Then the other character in the story is the tax collector. And he was despised and hated by almost everyone.

And here's the real interesting part, many of the tax collectors were Jewish by birth, and they were betraying that heritage by helping out the Roman government.

But let's say you owed for the year \$4,000 in taxes. These tax collectors might come up and say, "Your bill is, \$5,000 and if you don't want to pay them, then you're going to have to deal with these Roman officers."

Then after the tax was paid what they would do is give \$4,000 to the Roman government and they'd keep \$1,000 for themselves.

They were thieves, which is one reason why everyone hated them.

That's the background of the story. Now, here's the story. . .

Luke 18:9–14 (NLT) - Then Jesus told this story to some who had great confidence in their own righteousness and scorned

everyone else: 10 “Two men went to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee, and the other was a despised tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed this prayer\*: ‘I thank you, God, that I am not like other people—cheaters, sinners, adulterers. I’m certainly not like that tax collector! 12 I fast twice a week, and I give you a tenth of my income.’ 13 “But the tax collector stood at a distance and dared not even lift his eyes to heaven as he prayed. Instead, he beat his chest in sorrow, saying, ‘O God, be merciful to me, for I am a sinner.’ 14 I tell you, this sinner, not the Pharisee, returned home justified before God. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

Look again at verse 11. . .

11 The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed this prayer\*: ‘I thank you, God, that I am not like other people—cheaters, sinners, adulterers. I’m certainly not like that tax collector!

And so, with the Pharisee it was all about him. I thank you, God, that I am not like other people certainly not like that tax collector.

Then Jesus said something shocking to those listening on. He says this in verse 14. . . ,

14 I tell you, this sinner, not the Pharisee, returned home justified before God. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

Remember what we read in 1 Peter? Let’s look at it once more. ..

1 Peter 5:6 (NLT) - 6 So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time he will lift you up in honor.

Notice what it says, don’t miss this he said, at the right time he will lift you up in honor.

It was the right time for they hated tax collector to be lifted up in honor. I tell you, this sinner, not the Pharisee, returned home justified before God.

The second type of pride I want to talk about and if I'm being honest I fall prey this one more often than I care to admit. The second type of pride, if you're taking notes is this. It's an "I can handle it myself," pride.

How do you know if you struggle with this? Well, if you have a difficult time asking others for help, you might be dealing with an I-can-handle-it-myself pride.

And oh, we can so easily justify it can't we? It sounds like this, "I just don't want to bother anybody. I can do it myself."

And if you, when someone else wants to help you or wants to give to you, or wants to bless you, but you just find it so difficult to receive. That is prideful.

And maybe you never thought about this but as a believer if you struggle to take things to God in prayer what that is saying is, deep down, no matter what you say you believe, your actions indicate that you think you can do it without God.

Your telling God, you can sit this one out I've got it.

I have too many times started a project I thought I could handle on my own just to get halfway through and say you know what, I could really use some help.

And I have struggled with the I can handle it myself pride. Is it just me or have some you struggled with that as well?

There's a good example of the I can handle it myself pride in Scripture. Most of you know the story but maybe never have heard it used in a message about being prideful.

It's the story of the Prodigal Son. . .

Luke 15:11–12 (ESV) - And he said, "There was a man who had two sons. 12 And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.' And he divided his property between them.

And what you hear between the lines is basically, "Dad, I want my stuff. I don't like your rules. You're cramping my style. I want to do life my way."

Now, if this was a modern day story, it might go something like this. So this son, went out, max'd out his credit cards, bought a Lamborghini, started drinking beer and smoking, hanging out with loose women, and just went absolutely wild.

And before long, he couldn't support his lifestyle, started living on a friend's sofa, but his friend got sick of him not doing his fair share and kicked him out, and all of a sudden, he woke up one day hurting. He thought he knew what he wanted, and he thought he had the resources to pull it off, he really thought he knew what was best and that he could handle it without his father but. . .

Now this is what the Scripture actually says. . .

Luke 15:17 (NIV) - "When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death!

When he came to his senses, then and I love this. . .



Luke 15:18–20 (NIV) - 18 I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.’ 20 So he got up and went to his father. . .

And if you know the rest of the story when he starts heading for home the father is there waiting for his return. And I’m here to tell you today that no matter how many times you thought you could handle it without God. When you decide to return He is right there waiting ready to run up to you and say let’s do this thing together.

As a matter of fact the rest of verse 20 says. . .

Luke 15:20 (NIV) - “But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

Pride comes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.

So, what does this mean to you? If you battle with an I-can-do-it-myself pride, it’s time to humble yourself and get help.

Maybe you are addicted to something and you think to yourself, “I can handle it. I can stop this any time.” And let me just say this, if you haven’t stopped yet, chances are your not going to stop without help. So, humble yourself. Open up and say, “I need help.”

Dr. Phil has said, you can’t change what you won’t acknowledge. It’s time to humble ourselves reach out to God, to others and let me add this, God is our ever present help in time of need.

I can go before Him, nothing catches Him off guard. He will be my refuge and strength.

James 4:2 (TPT) - You jealously want what others have so you begin to see yourself as better than others. You scheme with envy and harm others to selfishly obtain what you crave—that's why you quarrel and fight. And all the time you don't obtain what you want because you won't ask God for it!

Ask God, ask a close friend, ask your pastor, a co-worker, someone. Ask for it and then be willing to receive it.

First type of pride we looked at was. "I-am-better-than-you" pride. Second type, "I-can-handle-it-myself" pride. The third type I want to talk about, if your taking notes, is "It-doesn't-apply-to-me" pride.

Those are the ones that say there may be the rules, but they don't apply to me.

There's a story about Muhammad Ali. He was on an airplane and as the plane was about to take off the stewardess went over to him and said, sir I need you to put on your seatbelt. Muhammad Ali replied, "Superman don't need no seatbelt."

And without missing a beat she looked at him, smiled and said, "Superman don't need no airplane either, please fasten your seatbelt."

And maybe some of you like Muhammad Ali think you're above the rules.

You are the people that take twelve items to the express checkout line that says ten items or less, why? You think the rules don't apply to you.

I know that scripture says that we are supposed to forgive as Christ has forgiven us, but you don't know what this person has done. That one just doesn't apply to me.

But Scripture teaches something different.

King David at least once in the Scriptures didn't think the rules applied to him.

Scripture says. . .

2 Samuel 11:1 (NIV) - In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king's men and the whole Israelite army. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem.

In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David remained in Jerusalem.

When he didn't go where he was supposed to go he ended up doing something he wasn't supposed to do. And he saw something he wasn't supposed to see. He thought something he wasn't supposed to think.

And when he saw Bathsheba it was like wow, she looks mighty fine, he ended up committing adultery all because he didn't think the rules applied to him.

But it gets even worse, after he has this affair, he ends up sending her husband off to the front lines to make sure he gets killed in the battle, the same battle David should have been at, all because Uriah the husband had too much integrity to sleep with his wife when everyone else was out fighting. And all because David didn't think the rules applied to him.

Eventually, Nathan the prophet called King David on the situation, and he told him a little story. You can read it sometime, but let me just summarize it for you. It said something like this. There was a rich guy with lots of sheep and lots of cattle, and there was a poor guy with one little bitty lamb. A traveler comes along and

instead of the rich guy offering him one of his sheep from his own field, from his wealth, he instead, killed the poor guy's one little lamb and fed it to him.

And when Nathan told David the story David was like, "That's the worse thing I've ever heard in my life."

This is what scripture says. . .

2 Samuel 12:5–6 (NIV) - David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, "As surely as the Lord lives, the man who did this must die! 6 He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity."

David was like, "We've got to punish this guy. This just isn't right."

And then, Nathan looked at David and said, "Auttaeesh."

"Auttaeesh," which is Hebrew for "You are the man." "You are the one that did that."

Let me say this as lovingly and humbly as I can. There may be some you here today or watching online and God has shown you something that you are doing that is contrary to His word and somehow you have come to the conclusion that it just doesn't apply to you. The word is for someone just not you.

And if that's you and you are living in this kind of pride. May I say to you, auttaeesh. You are the man.

And ladies if your thinking, "Well, I am glad that I am a lady." May I say to you, auttaeesha, which means you are the woman.

So, here's a question for you. Is there an area in your life where you are saying, "You know what? This doesn't apply to me."

If you have an “I’m better than you” pride, humble yourselves. Love and serve others.

If you, in your own life, feel like “I can handle it my own self,” humble yourselves. Ask for and receive the help you need.

If you think that God’s truth does not apply to you, humble yourselves. Repent and surrender yourself fully to God’s will.

Now, why is it this so important? Why is this enemy within so deadly?

Let me finish up with a couple things. . .

First as we read in 1 Peter 5, God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.

And Proverbs says something similar it tells us,

Proverbs 3:34 (ESV) - Toward the scorers he is scornful, but to the humble he gives favor.

Now let me pause here and take a few moments to talk about this idea of God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.

What is being highlighted is the key principle about God’s relationship with us.

The term resists or opposes is telling us that pride is contrary to God’s nature and His heart for us.

Pride involves an inflated sense of self-importance and reliance on not God but our own abilities.

It’s saying we can do this. I can handle it as the song says, all by myself.

Basically, it is a posture of the heart that elevates oneself above others and even God. Which ultimately leads to a lack of dependence on Him.

So, God's resistance to the proud is not about withholding His love or grace but about the natural consequences of pride, which is a barrier to receiving His grace and favor.

Truth is pride blinds us to our need for God and His guidance, making it difficult for us to experience the fullness of His love and provision. Difficult receiving what God was longs to give us.

Whereas, humility is about recognizing our dependence on Him knowing that it is in Him that we live and move and have our being. And with that humility it opens the door to experience God's grace fully and completely in our lives.

One more Scripture from Isaiah the prophet it's found in chapter 6.

Isaiah 6:1–5 (NIV) - In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. 2 Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. 3 And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." 4 At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. 5 "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty."

When Isaiah gets into the presence of God and is confronted with the purity and holiness he becomes acutely aware of his own sinfulness and that of the people around him.

So, let me paraphrase, he said, “When I saw the Lord high and lifted up, I was speechless.”

But here’s the good news and also a glimpse of the gospel to us as New Covenant believers. The chapter doesn’t stop with Isaiah’s awareness of how sinful he is.

The next couple verses tell us,

Isaiah 6:6–7 (NIV) - Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. 7 With it he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.”

See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.

That act symbolizes God’s cleansing and forgiveness for him and it prepared Isaiah for the calling God had on his life.

And for us today, this passage serves as a reminder of God’s holiness and our need for His cleansing.

And here’s the good news, through Jesus Christ, because of what He did, we have been made clean and righteous, and we can approach God with confidence, knowing that our sins are forgiven because in humility we called on Him because we knew we could never live up to His standard and calling on our life without the Holy Spirit’s power which was given to us when we called on Him to rescue us.

It’s in humility not pride that we can experience the closeness of God in our lives.

Pray

