

Foundations Lesson #18

Pride & Humility

In Matthew 23:12 Jesus said, “For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.” Someone will do the exalting and someone will do the humbling. If we do the exalting, God does the humbling. If we do the humbling, God does the exalting. We get to determine who does which.

The phrase we have just quoted, “For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted,” appears three times in Scripture. Once here in Matthew's gospel and twice in Luke's gospel, where the wording is very slightly different. Each of these three times Jesus is the one speaking, and each time the context is different. So let's take a careful look at these three passages that contain this important saying of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Mt. 23:8-12 [Jesus speaking] “But you are not to be called 'Rabbi,' for you have only one Master and you are all brothers. And do not call anyone on earth 'father,' for you have one Father, and he is in heaven. Nor are you to be called 'teacher,' for you have one Teacher, the Christ. The greatest among you will be your servant. ***For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.***”

What's Jesus dealing with here? He's talking about how we like to be spoken to; how we are addressed; what kind of titles of respect we want people to use when they are talking to us. And our preference reveals if we're being humble or self-exalting.

Lk. 14:8-11 [Jesus speaking] “When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited. If so, the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, 'Give this man your seat.' Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place. But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, 'Friend, move up to a better place.' Then you will be honored in the presence of all your fellow guests. ***For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.***”

So again, the context is very ordinary – being invited to a dinner. The question is, “How do we handle ourselves?” Because we can handle ourselves in a way that we are exalting ourselves, or we can handle ourselves in a way that is humble. Jesus tells us here, “take the least important place.” Don't worry about trying to make an impression or be concerned about what someone might think or how you feel you compare with the other invited guests. Don't even go there. Just be content and comfortable taking the lowest place. Then when your host sees you there – and the host in this parable represents God himself – **he** will move you to the place that is appropriate for you. You get to move up. That's a good day.

Lk. 18:9-14 To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself; 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men – robbers, evildoers, adulterers – or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.'
“But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'
“I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. ***For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be***”

exalted.”

Here the context is going to the house of God to pray, in other words, how we approach God. So these three examples are examples from everyday life. They deal with how we address one another, or getting invited to eat at someone else's house, or prayer – all quite ordinary. Jesus is saying that in the ordinary facets of everyday life we can be exalting ourselves, or we can be humbling ourselves, and he's telling us that it works much better if we choose to humble ourselves.

With that in mind, let's take a look at Roman Numeral #1 on our outline, definitions. Pride: an attitude which believes that what is important in life is me me me me me. What's really important in life? Me. That's what pride says.

Pride Pride believes that I am hot stuff. Pride's favorite topic of conversation is **me**. And pride loves to talk about how much better I am doing than others, or how much better I'm doing than I used to be doing, or my accomplishments, my awards, trophies, or recognitions. Pride is quick to interrupt people when they are talking, because, after all, what **I** have to say is so much more important than what others are talking about. Pride will even occasionally put self down just to get attention, because what's important is me me me.

And of course Jesus, in the three passages that we've already looked at, contrasted humility with self-exaltation, so we can say that part of what pride is all about is self-exaltation. Having said that, a few Scriptures:

Ps. 10:4 In his pride the wicked does not seek him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God.

Pr. 13:10 Pride only breeds quarrels, but wisdom is found in those who take advice.

Is. 16:6 We have heard of Moab's pride – her overweening pride and conceit, her pride and her insolence – but her boasts are empty.

You and I are commanded in Scripture not to be proud.

Ro. 12:16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

Then in I Corinthians 13, when love is identified and described, it says this:

I Co. 13:4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.

Since we are all commanded to love one another, and since not being proud is included in being loving, I believe it's fair to say that here also we are commanded not to be proud.

So since we have defined and examined pride, let's now head on over from the dark side to the side full of light, which is humility. Humility has here been defined as: an attitude which gratefully acknowledges that I am and have **nothing** other than what God has given me, therefore life is all about **Him**. So when somebody says to me or you, “Hey, you did a nice job,” we might outwardly thank them for their compliment, because they are being nice, but inwardly we would be thinking “I really had nothing to do with that. God gave me the ability to do that. God gave me the strength to do that. God gave me the wisdom and knowledge to do that. So I'm grateful for how **He** has created me and for what **He** has done for me. Humility always acknowledges God; pride never does.

Humility Bill Kirk has often said, “Humility is not thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less.”

A lot of humility starts between the ears. It's the little gray cells that we have to train to line up with the ways of God. In our pride, we love to think about self. But if, when we find ourselves doing that, we start training our minds to think instead about God first and foremost, and secondly about others, we'll find ourselves growing in humility because our minds have been renewed.

Hubert Lindsley used to go into violent communist protests in the late 1960s and preach Christ. Billy Graham once interviewed him and asked, "What's the largest demonstration that you've ever broken up?" Lindsley replied, "35,000 people." Billy Graham was amazed. "One man? Thirty-five thousand people?" to which Lindsley replied, "Dr. Graham, Jesus was with me."

Humility always gives credit where credit is due.

Andrew Murray has said, "Humility is nothing but the disappearance of self in the vision that God is all. It is the displacement of self by the enthronement of God. Where God is all, self is nothing." And I repeat: Where God is all, self is nothing.

There was a teacher at Valley Forge Christian College who one day was simply walking down the sidewalk. As he was walking, God asked him a question: "What can you do without me?" The teacher answered, "Well, Lord, I suppose I can't do anything without you." And immediately the teacher falls to the ground, he's all shaken up, some people gather around to help him get back up and make sure he's OK, and God speaks to him again and says, "You can't even walk without me." He walks on, and the experience is repeated. A second time he falls to the ground in a heap; a second time people have to help him back up; and a second time God says, "You can't even walk without me." Nobody at Valley Forge could teach or preach with quite the same power, quite the same clarity, quite the same affect as he could when it came to the subject of being dependent upon God. Why? He had had an experience with ***The Almighty***. Humility willingly acknowledges, and gratefully acknowledges, that we have nothing and are absolutely nothing outside of the grace of God.

Jn. 3:27 To this John [the Baptist] replied, "A man can receive only what is given him from heaven.

When I first got saved I was reading the Good News translation, and in the Good News it says, "No one can have anything unless God gives it to him." I like that. It's clear. It's easy to understand.

Dt. 8:17-18 You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth form me." But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today.

Scripture commands us to be humble.

Eph. 4:2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

Pp. 2:3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.

Col. 3:12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

Tit. 3:1-2 Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men. [not just the ones that are great, but everybody]

I Pt. 3:8 Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble.

We are commanded to be humble. So we see pride and humility and we see the contrast between the two. I would like to point out that from the standpoint of heaven, pride really is ridiculous. I hesitate to use the word ridiculous because so many people who use that word, use it with a bad attitude. But I believe it is quite accurate to call pride ridiculous from heaven's vantage point. Just think of the angels for a minute. They clearly understand that God is all in all. That's easy for them to see because they live in an environment where that's obvious. For them it's not a matter of faith, as it is for us, they see it by sight. They see that He's the creator of all things, the sustainer of all things, He's the Great One, they worship him gladly, they see that on earth everything that lives and moves has its being in Him and because of Him. All that is unmistakably evident to them. And then they look down to earth, and there's this one little earthling, originally created from dust, graciously given the stature of being made in the image and likeness of ***The Almighty***, who raises his puny voice and says, "Look at ***ME!***" I can just picture them nudging each other and saying, "These humans, don't they even know the score?" Pride really is ridiculous in heaven.

Humility, in essence, is simply agreement with the truth – the truth of how great God is and what we are without Him, which is nothing. And let's remember that everything that we are we are by the grace of God because He created us in the first place ...all the giftings you and I have, all the abilities we have, ... the ability to walk, the ability to talk, the ability to think, the ability to have any feelings, attitudes, or emotions, the ability to communicate, whatever abilities we have, they are all a gift from God. We didn't earn any of them. Humility joyfully acknowledges that.

Foundations Lesson #18 Pride & Humility, Part Two

Going on to Roman Numeral number two, let's look at the outcomes that result from pride and humility. First we'll take pride, and we have a list here...

II Chr. 26:16 But after Uzziah became powerful, his pride led to his downfall.

Pr. 18:12 Before his downfall a man's heart is proud,

So when we have pride, what is one of the outcomes? A downfall. Next,

Pr. 11:2 When pride comes, then comes disgrace,

We have disgrace.

Pr. 15:25 The LORD tears down the proud man's house

So in this verse, the proud man gets his house torn down. That's not fun. That's not a good day.

Pr. 16:5 The LORD detests all the proud of heart. Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished.

Is. 10:12 When the Lord has finished all his work against Mount Zion and Jerusalem, he will say, "I will punish the king of Assyria for the willful pride of his heart and the haughty look in his eyes.

The next verse is worth memorizing.

Pr. 16:18 Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.

Zephaniah 2 says pretty much the same thing but it gives us more of an illustration of the truth:

Zph. 2:9-10 Therefore, as surely as I live," declares the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, "surely Moab will become like Sodom, the Ammonites like Gomorrah – a place of weeds and salt pits, a wasteland forever. The remnant of my people will plunder them; the survivors of my nation will inherit their land." This is what they will get in return for their pride, for insulting and mocking the people of the LORD Almighty.

The Bible says about Pharaoh that he **refused** to humble himself before God – we're talking the ten plagues and the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt (see Exodus 10:3) – and what was the end of Pharaoh? His lifeless body got washed up on the shore of the Red Sea. That's a vivid illustration of pride coming before destruction. The next result or outcome of pride: gets brought low.

Pr. 29:23 A man's pride brings him low,

Is. 2:11 The eyes of the arrogant man will be humbled and the pride of men brought low;

Is. 23:9 The LORD Almighty planned it, to bring low the pride of all glory and to humble all who are renowned on the earth.

Then, will be humbled.

Is. 2:12 The LORD Almighty has a day in store for all the proud and lofty, for all that is exalted (and they will be humbled),

Next, will be ruined.

Jer. 13:9 "This is what the LORD says: 'In the same way I will ruin the pride of Judah and the great pride of Jerusalem.

I want to tell you a little story. Francis Frangipane was ministering at a conference. He gets there and the first thing he does is he announces to the people that he is going to give them the name of the ruling spirit who is opposing God's people in their region. Just about when he had everybody sitting on the edge of their chairs waiting to hear what the name of this ruling spirit was that was opposing God's people in their region, he gives them the name: YHWH. YHWH is the Hebrew name for God. It's used very often in the Old Testament. They were puzzled and amazed. Then he quoted the Scripture, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Then he called people to repent of their pride. That takes courage. Of course, Francis doesn't lack any courage, but we need to be clearly aware of the fact that God opposes the proud.

Jas. 4:6 But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

I Pt. 5:5 Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

I would rather have every demon in hell oppose me than to have God opposing me. And God says he's going to oppose me if I'm proud.

Take a look at this list: downfall, disgrace, house torn down, punishment, destruction, humbled, ruined, being opposed by God. Can you see that **nothing good** comes out of pride? **Absolutely Nothing**. I say that because in our society we don't think that pride is a big problem, or maybe not even a problem at all. Sometimes it's rewarded in society. Sometimes it's applauded. But pride is spiritually fatal. It will kill us if we don't deal with it.

There are times that I have watched God change the outcome of sports games because of pride. I won't go into detail, but God really does oversee everything, and the race is not always to the swift or the battle to the strong. Andrew Murray once wrote, “Let us admit that there is nothing so natural to man, yet nothing so insidious, so dangerous, as pride.” Pride is a stench in the nostrils of God Almighty. The tendency to be prideful is part of our fallen nature, but we can, and we **must**, overcome it by the power of God. He and He alone can deliver us from the pride that is in our hearts. Let us cry out to Him and trust Him to do just that.

So with that in mind, let's examine some of the outcomes that result from humility.

II Sam. 22:28 You save the humble, but your eyes are on the haughty to bring them low.

Ps. 18:27 You save the humble but bring low those whose eyes are haughty.

Now the Bible doesn't explain what the humble are saved from in these verses – I suppose it could be getting saved from trials or enemies or disasters – it doesn't give any specifics. It just tells us that God saves the humble. I think we can all agree that it's a wonderful blessing to have God saving us, whatever it might be that he's saving us from.

Guidance from the Lord:

Ps. 25:9 He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way.

Sustaining:

Ps. 147:6 The LORD sustains the humble

Ps. 149:4 For the LORD takes delight in his people; he crowns the humble with salvation.

Then, the humble are recipients of God's grace.

Pr. 3:34 He mocks proud mockers but gives grace to the humble.

Jas. 4:6 But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

I Pt. 5:5 Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

If you go into an old basement that may have some concrete on the floor, but it's pretty uneven, and you take a 5-gallon bucket of water and you pour it out on the ground, where's the water going to go? It'll go to the lowest places in that basement. The grace of God is like that. It flows to the lowest

places; it goes to the places where people's hearts are bowed low. It doesn't flow to the high and exalted places. When God sees us being truly humble, lowering ourselves, joyfully admitting that we are nothing without him, that's where He pours out his grace. And we are all in desperate need of His grace! It doesn't hit the mountain tops. It doesn't flow to the peaks and the areas of exaltation. The grace of God gravitates to genuine humility.

More benefits:

Pr. 11:2 When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.

Pr. 18:12 Before his downfall a man's heart is proud, but humility comes before honor.

Mt. 18:4 [Jesus speaking] Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

Rick Joyner, in his book entitled The Final Quest, gets handed a cloak which looks very drab, very dull, and very ordinary. And the name of the cloak is humility. At first it is somewhat uncomfortable, but he is told that the cloak of humility is the highest rank in the kingdom. Jesus said that whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. I believe there are aspects of humility that we are unaware of. Humility has far-reaching consequences. But the last outcome that results from humility is repeated several times in Scripture, and we have already read three of those passages,

Lk. 18:14 For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

I Pt. 5:6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.

Summary Humility has never been popular in the eyes of the world. Part of the reason is that it's not easy. It's difficult. It requires dying to self, and self doesn't like to die. Romans 12 tells us that we are to offer our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God. Dead sacrifices never move (cause there's no life in them, they can't move). But living sacrifices have this tendency to want to crawl off the altar. They don't want to die. Death to self is painful, but it's worth it! Let the flames consume your pride. You'll be glad you did.

And another reason humility is difficult is that as soon as we think we have attained it, we have already lost it. Because if you think you are humble, that, in and of itself, is prideful.

The story is told of a church that wanted to find the most humble person in the congregation and do something special for them. They found an old man who was a deacon and a Sunday school teacher, and that was the most humble person in the church they could find. And so they honored him and they gave him a pin, and the pin said “most humble person in the church.” One month later they had to take the pin away from him. Why? Because he wore it. You see, anyone who advertises his humility is not humble at all. They are drawing attention to themselves and making a display of their accomplishments, which is the opposite of humility. In the same way, as soon as we think we have arrived, as soon as we think we are humble people, we have already lost whatever humility we may have had. I have confidence in God that **He** is yet able to make all of us into men and women of genuine humility. He is able.

I have read authors who believe that the way for us to become more humble is for us to focus on our sin. I disagree, because the very essence of pride is focusing on self. You can't cast out self by focusing on self, even if it's sinful self. That's not going to rid us of the monster. Let's get our eyes on God. Let's get our eyes on the God who has forgiven us, who has redeemed us, who has treated us

with incredible grace when we didn't deserve it. If we focus on His goodness, His holiness, His awesomeness, His perfection – in His presence our pride can be dealt with. The more we worship God in spirit and in truth, the more we focus on **Him**, the less likely we will be to walk in pride.

So let's turn our outline over and go to Roman Numeral number three, humility modeled in the life of Jesus. The concept can be difficult to grasp, but the One who is so powerful that entire galaxies started existing just because he spoke, the One who sustains all things by his word of power, that One, He is also humble. Maybe we have trouble picturing that or believing that because if we had that kind of power, we wouldn't be humble at all. But it is true that the all-powerful One is also the God who is supremely humble. In light of that truth, it shouldn't surprise us at all that we can see a life of great humility lived out in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. And so on our outline, the first demonstration of Jesus' humility has to do with his making himself nothing and coming to earth as a human being.

Pp. 2:5-8b Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself...

So here we have an account of the God of the universe, who decides that in order to rescue humans, in order to save them from the things that are plaguing them, he's got to become a human being. Let's try to put that into perspective. If you and I were standing by an ant hole, and we noticed that the ants were at war with one another, and that they were making a complete mess of their lives, and because of that we wanted to help them, and if we then decided that one of us could become an ant and live as an ant among the ants to show them how to live life, and if we then were able to carry out that plan, the distance, the gap, that you or I would have to bridge in order to become an ant would be far, far, far, smaller than the distance that Jesus had to span in order to become fully human. Now if you could picture yourself becoming an ant with all the limitations of being an ant, that's kind of frightening. But the gap between God and a human is **far** greater than the gap between one of us and an ant. At least we and the ant are part of the same created order. The difference between God and us is the difference between The Creator and part of his creation. That's huge. Yet Jesus submitted himself to that plan, and he did so willingly. His love is that great. But his willing submission is also a demonstration of his humility. There was no attitude of, "I'm God. I'm not doing that!" So we see Jesus modeling humility first by becoming fully human.

Secondly, we see Jesus' humility by acknowledging his complete submission to the Father's will. Let me read you some snippets from John's gospel:

Jn. 5:19 "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself;

Jn. 5:30 By myself I can do nothing;

Jn. 5:41 "I do not accept praise from men,

Jn. 6:38 I have come down from heaven not to do my will...

Jn. 7:16 "My teaching is not my own...

Jn. 7:28 I am not here on my own...

Jn. 8:28 I do nothing on my own...

Jn. 8:42 I have not come on my own...

Jn. 8:50 I am not seeking glory for myself;

Jn. 14:24 These words you hear are not my own.

How many of you are getting the idea that Jesus depended upon the Father for everything? Is it not the most humbling thing to see ourselves as utterly dependent? Jesus modeled that humility.

QUOTE This life of entire self-abnegation, of absolute submission and dependence upon the Father's will, Christ found to be one of perfect peace and joy. He lost nothing by giving all to God.

This is the true self-denial to which our Savior calls us, the acknowledgment that self has nothing good in it, except as an empty vessel which God must fill, and that its claim to be or do **anything** may not for a moment be allowed. - Andrew Murray

So we see how Jesus modeled humility by acknowledging his complete submission to the Father. Next we see his humility in embracing the identity of a servant. Some people cringe at the idea of serving. They feel they're above that. But we see that when the God of the universe took on human form, he lived to serve, not to be served. That's humility.

Mk. 10:42-45 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. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. 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."

Jn. 13:3-5 Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

verses 12-17 When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. 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.

I'm glad that Jesus showed us that there is a blessing in store for all who walk in servanthood. As he said, "Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them." Then, in Luke's gospel chapter 22, this takes place just after Jesus had washed his disciples' feet:

Lk. 22:25-27 Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.

So Jesus embraced becoming a servant to all. Pride wants to be served. Humility **delights** in serving others. There is nothing so divine or heavenly as being the servant and helper of all. One author has said this:

QUOTE Humility before God is nothing if not proven by humility before men. Our

thoughts and feelings toward others are an acid test for determining how much humility we actually have towards God.

I Jn. 4:20 If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen.

So there we have the principal explained. How we treat our brothers and sisters is one of the evidences of how we actually love God or, in this case, how humble we are towards Him.

Pp. 2:3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.

QUOTE The question is often asked, *How can we consider others better than ourselves, when we see that they are far below us in wisdom, in holiness, in natural gifts, or in grace received?*

The question proves at once how little we understand what true humility is. True humility comes when, in the light of God, we have seen ourselves to be nothing, have consented to part with and cast away self, to let God be all. The soul that has done this, and can say, "So have I lost myself in finding thee," no longer compares itself with others. It has given up forever every thought of self in God's presence; it meets its fellow-men as one who is nothing, and seeks nothing for itself; who is a servant of God, and for his sake a servant of all. A faithful servant may be wiser than the master, and yet retain the true spirit and posture of the servant. The humble man looks upon every – even the feeblest and most unworthy – child of God, and honors them and prefers them in honor as the son or daughter of a Great King. The spirit of him who washed the disciples' feet, makes it a joy to us to be indeed the least, to be servants of all who cross our path.

I've put up a small poster in my office, it's just an 8½ by 11 piece of paper, that says "JOY for today" right across the top of it. The word, "JOY," is in capital letters. Then the J, O, and Y, in acrostic form go down the left side of it and "J" stands for Jesus first. "O" stands for Others second. And "Y" stands for Yourself last. I need that reminder. I believe all of the Christian life is a matter of Jesus first, others second, and self last. May God help us to live that way!

Lastly on our outline, we see humility modeled in the life of Jesus by his laying down his life so that sinful humans could be rescued.

Mt. 20:28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Pp. 2:5-11 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Peter wrote that if we humble ourselves, God will lift us up in due time, and we see that truth powerfully demonstrated in the life of Jesus Christ.

Foundations Lesson #18

Pride & Humility, Part Three

Next, Roman Numeral number four, pride as seen in various biblical characters. I suppose there could be a long list of people in the Bible who exhibited some form of pride, but I've selected just a few of the more obvious ones so that we can identify the pride but also so that we can see some of the consequences of that pride.

Ac. 12:21-23 On the appointed day Herod, wearing his royal robes, sat on his throne and delivered a public address to the people. They shouted, "This is the voice of a god, not of a man." Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died.

A couple of worms had a big, juicy lunch that day. The people were attributing to Herod something that was not rightfully his. It seems like Herod would have been OK if he had just let the people know that they were mistaken. Apparently, he loved their flattery too much to do that. The disaster that followed speaks for itself.

Then, in the book of Daniel, chapter 4, King Nebuchadnezzar has an experience with God. I'd encourage you to read the whole chapter to get the context – it's a great story. But in verse 30, he says, "Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?" I think all of us can feel the pride just oozing out of that statement. Immediately, his royal authority is taken away from him by God, he was driven away to live with the wild animals. He ate grass like cattle; his body was drenched with the dew of heaven; his hair grew like the feathers of an eagle; and his nails grew like the claws of a bird. He was in that state for "seven times." Now we don't know how long a "time" was. Traditionally, it was one year, but that is unclear. So for perhaps seven years he was in that condition, and then God decided it was time to restore him. So, even though few details are given, he reigns on his throne again. The last verse of the chapter, verse 37, shows us that King Nebuchadnezzar learned his lesson well. He says, "Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything he does is right and all his ways are just. **And those who walk in pride he is able to humble.**" May we learn that lesson as well as Nebuchadnezzar learned it.

Pride takes credit for what God has done. Let me say that again. Pride takes credit for what God has done. Then there's another truth to consider here: Generally, the more gifted you are, the more you will have to fight pride in your heart. That's because in the areas that you're gifted, you can see that you are able to do things that other people cannot do. And it's true that you have more ability in those areas. That's good, and there's no sense in denying the truth of it. Why? Because God delights in giving good gifts. He's generous. He's kind. He loves to bless. He loves to give away special abilities or talents or skills. But when we see those things, we cannot jump to the wicked conclusion that we are better than others, nor can we make the drastic mistake of failing to acknowledge the God who generously invested those talents into our lives. We can do such-and-such better than others, yes. But it's all because God has been gracious. We can't take credit for what God has done. That's pride, and pride is spiritually fatal.

And then we have Ananias and Sapphira. Again, you can read the whole story in Acts chapter 5. They sold a piece of land. And the previous chapter tells us that it was customary for people in the church to be selling lands or houses, bringing the money into the church meeting and laying it at the apostles' feet. So Ananias brings in money that he had received from the sale of his land, and lays it at the apostles' feet. But he fails to mention that he received more from the sale than the amount of his offering. In other words, he kept part of the sales price for himself. We don't know how much, but he retained a portion. And, because he lied about it, he literally drops dead. His wife comes in three

hours later, she lies about it too, and they have to bury her corpse right next to where they had to bury her husband. They both dropped dead in church for lying. Scripture does not tell us **why** they lied, but I imagine it had to do with the desire for a good reputation. They probably wanted to be seen as generous people who cared about their church family. If so, pride was certainly at the root of it all. May we never care about what other people think about us, but may we care passionately about what God thinks about us. By the way, his opinion is the only one that counts.

Then we see that even Jesus' disciples manifested pride. The first incident on our outline deals with their claiming that they would never disown him. Now that's not a real smart thing to do. I've heard people make all kinds of claims, "O, God, I'll never forsake you." I can understand that people feel loyal right then, but telling **The Almighty** what we are or are not going to do is not a good idea. He knows far, far better than we do what's going to happen and what we are capable of. He knows all things. He doesn't need our information. Besides that, our information is usually quite flawed.

Mt. 26:31-35 Then Jesus told them, "This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written: 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee."

Peter replied, "Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will."

"I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times."

But Peter declared, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you." And all the other disciples said the same.

When we make statements like that, God in his love and in his goodness usually shows us how frail we really are – He withdraws his hand, leaves us to our own resources and we fail miserably. And that's exactly what happened to Peter and the other disciples. I believe they were relying on self to remain loyal to Jesus. They learned. It's not about me, me, me.

Then in Luke's gospel, chapter 10,

Lk. 10:17-20 The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name."

He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, [Jesus gives a little word of correction here] do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

In other words, don't rejoice about how good you feel when you can boss demons around. That's carnal. It's not about you. Rather, rejoice that God has given you grace unto salvation. Rejoice that you have been rescued from your sins and that your names are written in the Lamb's book of life. God has been incredibly kind to you. You can rejoice about that.

I think probably the epitome of pride manifested by the disciples comes on the night Jesus was betrayed. Jesus had just a little earlier done the job of the lowest slave in the house by washing all the disciples' feet, and he had told them, "Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you." By that, he let them know that it's all about servanthood – it's all about lowering yourself in order to elevate others. So what do the disciples do? Luke tells us that a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. So we scratch our heads and wonder, "Is that not the exact opposite of what Jesus has just modeled?" And of course it is. But how often have we been just as dull or even more dull than the disciples were that night? Pride can be so much a part of our nature that we don't even have a clue as to what's happening when we are manifesting it. And, having received great teaching on humility, by word and/or by example, is no guarantee that our hearts have been transformed. All the more reason we need to rely on God to make us into people of humility. He is our only hope to free us from pride.

Our last example of pride is perhaps the most obvious. It comes from the life of the devil himself. The church has for over 1,000 years taken the passages in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 to represent the fall of Satan:

Is. 14:12-15 How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star [“Lucifer” in the KJV], son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, “***I will*** ascend to heaven; ***I will*** raise my throne above the stars of God; ***I will*** sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. ***I will*** ascend above the tops of the clouds; ***I will*** make myself like the Most High.” But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit.

Lucifer's last “I will” is highly significant. It seems that after four “I wills” God was still being patient. But you don't want to cross over the line of God's patience. The results are devastating. It's after Lucifer says, “I will make myself like the Most High” that he gets kicked out of heaven and hurled to the earth.

Ez. 28:17 Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings.

The ultimate in pride is saying or thinking that “I am like God, and I did it myself.” A little while after Lucifer's fall from heaven, he tempts the woman in the garden with the same pride. He tells her that if she eats of the forbidden fruit, she will be like God. And he's still perpetrating the same lie. How many religions do you know today where people are told that they can become like God? The truth is, we can become more like God, but He has to be the one changing us into the likeness of Christ. We are incapable of doing that on our own. Anyone who thinks they can is guilty of the most dirty, rotten, filthy, ugly, and disgusting pride.

QUOTE “So much as you have of pride within you, you have of the fallen angel alive in you; so much as you have of true humility, so much you have of the Lamb of God within you.”
“Evil can have no beginning but from pride, and no end but from humility. The truth is this: pride must die in you, or nothing of Heaven can live in you.”

The final point on our outline, Roman Numeral number five, gives us some manifestations of pride. Pride can manifest itself in many different ways, and five are listed here. Number one, being easily offended. If what is important in life is me, me, me, me, me, and someone says something that ***I*** don't like, well then, I have every right to get upset. I'll get vexed, chafed, and irked. I'll become irritated, upset, and angry because they shouldn't have said that to me, me, me.

Jn. 6:60-61 On hearing it, many of his disciples said, “This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?”

Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, “Does this offend you?”

Pride gets easily offended. So when we find ourselves being offended, we usually need to repent of some pride.

The next manifestation of pride is having a problem with authority. After all, if life is all about me, me, me – if that's what's important in life – then nobody should be telling ***me*** what to do. A minister of the gospel once said to a friend of mine, “I'm an apostle. No one tells me what to do!” That's pride, pure and simple.

I Pt. 2:13 Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men:

Going on, the next manifestation of pride is failure to admit wrongdoing. Someone who has a proud spirit can get caught on camera with their hand in the cookie jar and say, "I haven't done anything wrong." "Who, me?"

I Sam. 15:20 "But I did obey the LORD," Saul said. "I went on the mission the LORD assigned me. I completely destroyed the Amalekites and brought back Agag their king.

Do you remember what Samuel said? "What is this bleating of sheep in my ears?" Pride says that it doesn't matter if I'm actually innocent or guilty, because it's about me, me, me, I must be innocent. The evidence doesn't matter. Failing to admit their own wrongdoing.

Pr. 26:12 Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.

Ps. 36:2 For in his own eyes he flatters himself too much to detect or hate his sin.

Another manifestation of pride: an attitude of superiority or boasting.

Est. 5:11-12 Haman boasted to them about his vast wealth, his many sons, and all the ways the king had honored him and how he had elevated him above the other nobles and officials. "And that's not all," Haman added. "I'm the only person Queen Esther invited to accompany the king to the banquet she gave. And she has invited me along with the king tomorrow.

Those of you who know the rest of the story know that when Haman said these things he had less than 48 hours to live, even though he didn't realize that at the time. Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall.

Then, the last symptom or manifestation of pride that is listed on our outline is leaving God out. Pride tells us that we don't want or need any help. We are self-sufficient. So why include God? Proud people feel they don't need God. Humble people feel they are in desperate need of Him.

Jsh. 9:14 The men of Israel sampled their provisions but did not inquire of the LORD.

Dt. 8:14 then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

Ps. 10:4 In his pride the wicked does not seek him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God.

Hos. 13:6 When I fed them, they were satisfied; when they were satisfied, they became proud; then they forgot me.

In closing I would like to say that you and I can avoid being proud people. How? Every time we sense the pride inside of us – whether anybody else catches it or not is immaterial, the issue is that God in his grace and mercy has shown it to us – when we see it, all we need to do is to repent. We need to cry out to God asking him to forgive us, and then also asking him to change us because having pride in our lives does not glorify or please him. We will continue to have to work on becoming humble for the rest of our days while in this body. But God is faithful. He can and will mold us into people of genuine humility as we ask him and trust him to do so. God bless you all.