

Theme: Pride is a disordered love that excessively focuses on myself, seeks to exalt myself above God and His will, refusing to accept my God given limitations or confess my failures.

## I. Intro - The Beast

- A. Tale as old as time - literally
- B. A handsome Prince becomes arrogant - and is turned into a beast as a result
- C. Can only be saved if he can get someone to fall in love with him, which requires a great change in character!
- D. A rendition of pride goes before a fall - and also a picture of the way out of pride and its penalty
- E. What is pride? How does it act as a root vice?
- F. What is the opposing virtue? What practices resist pride and encourage virtue?

## II. Understanding Pride

- A. Defining Pride - a haughty spirit  
Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall. Proverbs 16:18
  - 1. Note the parallelism - pride is a haughty spirit
  - 2. This is not normal "self-respect" nor the desire to do something as well as we can (pride in our work)
  - 3. Pride is an excessive estimation of and focus on myself and my abilities
  - 4. The vice of pride is a constant focus on myself, the habit of self-preoccupation and self-promotion Pride - a despised and destructive sin

- 5. The reality is we all hate pride - in others! This is why pride is the most hated & most practiced of the seven root vices

## B. The problem with pride

- 1. Pride leads to fall and destruction  
Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall. Proverbs 16:18
- 2. God hates pride (God's Wisdom speaking here)  
I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech. Proverbs 8:13
- 3. God opposes the proud  
That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." James 4:6

- C. God hates pride because it is destructive to us and all we love. This is why we must understand it and cut it from our lives

## III. The Root Vice of Pride

- A. Pride as a disordered love (how pride goes wrong)  
Pride is a disordered love that excessively focuses on myself, seeks to exalt myself above God and His will, refusing to accept my God given limitations or confess my failures.
  - 1. Pride is a disordered love that excessively focuses on myself
    - a. Pride is the posture that I am the center of the universe
    - b. Sin as a state of being is the ultimate black hole of the spirit, the implosion of an inwardly gravitating self. The black hole is pride. - Gerard Reed

- c. Like a black hole, pride sucks everything into itself, placing its desires, wants, and needs above everything else
  - d. If left unchecked, like a black hole pride will destroy everything around it in the attempt to fill itself
  - e. This is even true in some forms of self-degradation and self-condemnation - anything to keep the focus on self!
2. Pride seeks to exalt myself above God and His will
- a. At its core essence, pride wants to be God
  - b. Other sins lead the sinner further away from God, but pride is particularly heinous in that it attempts to elevate the sinner above God. - Jason Meyer, *Killjoys*
  - c. Rather than glorifying God and enjoying Him, pride seeks to glorify and enjoy itself
  - d. Pride refuses to submit to God's will, but tries to establish and enforce its own will as supreme
  - e. Pride is personified in Satan in *Paradise Lost* - I would rather reign in hell than serve in heaven
  - f. Peter Kreeft - the song in hell is "I Did It My Way"
3. Pride refuses to accept my God given limitations
- a. At its core essence, pride wants to be God - and therefore it must be unlimited
  - b. Pride rails against our creaturely limitations
  - c. This is why pride so often feeds into the other vices - we envy those with gifts greater than our own; we rage against our limitations; we crave that which we think we should possess but do not

4. Pride refuses to confess my failures
- a. Nothing shows we are not God like sin and failure
  - b. Pride motivated Adam to blame Eve (and ultimately God) rather than simply confess his sin
  - c. Pride caused king Saul to claim he had not sinned in the face of God's Word of rebuke for his sin
  - d. Pride will cause us to do virtually anything to hide or excuse our sin and avoid open, simple confession

- B. Pride seeks identity and joy in self rather than God  
I seek to find my identity in myself, thinking I can find fulfillment apart from God.
1. We are created in God's image, and our true identity is found in being as much like God as a creature can be
  2. Our joy is found in submission to God and His will - but pride tries to find its identity and joy in self rather than God
  3. Sometimes pride finds our identity in what others think of us - rather than what God declares of us
    - a. How many Facebook likes can I get?
    - b. What do other people think about me?
- C. Pride leads to other sins - a few examples
1. Pride is often the source of many other root vices
  2. Degrade others in speech or action to exalt myself
  3. Use others rather than view them as God's image - pride takes rather than gives
  4. Sexual abuse - #metoo - just use people

5. Lie to maintain a false image of who I am, or to avoid confessing my sin (hypocrisy)
6. Love of novelties - need for the latest tech, biggest car, etc. - to make me stand out (conspicuous consumption)
7. Brag and boast about myself or a relation to make others focus on me

## IV. Applying the Word

### A. We must embrace the opposing virtue of humility

But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: “God opposes the **proud** but gives grace to the **humble**.”<sup>7</sup> Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you...<sup>10</sup> Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up. James 4:6–7,10

1. Humility is the opposing virtue (same in 1 Peter 5)
2. This is why Bernard of Clairvaux said the four cardinal virtues were “Humility, humility, humility, and humility!”
3. A proper understanding of humility
  - a. Humility begins with less of a self focus and more focus on God and others
    1. “Humility is not thinking less of yourself, it’s thinking of yourself less.” - CS Lewis
    2. Because pride is an excessive self-focus, humility is the practice of fixing our gaze on something other than self
    3. Pride is a worshipful gaze in the mirror, while humility is the joyful gaze at God and others
  - b. Humility is the willingness to confess our sins to God and others

1. Humility is the ability to acknowledge and confess our sins to God

Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.<sup>11</sup> 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.’<sup>12</sup> I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’<sup>13</sup> “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.’<sup>14</sup> “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.” Luke 18:10–14

- a) Humility openly confesses its sin to God
- b) Pride tries to justify itself, but humility casts itself on the mercy of God

2. Humility is the willingness to confess sins to others
 

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. James 5:16

  - a) Humility openly confesses its sin to other people
  - b) This is especially important if we have sinned against them
  - c) It also openly acknowledges that we need them

### B. Practices of Resistance

#### 1. Confession

##### a. Of sin

1. This includes direct confession to God - at the moment, in song, prayer, and at the Table
2. Confession to other humans
  - a) Mandatory if we sinned against them - lots of chance to practice this in family, and also in friendships
  - b) Also a good practice - accountability partners, or spiritual friends or mentors

- c) This is even more humbling than confessing directly to God
- 4. Caution - do not create a problem for the other person via your confession
- 5. Over the next week - confess specific sins to another human
- b. Confession of weaknesses, needs & fears with others for prayer
  - 1. Not necessarily sin - but our own weaknesses
  - 2. This is humbling - we admit we need help
  - 3. Over the next week - rather than displaying your strength, tell a person of a specific weakness, need or fear
- c. Confession is helpful to root out pride - especially in those who most deeply value their "privacy"

## 2. Silence

- a. Monks sometimes do absolute silence - serve without saying a word
- b. For most of us - try a day or week where you do not bring yourself or your accomplishments up at all
- c. Focus on listening to others - rather than waiting to reply
- d. Silence may be more helpful for those who like to talk and share about their lives

## 3. Service

- a. Like Jesus washing the disciples feet, we humble ourselves by serving others

- b. Especially serving others who can not repay us in any way
- c. And then practice silence - rather than broadcasting to others all we did

## C. The Table of Confession

1. At the Table we will practice the humility of confession
2. We will have a corporate prayer of confession
3. As you receive the elements, we will have silence to let God reveal sin we need to confess - perhaps some form of pride; perhaps something else flowing from pride; or a sin for which we are deeply sorry
4. At that point, give a personal confession of the specific sin - humbling ourselves to name the sin to God and ask forgiveness
5. Then we will also profess that in Christ we are forgiven!

### Pride

Proverbs 16:18  
 February 11, 2018  
 Communion  
 Psalm 79:9

Teaching keywords: Lent; humility and pride; sin; character; sanctification; confession and repentance

May God our Savior help us for the glory of His Name; may he deliver us and forgive our sins for His Name's sake, through Jesus Christ our Lord and Master. Amen. (Psalm 79:9)

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

Let us humbly confess our sins to Almighty God

Almighty and most merciful Father,  
we have erred and strayed from Your ways like lost sheep.  
We have followed too much  
    the devices and desires of our own hearts.  
We have offended against Your holy laws.

We have left undone  
    those things which we ought to have done,  
and we have done those things  
    which we ought not to have done;  
and apart from Your grace, there is no health in us.

O Lord, have mercy upon us.  
Spare all those who confess their faults.  
Restore all those who are repentant,  
according to Your promises declared to all people  
in Christ Jesus our Lord;

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