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"5 Things You've Gotta Know About Life"

#4 You Are Your Own Worst Enemy

James 4:1-10

August 1, 2004 • Sunday 9:15 AM • Dr. David McKinley

[Dr. McKinley, message, *You Are Your Own Worst Enemy*]

Wow, don't you wanna hear em do it one more time? [congregation laughter]
Ha, ha! I am telling you, how wonderful that is Todd, choir and vocalists today, thank your. [Ephesians 2:8-9]

⁸For by grace we are saved through faith, and that not of ourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹not of works, lest anyone should boast.

And for that reason we celebrate the incredible grace of God made available in our lives. Thank you so much for such wonderful music today. Thank you, dead pastor, for your love and encouragement today. We are gonna have an official coming home party for our pastor. It's gonna be on Saturday evening the 14th of August. It's gonna be a big evening of worship and celebration and then we're gonna go down to Main Street for something we're calling Taste Of Texas and he and Deb are gonna be there along with our special musical guest that weekend John Tesh is going to be here in service on Saturday evening and on Sunday and a..., it's gonna be a great time. So I hope that you'll make plans right now for a big homecoming party on August the 14th and 15th that weekend. We're just gonna have a great time together and a..., looking forward to it. I need to grab something. [pauses to reach down and pick up a bottle]

Over the last a..., few weeks here in the course of the summer, my daughter, a..., Lizzie who's just about to be a freshman in high school has a new found affinity for grape soda, a..., she was finishing off this bottle the other evening, Stewart's Grape Soda and enjoying it and talking about it and she was looking at the back of the bottle when all the sudden she said, "Dad did you know that if we lived in..." and she read off the a..., list of states, she said, "Did you know if we lived in one of these states that they'd give us 5¢ back for this bottle?" And she was just so amazed with that discovery, [pause for slight congregation laughter] and just like that I had a flashback. I recalled how that so many times in the long and lazy days of summer my mom would put us in the car and take us to one of the area parks when I was a little boy and we would engage together, my brother and I, in one of our earliest occupations, bottle collecting, because when I was a little boy, long before we were all caught up in the world of recycling and plastic and cans and all those things, I think many of you can remember that there was a day when everything came in a bottle like this and you would redeem the bottle for a little bit of change and

as a little boy who needed a job to make money in the summer one of the greatest things that I could do would be to go to one of the parks and begin to pick up bottles. Now, of course, a lot of days we'd go and there'd just be a bottle or two here or there and I'd get 4 or 5 bottles and I'd pick up a quarter and I could go buy some candy. A... on a maybe pretty good day I would find 10 bottles and I could get 50¢ and that was pretty good at that time, but on a really, really good day we'd haul in about 20 bottles and I would take 20 of these and the next thing I knew, I had one of these [pulls dollar bill out of pocket] and I'm telling you that dollar bill that I would get for those bottles was unlike anything else. I felt like I had really earned some money. I needed it. It was the only way I could get it and I was so excited when I finally had one of these and it would burn a hole in my pocket. I'm curious, is there anybody here today who needs one of these? Anybody? Some of you lifted you hand. Anybody need it you can just come get it. Somebody need a dollar? [congregation laughter as young man comes up to get the dollar] All right, right here. [more laughter] I got a taker. Thank you man, appreciate that. [applause] now just think you got one of those and you didn't even have to collect bottles to get it. That's pretty nice, wasn't it? I appreciate the fact you were willing to do that. You know the interesting thing is, is that he and he alone was willing to get up and to respond to that offer. A... I have a hunch that most of you if you were walking to your car today and saw one of those on the parking lot, without even thinking you'd reach down and pick it up and say, hey I found a dollar. But somehow sitting in this crowd with this many people you thought there is no way I'm goin up there. [congregation laughter] For one reason you thought this may be a trick and I'm not about to get caught into it. But thankfully for most of us in this room that dollar does not represent a significant need for many of us. Now I am curious as to what kind of competition we might have had if I'd have had a hundred dollar bill [more laughter] and said would you like this dollar. [more laughter as Todd gets up] But you...brother Todd, brother Todd, you know he just got back from vacation, you understand he probably needs it right now, but a... [more laughter] I'll give you a bottle maybe that'll help. [more laughter] But I say all that to say that a... in a very unique way we've just seen in this little moment one of the most significant and one of the most subtle forces in life. It is a force that we all have to reckon with, it is an issue that we all have to deal with. On the one hand it is a force that restrains us, that keeps us from stepping out of the crowd and from being seen as different. On the other hand it is a force that sometimes propels us in life and calls us to...causes us to call attention to ourselves and to stand out and to step over others in life. It's an issue that is addressed in the 4th chapter of the book of James and it is what James identifies as the 4th formidable life lesson that each and every one of us needs to see and needs to learn. It is a lesson about the subject of pride, the subject of pride. What is it that kept so many of you from coming forward in that moment? For one thing you had enough pride to say I'm not gettin up and goin up there in front of all these people and I thought it was so interesting that the pastor would come and say such kind words for me on a day I was preaching on the subject of pride I...you know I had to keep from indulging myself in the moment [slight laughter] to have someone I love and respect say

something so kind. But pride is a subtle and significant force that works and moves in all of our lives. Now when you read the Bible you find that there are **2 KINDS OF PRIDE** described in the Bible.

The first of those kinds of pride is a **GOOD KIND OF PRIDE**. It's the...a pride of dignity, of respect and of honor and certainly the Bible teaches the virtues of respect and honor and there's a value in pride. To say that I'm proud of my children, that I'm proud of my wife or my husband, I'm proud of my church in a sense of gratitude and a sense of honor is a good thing. And so there is a valuable form of pride found in the Bible.

But of course so much of what the Bible addresses is the other side of the coin of pride. It is a **PRIDE THAT FINDS ITS EXPRESSION IN CONCEIT, ARROGANCE AND INDEPENDENCE**. It is a pride that indulges itself in egotism and the Bible has much to say about the problem of pride when it is expressed in this way. Someone has said:

"Pride is the only disease, when you have it makes everyone else sick."

Heh, [slight congregation laughter] and pride is a very destructive force in our lives spiritually, relationally and every other way. If I had to define what I want to describe and to speak to you about this morning I would simply say this:

"Pride is self-absorption and self-exaltation in the face of God and at the expense of the needs, concerns or cares of others."

"Pride is self absorption and ~~self examination...or excuse me self~~ exaltation in the face of God and at the expense of the needs, concerns or cares of others."

And so it is this issue that James begins to address in chapter 4. Now, as we step into this chapter what you're gonna find immediately it's as though we were in an interrogation. It's not like James is just sort of giving us some devotion thoughts. It's as though we are under intense scrutiny and right in the midst of this chapter we find the interrogation as to looking at ourselves and exposing this issue of pride. Let's read it together beginning in James chapter 4 and verse 1:

¹Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasures that are at war within your members? ²You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. ³You ask and do not receive because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures. ⁴Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. ⁵Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"? ⁶But He gives more grace. Therefore He says:...

Look very carefully at verse 6:

...*"God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."* ⁷*Therefore submit 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*Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy into glooming.* ¹⁰*Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.*

Father, would You in this moment help us to see, help us to deal, help us to be honest with the injury of pride in our lives and our families and our nation. God would you let us humble ourselves before You, that You indeed may lift us up. In Jesus name. Amen.

James in this powerful passage of Scripture gives us 2 perspectives of whys in which we can live our life and in this passage of Scripture the first of those perspectives I would simply put in this phrase and in this statement. James in the opening verses of chapter 4 says:

We need to **UNCOVER THE DECEITFUL POTENCY OF PRIDE**. We need to uncover the deceitful potency of pride. Pride is such a real and regular force at work in our lives and yet we so often cover it, we so often masquerade it. Pride is the master of disguise and one of the amazing things is that pride is so easy to see in other people and yet it's so easy to cover up in me. Now, let me just ask you, let's just be honest, "How many of you know somebody who you think has a problem with arrogance and pride and conceit, how many of you know somebody like that?" Hold your hand up. Don't look at em, just hold your hand up. [pause for congregation laughter] How many of you would say today humility is one of my greatest virtues? [more laughter] Huh? You might say something about yourself if you say that. You see pride is an amazing thing we see it and yet we o...so often use it for our own purposes and to cover our own motives that are misdirected and our misdeeds that are out of control and therefore the Bible says that if there's something that we need to understand and something that we need to see it is that this problem of pride is at the very heart, at the very core of so many of the life issues and the life problems that we struggle with. It was Theodore Roosevelt who once said:

"If you could kick the person responsible for the majority of your problems you could not sit down for a week." [congregation laughter]

Well, that's exactly what James is saying here. *You Are Your Own Worst Enemy* and for all of the blame and for all of the judgment and for all of the prejudice that you want to speak in life about others and their problems and their needs and indeed we live in a world filled with problems, at the core and at the heart of all of our problems is the problem of human pride and for that reason it is a deceitful potency that needs to be uncovered and needs to be addressed in our lives. Here in these opening verses of James 4, James gives us a picture of the destructive power of pride in our lives and so I'm simply going to use the word pride as a simple reminder for us as to the destructive power and the disabling force of pride in our lives. What is the problem of pride? Well,

#1 pride is that which...

Poisons our relationships. Pride poisons our relationships. Look in verse 1.

Where do wars and fights come from among you?

But keep listening.

Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. And you ask...

You hear what he says here? He says the problem in most of your relationships is you! You wanna know why you have so many conflicts in life? He's pointing the finger. He's saying it's you. It's easy to look and say no, it's others, but James is saying listen it's you. The thing that poisons relationship, more than anything else, is this problem of pride. The writer of the book of Proverbs says in Proverbs 13 in verse 10:

By pride comes only contention,...

And the source and the core and the hub of so many of the conflicts that we have in our homes, in our marriages, in our churches and our nation are nothing more and nothing less than the problem of pride. It is ego against ego engaged and encountered in a battle and neither one will stand down. I'm convinced ladies and gentlemen that 90% of all problems in all marriages in all homes in our nation are all ultimately rooted and related to the problem of pride. When King James and Queen Mary live under the same roof, but constantly embattle themselves as rival kingdoms, each one wanting to have dominance and control, being self-seeking and self-fulfilling. Yes, we have money problems. Yes we have problems with sex and problems with communication and problems with in-laws and problems with schedules, but I'm telling you that 90+% of all of our problems could be resolved if only we would stand down on the issue of pride. But it's when we im-bold in our wills and when we dig in with our determination that we ultimately end up creating the conflict and the injury of pride. Pride is what makes me demanding rather than understanding. Pride is what makes me manipulative rather than focused on ministry and service to my wife, my children and others. It is pride that poisons our relationships. Is it any wonder that Paul in describing love in 1st Corinthians 13 said at the very beginning: [13:4]

Love...is not puffed up;

It's the opposite of pride and so pride poisons my relationships. There's a 2nd thing that pride does in my life and that is that pride...

Restricts our growth. When all of the efforts of my life are to find self-fulfillment and self-enlargement instead of being fulfilled and in being enlarged because of it, instead I find that what pride does is it keeps me from growing, it keeps me from moving, it keeps me from advancing in life. One of the reasons that so many people get stuck in life is because they come to the place that they are so indulged by their own sense of experience and competency that nobody can tell them anything and nobody can teach them anything and one of the things that every one of us has to learn and to understand in life is that the secret to fulfillment in life is to continue to grow, but you cannot grow as long as you know it all and think that you rule it all. You see there's a spirit of...of kindness and of humility that makes me be reachable to others. Proverbs 26:12 says:

Do you see a man who's wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.

And so pride not only poisons my relationships, ladies and gentlemen, pride restricts my growth. There's a 3rd thing that pride does in life, not only poisoning my relationships and restricting my growth, but read again the Scripture in James 4, pride...

Increases my stress. Stressed out, tense, driven, listen to what he says. He said:

You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain...

Those phrases just hang out there for me.

...do not have...cannot obtain...

Do you know how many people are living life so consumed with the comparisons and the competition and the sense of not having what others have and wanting what others are getting and feeling cheated and...and feeling as though they're not getting all they deserve in life. There's this stress in life and so much of the stress in life is nothing more than just the internal conflict of pride that goes on inside of us. Pride when it is indulged makes us very insecure and makes us very unstable and rather than fighting and achieving and obtaining what pride does when it is motivating my life and my career and everything else about me, what it does is that it ultimately creates great tension and great stress in my life. Heh!

I heard about a guy who said when I was in my 20's, he said in my 20's I was always worried about what everybody thought about me. He said it was just a constant point of stress in my life, you know, was I gonna make the grade, was I gonna measure up, what did people think, how did I dress, where did I live, what did I drive, what was my job. He said I was just constantly frustrated and I was worried about what everybody thought about. He said, though when I got into my 40's, he said, I didn't care

what anybody thought about me. I just got to the place, loosin my hair, loosin my shape, just decided you know what? I don't care what anybody thinks about me. He said, but you know the most amazing discovery in life was when I got to my 60's and I realize nobody was ever thinkin about me in the first place. [pause for congregation laughter] A lot of us are stressed out today because we're so worried about what other people are thinking about us, our image consciousness a..., our possessions, all of these things and all of this is nothing more and nothing less than an expression of pride. You see here in the book of James, James says:

...you do not have because you do not ask...

Interesting that little word ask is the exact same word that we find throughout the New Testament is the primary overarching word for prayer. Do you remember Matthew chapter 7 when Jesus said: [verse 7]

"Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock on the door..."

Ask, it's that same word. You see, instead of living your life stressed out by what you're not able to get and not able to attain, pride creates so much stress because of the competitiveness of it, but you see when I move from the competitiveness of pride to a deep sense of dependence upon God and understand that what I need in life is the grace of God and the strength of God, then that's when life begins to change. As long as I try to create self-promotion and self-satisfaction I will have stress. But when I become a person of God dependence I will have peace. So pride poisons my relationships. Pride restricts my growth. Pride increases my stress and then listen to this, pride...

Distorts my values. Rather than being a person who has God honoring values and virtues that are becoming, pride does just the opposite to us. Pride becomes so personally indulged and so self-focused, that what it does is it destroys our values. Read again the values of the life that's described here in James chapter 4, it speaks of lust, of murder, of covetousness, of fighting and of war. Lust, murder, covet, fight, war, those aren't virtues, those are vices, those are the very things that are a blight on human society, culture, community and family and why do these things surface? Because they are rooted and motivated by pride. Have you ever been to a fun house or, maybe, to a fairgrounds and stood in front of one of those sort of distorted, disfigured mirrors? Isn't it amazing what it'll do, how it'll shrink your feet and stretch your head, how it'll push you all out of shape and make you some sort of a distorted image? Do you know that's exactly what pride does? For all the ways that we try to look better because of our pride, what pride actually does is to distort our shape and our figure so that everything about us is unbecoming and is out of place. Pride destroys your values. There's one final thing that James tells us that pride does and that is that pride will...

Ensnare your soul. Pride has consequences now and consequences later. Let's continue to read in chapter 4 in verse 4, very strong words:

⁴Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity...

Literally is an enemy.

...of God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. ⁵Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain. "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"?

Here the Bible is talking about becoming a person who because of pride does not live for God's purpose but is so indulged in themselves that they have ensnared their very souls. Now when the Bible speaks of the world here and being in...a friend of the world is to be an enemy with God. It's not talking about just the people of the world. The Bible says: [John 3:16]

"God so loved the world..."

But when the Bible speaks of the world in this fashion it's talking about the system of the world. It's a culture, a mindset in the world that disregards and disrespects God and seeks to live ignorantly and independently of Him. James is not the only one who spoke of the world in this fashion. His friend John spoke of it in 1 John chapter 2, beginning in verses 14 [15] and following, John said:

¹⁵Do not love the world or the things that are in the world. For if anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶For all that is in the world—is the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but it is of the world. ¹⁷And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of the Father abides forever.

You see ladies and gentlemen there is a way in which pride ensnares your very soul away from the things of God, those things that are of value and of affection, those things that will last into those things that will be diminished. And to live in such a way is to live in conflict with God. In fact God's Word is very strong on this issue of pride. In the book of Proverbs chapter 6, the Bible gives us a hate list and this is what it says, it says: [verse 16]

These six things the LORD hates, and seven are an abomination to Him:...

What's the first one on the list? Would you say it with me?

A proud look,...

Let's say it one more time.

These six things the LORD hates, yes seven are an abomination to Him:...

And what is #1 on the list?

A proud look,...

The Bible tells us that we need to uncover the deceitful potency of pride found within the depths of the human heart, because until we deal with the issue of pride our lives will never be of value to the purpose and the plan of God. Pride is a destructive force in your life. It poisons your relationship. It restricts your growth. It increases your stress. It distorts your values and ultimately it will ensnare your soul. [pause] But there was a hinge verse, a hinge verse back in James chapter 4 and verse 6. Very clearly, very succinctly James says it this way:

...“God resists the proud, But He gives grace to the humble.”

For the barrier of pride that would ensnare and destroy my life God gives each and every one of us a point of breakthrough and the breakthrough of the barrier of pride is the provision of God's grace and grace transforms what pride distorts. Grace is able to take my life and to touch my life and to shape me and to make me into the person that God wants me to be and while pride destroys, grace restores. Therefore the second thing that James would have us to see today is that...

We need to **UNDERSTAND THE ENABLING POWER OF GOD'S GRACE**. Understand the enabling power of God's grace. Just as pride can in many ways unplug you from God's plan and purpose, grace will let you live a plugged in life to God's glory and His purpose. Clearly defined grace is God's unmerited goodness and His unlimited power released in my life to change me for His purposes. It is His unmerited goodness and His unlimited power released in my life to change me for His purposes and God wants to apply His grace to you and His grace to me and therefore the Bible says in verse 7 of James 4:

Therefore...

If you wanna live in the lif...realm of grace here's how you do it. Let's look at the strategy that James gives us for applying grace to life.

Therefore...

He says in verse 7.

...submit to God...

How am I going to experience the grace of God in my life? #1, I have to...

Get honest with God about my pride. I have to get honest. I have to come clean. I have to be willing to say what God says about this problem in my life and if I want to be a person who experiences grace

then it all begins with the moment that I submit to God and admit in life, Lord, I'm a person whose life is under the sway, the control of pride.

I heard about a young man who was talking to his sister, he said you know I have a confession to make, he said I feel so bad about this, he said but...I just feel like I need to confess it to someone. He said, you know every time I look in a mirror, he said, I look at myself and I just think, what a hunk, heh, [slight congregation laughter] what a hunk! His sister listened to him as he talked about his frustration over his vanity. Finally she said to him, she said, listen, She said, that's not a sin, she said, that's just ignorance. That's just ignorance. [more laughter] Well, I want you to know pride is a sin, but it's also just ignorance, it's ignorant to think that I can live my life apart from God and the greatest step that takes place in life is that when I see the magnitude of the grace of God and I begin to get honest about...with God...about my pride. So get honest with God about your pride and then...

Recognize that your life has divine specifications. Let's see again that application of grace.

Therefore submit to God..

And then listen to the rest of verse 7:

...Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

Now suddenly the devil shows up here. You remember there was a place in the Bible where suddenly the devil showed up, right? It was in the book of Genesis and there in the book of Genesis God's man and God's woman, Adam and Eve were living in the garden according to all of the provision and all of the plan of God. God had given them very specific instructions, but the devil showed up and when the devil came the first thing that he did was to put a question mark where God had put an exclamation point. His first thing was to say: [Genesis 3:1]

...“Has God...said that, ‘You should eat of every tree of the garden’?”

And they said, oh yes we can eat of every tree, except for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and then Satan deceived and distorted the truth and he said God is holding out on you: [Genesis 3:5]

“God knows that in the day that you eat of the fruit your eyes will be opened and you will be like God...”

What was he appealing to? Pride, he was appealing to that within us that wants to say I can live and exist apart from God and so with that subtle temptation the entire world was brought under the sway of sin and what is sin? It is nothing more than S “I” N, me, myself and I will live my life apart from God. You see Satan deceived the first couple by making them believe that they could fulfill themselves apart from God.

Do you remember what happened in the temptation when Satan came to tempt Jesus? [Matthew chapter 4] Do you remember that he said why don't you do it my way instead of doing it God's way. I'll take you away from suffering. But, of course, Jesus resisted that temptation, the pride of life. Ladies and gentlemen, the secret to God's grace is seeing not only that I need to get honest with Him, but secondly that God does have a plan for my life, that there are divine specifications and the moment that I start saying Satan I will not do it your way, I will do it God's way, I will resist Satan's temptations to indulge myself and to fulfill myself but instead I will give myself wholly to the purpose of God, then grace begins to move and to work in my life. Get honest with God, recognize that there is a plan for your life based on divine specifications and then #3...

Acept God's provision for your peace.
Let's continue reading in verse 8:

Draw near to God and He will draw near to you...

How can I live this life of grace? How can I come near to God? How can I submit to God and live according to the purpose and plans that He has for me? Well, here's the good news. God has provided a way for us to draw near to Him and it is through His Son our Savior Jesus Christ. The writer of the book of Hebrews says it this way: [10:19-22]

¹⁹Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰by a new and living way which He is consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, ²¹and having a High Priest over the house of God, ²²let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

Jesus Christ is God's way of grace and of truth and what we must come to the place in life is the place that we say God I am a sinner, God I am a rebel, God I have lived my life apart from You, but God what I want more than anything else is to accept Your way of peace and Your provision of grace. The song writer said it so well when he said:

*Oh the love that drew salvations plan!
Oh the grace that brou't it down to man!
Oh the mighty gulf that God did span
At Calvary.*

And we can draw near to God, not because of our efforts or our goodness, but because of the grace of God in Jesus Christ, accept His provision of peace. So not only does grace find its expression in getting honest with God and stepping away from my pride and accepting the fact that He has made a provision for my peace, but then grace brings me to the place where I want to...

Confess my sins. You see that...instead of being proud like the peacock and strutting my stuff in the presence of God there is contrition, there is humility. You said, I thought you were talking about grace and sn't it grace that frees us? Yes, it is, but grace when it touches our hearts overwhelms us with the love and the mercy of God and so great is that love and so great is that mercy that when grace touches me then all that I can do is say, oh God, oh God be merciful to me. In the book of Romans chapter 2 in verse 4, the Bible tells us that it is the

...goodness of God that leads us to repentance?

And is it any wonder that James tells us that when the grace of God is applied to our hearts that we cleanse our hands, that we purify our hearts, that we lament and mourn and weep, because there is a desire to step away from anything and everything in my life that would be seen as a rival to the authority of God in me. Thank God the Bible says: [1 John 1:9]

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

And God will remove the sting and the stench of pride when we confess our sins to him by His grace. There's one final thing that we do as we uncover the grace of God and that is that we...

Exalt the Lord in our lives and He then lifts us up.
Listen to what it says again in verse 10:

Humble yourselves ~~unto the~~...in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

You see when I change the entire M.O. of my life, when the agenda of my life is no longer about me, but it's about God and His purpose and His plan and His glory then everything in life is turned inside out from the old pattern of life which is pride, to the new pattern of life which is living for God's purpose. If I exalt myself God is gonna put me down. In fact, the Bible says in Proverbs: [16:18]

Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before the fall.

And if I exalt myself God will put me down, but if I exalt Him then here's the wonder of it all, all the things that I look for, all the things that I long for, all the things that I seek after I do not find in me, but I find in Him. He provides it. He fulfills it. He completes it as I give my heart and my life to Him.

Earlier this morning I was with a group of men praying for this service today. Each week our pastor and I have the privilege of gathering with a group of men who come and pray over the services and pray over the day and I told those men this morning that I was going to be speaking about pride and one of those men in his prayer said, "Lord, help me to realize that

You do not exist to make a big deal out of me, but my life exists to make a big deal out of You. That's what it's all about. It's not about you. It's about Him. And you, if you live to indulge yourself and to fulfill yourself, will only prove to be your own worst enemy, but if you will surrender and submit yourself to the grace of God, I'm here to tell you today that God's grace will lift you up. I love the words of the song:

*When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.*

Two paths, which one will you take today? The way of pride, the way of grace?