

Life on Life 301 – Moving From Pride to Humility Class Eleven - July 18, 2021

With humility of mind, regard one another as more important than yourself. (Phil. 2:3)

I. Introduction

A. **I am indebted to Stuart Scott** (Author of booklet, *From Pride to Humility*) who taught a workshop on this topic in **Track Three** of the ACBC counseling training conference. Most of what I teach will come directly from that talk. It's available in our office as a CD.

B. Preview

It's been said that the first sin was pride – Lucifer lifting himself up to be equal with God (Isaiah 14:12-14; Ezekiel 28:12-16). It is also said that pride is at the core of all sin because the first sin of mankind required the pride of going against God's command, and because they did it to eat a fruit that was said by the serpent to be "desirable to make one wise." We again see this reflected in Proverbs 6:16, where God says there are seven things He particularly hates. The first on the list was "haughty (proud) eyes." As Stuart Scott says, *God hates pride because it is His rival.*

When we counsel a man who continually leads his marriage into repeated, open conflict, pride is there. To be sure, the "lusts" of James 4:1-5 are there, too. But remember the passage tells us, "God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble." (v. 6) Why would He tell us that except that "the lusts which wage war in our members" (v. 2) which "caused the conflicts" (v. 1) refer to things that we think we must have, deserve and have the right to require of others? *That* is the very character of pride. What is the pride such a man demonstrates? _____

When we counsel a woman who is depressed (not sad, but depressed) because her husband is inattentive and preoccupied with his work and his hobbies, we are dealing with pride. To be sure, the husband probably is selfish, immature and failing God's command to love his wife as Christ does the church. But if the woman has set in her heart as her source of confidence that he will attend her, show her how much she means to him, and focus on her as he did when they were dating, it is pride. But do we as biblical counselors see the pride? Do we see how to help them repent of it? What pride does she demonstrate? _____

If we are to help these ordinary situations that come up commonly in the Christian life, we need to equip each other to see pride and move → humility.

III. Moving from **Pride to Humility** is a primary **Hinge** to Practical Christianity

[Note from John: *We will not go through all these notes in class. You will profit by reading it, thinking through it and using it in some way as a base for instruction with those you counsel on this issue. In class, we will hit the "high water" marks of the notes.*]

People often ask how to get a truth from the head to their heart. **It always involves humility.** There's an old saying that the greatest distance is the distance from the head to the heart. Obviously it is only 18 inches, but many people almost never travel that path and the two greatest obstacles are people refusing to accept pain and refusing to see and address pride.

- A. Scott points out that several times in the Bible, after the Holy Spirit inspires the human writer to lay down some significant “indicative” or “positional” truth we need to know about God and about ourselves, he then switches to significant “practical” truth and application. Example: Romans 1-11 – indicative/positional emphasis Romans 12-16 – practical emphasis Ephesians 1-3 – indicative/positional emphasis Ephesians 4-6 – practical emphasis Colossians 1-3:5 – indicative/positional emphasis Colossians 3:6-4:18 – practical emphasis
- B. **The hinge between the two is frequently (*nearly always?*) humility.**
1. “Indicative” or “positional” truth refers to foundational, theological statements of fact about God and His relationship with us that we need to “know” more than “do”. “Indicative” in this use refers to doctrinal statements – not commands, per se, and not exhortations or warnings. Rather, statements of how things are (e.g., *God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world*, Ephesians 1:4). “Positional” refers to things that are true of us because we have been placed into Christ. It often refers to things that God has stated as true even before they are true in practice (e.g., *We have been buried with [Christ] through baptism into death so that as Christ was raised,... we might walk in newness of life*).
 2. “Practical” truth refers to things we are to do. In involves commands, warnings, exhortations, etc. to action (e.g., *Let no unwholesome word proceed out of your mouth*).
- C. Romans 12
1. Romans 1-11 is widely accepted as the longest and most thorough doctrinal instruction in the whole Bible. It is predominantly “indicative”, and carries many of the most significant teachings we have about God, about sin, about the nature of saving faith, about our positional identity with Christ as new creatures, about the power and means of overcoming sin, about Israel and the Church and the sovereign hand of God.
 2. Romans 12-16 is widely accepted as the “practical” part of the book. It instructs us on how to relate with others in the church and out of it, how to exercise our gifts, and many other practical aspects of the Christian life.
 3. Notice the hinge between the “doctrinal, positional, indicative” instruction and the more practical part of the book.
 - v. 1 – *Therefore, I urge you brethren, by the mercies of God, (positional, based on ch. 1-11), to present your bodies a living, holy sacrifice (requires humility) which is acceptable to the Lord* (evaluating your acceptability before God always humbles us).
 - v. 2 – *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind* (requires admitting that your way of thinking isn’t right, and that it is a process of being renewed in the mind, which requires humility)
 - v. 3 – *For through the grace given to me* (humble when he exhorts, because he shows that his authority to instruct is not his, but was by grace) *I say to everyone among you to not think more highly of yourself than you ought to think* (here he addresses the inborn tendency in “everyone of us” to think more highly of ourselves than is proper).
 4. God shows us that right from the beginning, when He moves to practical commands, (a) they depend on all the preceding positional truth and (b) the successful attempt to carry out the commands will come only through the channel of humility.

D. Ephesians 4

1. Much like Romans chapters 1-11, Ephesians 1-3 is famous for its doctrinal instruction, its positional truth and its powerful presentation of the nature of God, the church and believers within it. In it, we encounter so many memorable statements of truth.
1:5 – *He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ*
1:7 – *In Him, we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness...*
1:13-14 – *You were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, ... given as a pledge*
2:8-9 – *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, ...*
3:6 – *Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body*
2. Similarly to Romans 12-16, Ephesians 4-6 is virtually all “practical” instruction. In it, we learn how to relate to one another, how to manage our speech, how to relate in church and in marriage and in parenting, and specific things we need to know and do to remain victorious in the spiritual battle all Christians are in. We read such things as:
4:25 – *Speak the truth each one of you with his neighbor*
4:26 – *Be angry, and sin not*
4:27 – *Do not let the sun go down on your anger*
4:32 – *Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other as God forgave you*
3. But again, notice the HINGE between the doctrinal chapters 1-3 and the practical 4-6.
4:1 – *Therefore (on the basis of the positional truths) I, the prisoner of the Lord*
Notice how Paul does not stress apostolic authority but the humble position of prisoner
4:2 – *With all humility, gentleness and patience, showing forbearance to one another in love* Notice how before he exhorts, Paul tells them the attitude that will have to prevail if the things he is about to command are going to be done. Humble. Gentle. Patient.
4:3 – *Diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit* He tells them that before anything gets done, it will have to be done for the right reason – the unity of the Body. It is not about “me” and my preferences, but “God” and His preferences.
4:4-6 – *There is one body, and one Spirit... one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God*
Here Paul directs his readers to remember that before “I” do anything as a Christian, “I” better realize that the only “I am” that is important is the “I am” for whom the church exists. When the One God, One Lord, One Spirit comes into view, we are humbled.

E. Philippians 2

1. Paul begins this book with an emphasis on the gospel being preached, whatever the motive, and on the fact that for him, life is Christ. There is nothing else for him.
2. When he begins his instruction to the believers in Philippi about how they should live, he starts in 1:27 with a “theme” statement.
1:27 – *Conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel*
3. Then, to amplify what he means, he starts the next chapter as follows:
2:3 – *Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit*
2:3 – *With humility of mind, consider others as more important than yourself*
2:5 – *Have this attitude in you which was also in Christ Jesus*
2:6 – *Who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped*
2:7 – *But emptied Himself, taking on the form of a bond-servant*
4. These are woven together without comment because they all declare the same truth. If Jesus regarded Himself a bond-servant, how much more must we?

IV. What Does the Bible Say About Pride and Humility?

Our essential goal is to move from a self-focused perspective to a Christ-honoring one, from a "what do I want" focus to a "what does God want and what do others need" focus.

A. Definitions

1. Pride – (self-worship; putting ourselves in God’s place)
 - a. Six terms used in the Old Testament – like proud, exalted, high, lifted up
 - b. Two word groups used in the New Testament –
 - (1) One group is of words like lofty, proud and arrogant (similar to Old Testament)
 - (2) Second group are cognates of a word “smoky” or “cloudy,” probably referring to not seeing clearly
 - c. We need to make sure not to equate pride with boasting. **Boasting** is from pride, but pride shows up in SO MANY MORE ways that we often miss seeing our pride.
2. Humility (seeing ourselves accurately as compared with the Creator)
 - a. Old Testament are words like bow low, crouched down, crushed
 - b. New Testament words – two groups
 - (1) Gentle, serving, not bristly
 - (2) Servile, menial, ‘washing feet’

B. Biblical Examples

1. Pride
 - a. Satan – contradicts God (Genesis 3:4) [Anyone who contradicts God is proud]
 - b. Uzziah 2 Chron 26:16 – *when he became strong, his heart acted corruptly...*
 - c. Nebuchadnezzar – Daniel 4 on his roof, *I did it for my glory*
 - d. Belshazzar – Daniel 5 *you have not humbled your heart but have exalted yourself*
 - e. Pharisee in Luke 18:9-14 – prayed to himself, superior
 - f. Herod - Acts 12 “the voice of a god” (Very possibly was not flattery)
 - g. Diotrefes – 3 John 9 – *Loves to be first among them*
 - h. Deut. 8:11 *Beware you do not forget the Lord your God by not keeping His commandments... otherwise, your heart will become proud and you will forget*
 - i. Proverbs 16:5 – *Everyone proud in their heart is an abomination to the Lord*
 - j. Proverbs 16:18 – *Pride goes before destruction*
 - k. Job 13:3 – *But I would speak to the Almighty and I desire to argue with God*
2. Humility
 - a. Abraham preferred Lot on the giving of land
 - b. Moses said to be the most humble man (Numbers 12:3)
 - c. John the Baptist – *may He increase and I decrease*
 - d. Mary – *behold the bondservant of the Lord*
 - e. Tax collector in Luke 18:9-14 – *be merciful to me, the sinner*
 - f. Paul - Acts 20 *servant of the Lord with humility and tears* (frequently, prisoner)
 - g. We are commanded to *put on humility* (Col. 3:12)
 - h. Christ – All the gospels, plus Phil 2:3-11
 - i. Romans 12:3 - *Do not think too highly of yourself*
 - j. Luke 7:6 – Centurion – *Lord, I am not worthy for you to come...*
 - k. Romans 11:36 – *For from Him, and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever.*
 - l. Daniel 4:37 – *I praise and honor and exalt the King of heaven for all His works are true and His ways are just and He is able to humble those who walk in pride.*

- C. Lifestyle Examples (Again, from Stuart Scott – you can find these online to reprint)
1. Pride
 - a. Complain against God
 - b. Lack of gratitude (deserve better)
 - c. Most of our anger (not getting what I want)... why is everyone else on the highway?
 - d. Seeing yourself as better than others
 - e. Inflated ideas about your ability
 - f. Focused on your lack of abilities
 - g. Perfectionism – Christ is perfect; you are not (Called to be faithful, not perfect)....
 - h. Talking too much or talking too much about yourself
 - i. Seeking independence or control (designed to be dependent and interdependent)
 - j. Consumed with what others think – Huge source of pride
 - k. Being devastated by criticism
 - l. Unteachable, sarcastic, lowering others
 - m. Not servants and lack of compassion
 - n. Defensiveness and blameshifting
 - o. Lack of admitting when you are wrong or slow to ask for forgiveness
 - p. Lack of steadfast, humble prayer
 - q. Being disrespectful of authority or resisting authority
 - r. Voicing preferences when not asked
 - s. Mixing up specks and logs
 - t. Being impatient and irritable
 - u. Jealousy (fear of losing something) and envy (I should have that)
 - v. Using other people
 - w. Covering up things we have done or failed to do
 - x. Using attention-getting tactics
 - y. Not having close relationships
 2. Humility
 - a. Worshiping God
 - b. Giving thanks to Him in all things
 - c. Living 2 Cor. 5:9 – to please Him
 - d. Recognizing and trusting God and His promises
 - e. Overwhelmed at God's grace
 - f. Gentle and patient
 - g. Good listener
 - h. One who prays without ceasing
 - i. Teachable spirit
 - j. Quick to admit wrong and acknowledge sin
 - k. Talk to people for their good
 - l. Genuinely glad for others
 3. Additional Considerations
 - a. Realize the person with “low self-esteem” also suffers from pride even though it does not present itself the same way as arrogance does.
 - b. With pride, it is not an issue of “if we have it” but of “where and how does it show?”
 - c. Key to identifying it is who we are focused on – ourselves or the Lord and others. If we are focused on our weakness or our ability or our pain, it is a sign of pride.

- V. How Do We Defeat* Pride?** (**That is, what practical things reduce its influence?**)
- A. Linger longer on the pride. After all, *God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble.* Normally we want to run from it quickly because we do not want to see it. Instead, hover on it. See it. See when it shows. Don't think you will quickly defeat it. Take time to see how deeply woven it is into our flesh. It will not go away until our new bodies.
Great example: Job and God beginning in chapter 38. When Job is convicted of the sin of finding fault with God in chapters 10-34 (after having begun very well), and repents in chapter 40, God dives in even harder.
Principle from Scott: *When people shut up, it does not mean they are broken in conviction.* (As Scott and others have pointed out, Randy Patton does the same thing that God did with Job when he was working with "Trey" in week #2 and Trey had not done his homework. He was "too busy." Randy accepted the answer on its face, and then asked about his week, and what the things were that got in the way of the priority of study and growth. What about Tuesday night? Uh, huh. And Wednesday? What about Thursday? On through the week.)
 - B. Mediate on portions of the scripture that bring you face to face with humility
 Psalm 99
 Psalm 73
 1 Cor. 10:1-13
 Phil. 2:1-11
 Others
 - C. Pray for God to search your heart and show you where this sin may be hurting you and hurting His desired work in and through you (See Psalm 139:23-24).
 - D. Use the lists Stuart Scott has on identifying pride and humility (See page five for partial list and look online for the complete lists).
 - E. Read the Old Testament often. It shows so many examples of pride and need for humility.
 - F. Study the person of Jesus in the gospels. Humility personified.
 - G. *Invite* others to let you know when you come across as proud.
 - H. Spend time in worship – personal worship especially.
 - I. Practice the one another commands (He moves us away from ourselves to others)
 - J. Remember this is accomplished by the Holy Spirit – you can't do it yourself. (Phil. 2:12-13)

VI. Discussion

Homework Discussion

You were asked to **read Romans 13 and James 4:1-10 and to record** for the purpose of sharing your answers to the following questions.

1. Based on these passages, what roles does pride play in our ongoing sin?
2. What are some of **the indications in these two passages** of how humility will directly lead to conquering some of our greatest struggles?
3. What **implications are here for you when you counsel** others?