

ACCIDENTAL
PHARISEES

Week 3 – Pride
When Comparison Becomes Arrogance

We Have a Very High Opinion of Ourselves

- Findings of the **2013 college board** (through surveys of millions of high school seniors):
 - **70%** rated themselves above average (**only 2% as below average**).
 - **60%** rated themselves above average in “athletic ability” (**6% said below**)

We Have a Very High Opinion of Ourselves

- *In their ability to **get along with others**:*
 - ***60%** rated themselves above average*
 - ***60%** rated themselves in the top 10%*
 - ***25%** saw themselves in top 1%*
 - ***0%** rated themselves below average*

Pride in Scripture: The Pharisee and the Tax Collector



*⁹He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: ¹⁰Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: **‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers,***

***or even like this tax collector.** ¹²I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’ ¹³But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, **‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’** ¹⁴I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. **For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.**” – Luke 18:9-14 ESV*

Humble or Humbled? ¹

*Is humility a virtue that you can **cultivate**?*

or

*Is humility a by-product brought about by **life's circumstances**?*

*“If anyone would like to acquire humility, I can, I think, tell him the first step. **The first step is to realize that one is proud.** And a biggish step, too. At least, nothing whatever can be done before it.”*

– C. S. Lewis

¹ From *Gentle & Lowly* by Dane Ortlund, page 20

Great Quotes

*“Humility is **not thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less.** Humility is thinking more of others. **Humble people are so focused on serving others,** they don’t think of themselves.”*

– Rick Warren, The Purpose Driven Life

Ultimate Example of Humility

- In God's kingdom, it is the **servant** who is **greatest** and we are commanded to look out for the interest of others – **not our interests.**



¹³Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.

⁴Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” – Philippians 2:3-8

God's View of Pride

"⁶God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble." – James 4:6

"⁵all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble." – 1 Peter 5:5

"¹³The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverted mouth, I hate." – Proverbs 8:13

"⁵Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord; assuredly, he will not be unpunished." – Proverbs 16:5

"²³A man's pride will bring him low, but a humble spirit will obtain honor." – Proverbs 29:23

Hidden Forms of Pride

- Our culture is consumed with **Self-Esteem**.
 - Do you agree or disagree?
- How are **Pride** and **Self-Esteem** related?
 - Are they the **same**?
 - Are they **different**?
 - How does Scripture see them?



Great Quotes

*“Low self-esteem is merely
thwarted pride.”*

– Tim Chester, You Can Change

Hidden Forms of Pride

- One of the Bible's major aims is to **correct** man's high view of himself. Jesus taught the **virtue of humility** (Luke 18:14), and the importance of **self-denial**, rather than **self-love** (Matthew 16:24).

God's Word	Self Esteem Advocates
<i>Love God & others (Matt 22:37)</i>	<i>Love yourself</i>
<i>Build up others (Heb 10:24,25)</i>	<i>Build your self-esteem</i>
<i>None is righteous (Rom 3:23)</i>	<i>You are good</i>
<i>Heart is deceitful (Jer 17:9)</i>	<i>Believe in yourself</i>
<i>Put others first (Phip 2:1-4)</i>	<i>Put yourself first</i>
<i>Be humble (Rom 12:3)</i>	<i>Think highly of yourself</i>
<i>We are sinners (Rom 3:10-11)</i>	<i>You are of great value</i>
<i>Walk in the Spirit (Gal 5:16)</i>	<i>Do what you want to do</i>
<i>Deny yourself (Matt 16:24-26)</i>	<i>Find yourself</i>
<i>Put confidence in God (Phip 4:13)</i>	<i>Have self-confidence</i>

"Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips." – Proverbs 27:2

**"Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor."
– 1 Corinthians 10:24**

Hidden Forms of Pride

*“Hard work, true excellence, good behavior, and self-control have all been sacrificed at the altar of self-esteem. Self-esteemism is based on an unbiblical perspective. It is diametrically opposed to the truth of human depravity. Moreover, while Scripture commends self-control as a fruit of the Spirit, **the Bible has nothing positive to say about self-esteem, self-love, or any other variety of self-centeredness.**” – John MacArthur*

*“**At the core of the Christian life is death to self, a continual relinquishment of pride and rebellion, and a full surrender to Jesus Christ.**” – Dennis Rainey*

Hidden Forms of Pride

“Nowhere does the Bible instruct you to love yourself. The Bible teaches in many places the very opposite: You are to deny yourself (Matthew 10:39, 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23; John 12:25-26; Romans 8:13; Colossians 3:5; Titus 2:12).” – Lou Priolo

“The promises of God toward the truly humble are almost breathtaking. The infinitely high and lofty One who lives forever promises to dwell with them, to esteem them, to give them grace, to lift them up, and to exalt them ... **humility opens the way to all other godly character traits.** It is the soil in which the other traits of the fruit of the Spirit grow.” – Jerry Bridges

God's View of Humility

*"¹Thus says the LORD: 'Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest? ²All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the LORD. **But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.**'"* – Isaiah 66:1-2

*"²³ Thus says the LORD: 'Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, ²⁴ **but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth.** For in these things I delight, declares the LORD.'" – Jeremiah 9:23-24*

God's View of Humility

*“He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, **and to walk humbly with your God?**” – Micah 6:8*

Humility. We admire it in others, yet we all struggle to live it out in our own lives.

– Author Unknown

The Curse of Comparison

- Unfortunately, many of us fail to grasp how dangerous pride is.

¹⁶There are **six things** that **the Lord hates**,
seven that are an abomination to him:

¹⁷**haughty eyes**, a lying tongue,
and hands that shed innocent blood,

¹⁸a heart that devises wicked plans,
feet that make haste to run to evil,

¹⁹a false witness who breathes out lies,
and one who sows discord among brothers.”

– Proverbs 6:16-19



The Curse of Comparison

Haughty eyes, literally “eyes of loftiness”.

*According to Merriam-Webster, haughty means: “**blatantly and disdainfully proud**: having or showing an **attitude** of **superiority** and **contempt** for people or things perceived to be inferior.”*

The Curse of Comparison – It Gets All of Us

*“³³And they came to Capernaum. And when he was in the house he asked them, ‘What were you discussing on the way?’ ³⁴But they kept silent, for on the way they had **argued** with one another about **who was the greatest**. ³⁵And he sat down and called the twelve. And he said to them, ‘If anyone would be first, **he must be last of all and servant of all.**’”*

– Mark 9:33-35



The Curse of Comparison

- *When the Bible says someone has haughty eyes, it means that they consider themselves above others.*

*“Our spiritual comparisons are incredibly **biased**. We have an amazing ability to compare things in a way that causes **us to come out on top**. And when we come out on top, it’s hard not to **look down** on people who don’t measure up.”*

– Larry Osbourne

The Curse of Comparison

- *Areas of Comparison in the Christian Life:*

Spiritual disciplines (Luke 18:12)

Bible knowledge (John 5:39)

Giving (Matthew 6:3)

Service (Luke 7:7-10)

Spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:7)

Parenting

Popularity at church / In crowd

Praying publicly (Matthew 6:6)

Others?

Pride's Unholy Trinity

“Some of the most meticulously obedient folks I’ve known have also been some of the most prideful.”

– Larry Osbourne

Pride's Unholy Trinity

- **Log-eye disease** – easy to explain but hard to overcome. *It's our natural tendency to see the speck in someone else's eye while being oblivious to the log in our own eye.*

*“¹Judge not, that you be not judged. ²For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. ³Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? ⁴Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there is the log in your own eye? ⁵You hypocrite, **first take the log out of your own eye,** and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.” – Matthew 7:1-5 ESV*



Pride's Unholy Trinity

- ***Self-deception*** – *most of us have a rather self-inflated view of ourselves. When it comes to evaluating our spiritual scorecard, most of us cheat.*

*“We don’t believe we are **below-average** in important areas of life. We think we are at or **near the top** in everything that matters.”*

– Larry Osbourne

Pride's Unholy Trinity

- ***Comparison*** – *We judge others by their actions but ourselves by our intentions. All we see is the outside and we don't know backgrounds.*

“The problem with spiritual comparisons is that we can not read hearts. We don't know if someone has come a long way or barely grown.”

– Larry Osbourne

Overcoming Pride

- Obedience is important but it does not impress God.



*“⁷Will any one of you who has a servant plowing or keeping sheep say to him when he has come in from the field, ‘**Come at once and recline at table**’? ⁸Will he not rather say to him, ‘Prepare supper for me, and dress properly, and serve me while I eat and drink, and afterward you will eat and drink’? ⁹**Does***

***he thank the servant because he did what was commanded?** ¹⁰So you also, **when you have done all that you were commanded, say, ‘We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.’”** –*

Luke 17:7-10 ESV

Overcoming Pride

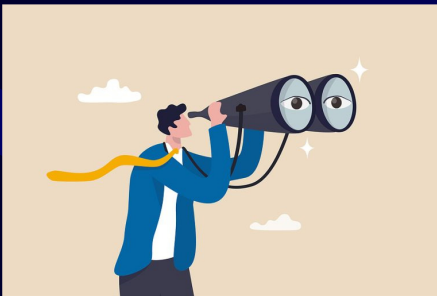
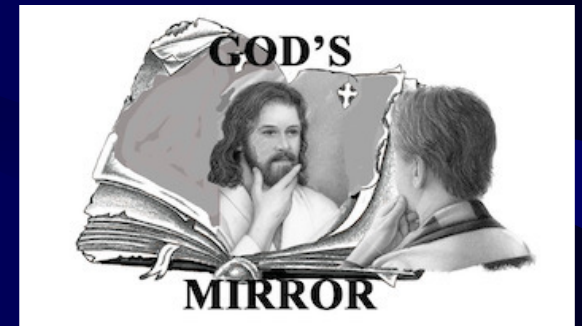
*“So why is it that so many of us find **pride in superior obedience**? I think it’s because we misunderstand God’s commands. We think of them as **difficult** and **burdensome**. We hear sermons and read passages about counting the cost, dying to self, and leaving all behind, and we assume that God’s commands are designed to separate those of us who have what it takes to become a **true disciple** from those who don’t.”*

– Larry Osbourne

Overcoming Pride

- Scripture is supposed to be used like a mirror. It's meant to show us who God is, what He wants, and how we measure up.

"²²But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. ²³For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. ²⁴For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. ²⁵But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing." – James 1:22-25



Overcoming Pride

- *We forget that pride and a lack of love nullifies our knowledge.*

“The more we know the more we are likely to look down on people who don’t know what we know.”

– Larry Osbourne

Overcoming Pride

- *We are supposed to be a light on a hill – not a flash light in the eyes.*

*¹⁴You are the light of the world. **A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.***

*¹⁵Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶**In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.**” – Matthew 5:14-16*



Overcoming Pride

- *Scripture to remember and help us overcome pride:*

“²⁹The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.” – Deuteronomy 29:29

***“⁸For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD.***

***⁹For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts.” – Isaiah 55:8-9***

Application Questions

- 1. How would you advise someone who asked you “What can I do to avoid ‘log-eye’ disease”?*
- 2. Do you think most people are inclined to use the Bible as a mirror, or as a pair of binoculars?*

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Next Week – Exclusivity