

The Virtue Of Humility



By Michael R. Powell
Senior Pastor
University Bible Church

University Bible Church

845 S. 9th Street
P.O. Box 8133
Pocatello, ID 83209
Phone: 208-234-1971

Email: universitybible@juno.com

Web: www.universitybible.org

1. The Problem Of Pride

Of all sins, pride is the most subtle and most destructive.

Pride is at the root of many other sins and was the cause of the fall of both Satan and the fall of the human race.

Pride is the exaltation of self.

It gives us an undue sense of our own superiority and independence.

It causes us to seek personal recognition and glory, even at the expense of others.

Pride has a certain expectation that God and others will serve us and do what we want them to do.

Pride causes us to become angry when these expectations are not met or when we feel that our rights have been violated.

Our pride causes us to have problems with authority. We don't want others telling us what to do.

Pride is self-willed, self-exerting, self-promoting, puffed up, and stiff-necked.

It is competitive and wants to prove itself as better than others.

Pride is at the heart of most conflicts between people.

Our pride makes it difficult to admit when we are wrong and to ask forgiveness of others.

Our pride keeps us from God and heaven.

Pride can be defined as thinking too highly of self.

The Bible **nowhere** says, "Come on now you are thinking too poorly of yourself. What you need is to consider yourself more. You need more self-esteem."

3. The Greatest Example Of Humility

Philippians 2:6-8 . . . although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.⁸ Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Mark 10:43-45 . . . whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant;⁴⁴ and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all.⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.

4. Humility And Salvation. cf Luke 18:10-14; James 1:21; 4:6-10

Luke 18:10-14 "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.¹¹ "The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.¹² 'I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.'¹³ "But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!'¹⁴ "I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

James 4:6b-10 God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.⁷ Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.⁸ Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.⁹ Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom.¹⁰ **Humble** yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.

James 1:21 Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in **humility** receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.

- ◆ They have all kinds of excuses.
 - ◆ They minimize their own sin and won't humble themselves enough to ask forgiveness
 - The **humble** have no problem asking forgiveness because they know how much they have been forgiven.
 - ◆ **Ephesians 4:32** Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.
- k. The proud often see no need for close relationships while the humble cultivate friendships. cf Proverbs 18:1-2; 1 Corinthians 12:21-22; Hebrews 10:24-25**
- **Proverbs 18:1-2** He who separates himself seeks his own desire, He quarrels against all sound wisdom. ² A fool does not delight in understanding, But only in revealing his own mind.
 - The **proud** think that building relationships isn't worth the effort and trouble.
 - ◆ They see themselves as self-sufficient.
 - ◇ They don't need other people.
 - The **humble** recognize that we need each other.
 - ◆ **1 Corinthians 12:21-22** And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." ²² No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary.
 - ◆ **Hebrews 10:24-25** and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, 25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

- Instead God has given us many warnings to discourage us from thinking too highly of ourselves.
 - ◆ **Romans 12:3** . . . I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think;

The Bible warns us of the seriousness of sinful pride.

- **Proverbs 16:5** Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD; Assuredly, he will not be unpunished.
- **Proverbs 26:12** Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.

In contrast God calls upon us to be humble people.

Micah 6:8 He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God?

Isaiah 66:2b . . . But to this one I will look, To him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word.

Ephesians 4:1-2a Therefore I, . . . implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, ² with all humility and gentleness

Philippians 2:3 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves;

Several Old Testament Hebrew words are translated into English as humility or humbleness.

Most refer to bowing low or crouching down.

Lowliness or submission

There are 2 New Testament Greek words that are translated as humbleness.

One word means to be lowly, servile, base, or groveling

The other means to be gentle, meek, or yielding

2. The Virtue Of Humility

a. The proud often complain while the humble demonstrate gratefulness. cf Psalm 116:12-19

- **Humble** people thank God and others often.
 - ◆ They don't indulge in self-pity
 - ◇ They are grateful for the gifts and talents God has given them,
 - ◇ They don't proudly believe that they deserve more and have gotten a raw deal.
 - ◆ They are thankful for the many things that God has given them and don't focus on what they don't have.
 - ◆ They recognize that God and others don't owe them anything.
 - ◇ Since they expect nothing, they appreciate everything they get.
- The **humble** don't believe that life is all about them.
 - ◆ Their happiness, their accomplishments, their recognition, their desires, their rights.
 - ◆ Therefore they aren't discontent, judgmental, critical, and always complaining.

b. The proud are often angry while the humble are gentle and patient. cf Romans 9:19-23; Colossians 3:12-14

- The **humble** don't become angry because their rights or expectations are not being met.
 - ◆ They don't come unglued when their schedule and plans are being ruined.

- ◆ They are genuinely happy for the successes of others.

i. The proud often lack compassion and service for others while the humble look for ways to help others. cf Galatians 5:13; Ephesians 2:10

- The **proud** are not thinking of others; they seldom think beyond their own desires.
 - ◆ They want to be coaxed.
 - ◆ They generally won't serve unless they get recognition.
 - ◇ This is a sure sign of a wrong motivation.
- For the **humble**, life is about God and others.
 - ◆ The two greatest commandments are to love God and to love others. Matthew 22:36-39

j. The proud find it difficult to ask or grant forgiveness while the humble quickly do both. cf Matthew 5:23-24; Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:12-14

- **Matthew 5:23-24** "Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.
- The **proud** have a hard time admitting they are wrong.
 - ◆ They are either devastated or angered by criticism.
 - ◆ They become defensive and try to shift the blame.

- The **proud** know it all.
 - ◆ They have no respect for those who disagree with them.
 - The **humble** view correction as a good thing and are willing to change.
 - ◆ They are quick to admit when they are wrong and thank the person who pointed it out.
 - ◆ They recognize that God may even choose obnoxious people to deliver the message. (He even used a donkey with Balaam)
- h. The proud tear others down while the humble build them up. cf Proverbs 12:18, 23; Romans 12:10, 15; Ephesians 4:29**
- **Ephesians 4:29** Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.
 - **Proud** people are often competitive toward others.
 - ◆ They want to show off their superiority.
 - ◆ They have a hard time rejoicing in others' successes.
 - The **proud** can be sarcastic, belittling, hurtful and degrading.
 - ◆ Often thinly cover it with humor
 - ◆ They may excuse themselves by saying, "That's just the way I am. That's my personality."
 - The **humble** build others up and are willing to put others before themselves.
- The **humble** don't pass judgment on God
 - ◆ They trust Him and know that He is smarter than they are.
 - **Humble** people are not focused on what they want, but upon what God wants.
 - ◆ They are willing to wait and are not easily irritated.
 - **Humble** people trust God's character and will often thank God in the midst of trials.
 - ◆ They trust that God is working all together for good.
- c. The proud see themselves as better than others while the humble recognize their own weaknesses. Romans 12:3, 10, 16; 1 Corinthians 4:7; Galatians 6:3**
- **1 Corinthians 4:7** For who regards you as superior? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?
 - The **humble** don't have an inflated view of their own importance, gifts, and abilities
 - They are tolerant of those who have difference preferences.
 - ◆ They don't ridicule others who have different opinions.
 - The **humble** don't speak negatively of others unless they must communicate the negative in order to help the person.
 - ◆ Humble people say, "but for the grace of God, there go I."

d. The proud frequently talk too much while the humble are good listeners. cf James 1:19; Proverbs 10:19; 27:2

- The **humble** don't think that what they have to say is more important than what others have to say.
 - ◆ They don't try to center the conversation on themselves.
 - ◇ Their interests, accomplishments and positive qualities.
 - ◇ Or their problems and concerns.
- The **humble** are more concerned about encouraging others than in talking about themselves.

e. The proud want personal recognition while the humble put others first. cf Romans 12:10; Galatians 1:10; 1 Peter 3:3-4

- **Galatians 1:10** For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.
- The **humble** aren't trying to impress others.
- The **proud** are often consumed by what others think of them.
 - ◆ This causes them to become either devastated or angered by criticism.
 - ◆ The proud are frequently perfectionists. They want to get applause and to feel good about themselves.
- The **humble** live for God not self or the opinions of others.

f. The proud often have a problem with authority while the humble are submissive to God and the authorities that He has put over them. Romans 13:1-2; 1 Peter 2:13-17; 3:1-7; 5:5-6; Hebrews 13:17

- **Romans 13:1-2** Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. ²Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.
- The **proud** don't want to be told what to do by anyone.
 - ◆ They find it hard to work under someone else or submit to authority.
 - ◆ They frequently bad-mouth those in authority over them.
- The **humble** are gladly obedient to those God has put over them.
- **1 Peter 5:5-6** You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Therefore **humble** yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time,

g. The proud are not teachable while the humble are thankful for instruction and correction. Proverbs 9:8; 19:20; 27:5-6; 29:23; John 9:13-34; Philippians 3:12-14;

- **Proverbs 9:8** Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you, Reprove a wise man and he will love you.