

Respectable Sins

Pride ~ The Sin that Lurks Behind So Many Other Sins

Grace Fellowship Church, Pastor Brad Bigney, March 27, 2011

“The sin of pride carries with it God's swiftest and most severe judgment. It blinds you to other sins in your life and hinders you from repenting of them. Pride is the ‘Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome’ or the (AIDS) of the soul. When a person dies as a result of acquiring AIDS, he doesn't really die of AIDS rather, he dies of an AIDS-complicated illness like pneumonia, tuberculosis, or meningitis. Not unlike a cataract, the AIDS virus somehow blinds the eyes of its victim's bodily defense system. This prevents his auto immune system from seeing and consequently destroying those deadly viruses and bacteria that ultimately kills him.

Like AIDS, pride blinds you not only to itself, but to every other sin tucked away in the recesses of your heart and life. It causes you to hate correction and reproof. It hides your sin from you, it justifies your sin, it excuses your sin, and it keeps you from repenting of your sin. It deceives you into thinking that you're spiritually well when, in fact, you have deadly cancer and are in desperate need...” *The Complete Husband*, Lou Priolo, p. 21-22

I. You Can Adopt Such a Hyper-Hatred for Sin that You Take On a Sense of Moral Superiority to Everyone Else Around You!

Luke 18:9-14

To the degree that you've bought into your own righteousness is the degree to which you'll fail to pursue Christ and His grace... and fail to love other people around you.

“Our best duties are as so many splendid sins. Before you can speak peace to your heart you must not only be sick of your original and actual sin, but you must be made sick of your righteousness, of all your duties and performances. There must be a deep conviction before you can be brought out of your self-righteousness; it is the last idol taken out of your heart. The pride of our heart will not let us submit to the righteousness of Jesus Christ.” **George Whitefield**

II. You Can be Guilty of Defending and Loving Sound Doctrine So Much that it Starts to Eclipse Your Love for the God of that Doctrine that Was Designed to Keep You Humble

If you care about doctrine at all, you're going to be susceptible to this form of pride.

I Corinthians 8:1-9

Never lose sight of the fact that while God calls us to be changing and growing and learning His Word, He still WARNS us that knowledge puffs up!

“Mr. Bookworm is smart, serious about his faith, and genuinely wants to serve the Lord. But he's not all that mature. In terms of knowledge, he's playing in the Major Leagues, but as far as wisdom he's batting below .200. He doesn't have gross sins, just some annoying ones. On the truth-grace scale, he's all truth. He's obnoxious, bordering on abrasive. He lacks all sense of proportion... To make matters worse, Mr. Bookworm talks too much. He sees every conversation as a forensics match waiting to happen. He's opinionated. He doesn't ask questions. People are scared of him and he doesn't know why... “A theologically astute, immature Christian is like a five year old flying an Apache helicopter. Here's this massive

weapon; it can destroy arguments and defend against heresy. It can soar to the heavens and take in glorious sights no one at sea-level will ever witness. This theological helicopter is good for search and rescue, just as good for seek and destroy. Every congregational army would be thrilled with such a vehicle. It's fast. It's furious. It's impressive. But it's also dangerous. And with a five-year old behind the wheel (or whatever they have in choppers), some people are going to get hurt. It's not wrong for a little kid to have a helicopter, but it would be nice if he grew up and took some flying lessons before taking the thing out for a spin." **A Tale of Two Corners: Knowledge and Maturity**, Kevin DeYoung, February 2011 issue of "Tabletalk" Magazine

Because we know we're finite and sinful, we should hold our doctrinal convictions with humility. We should have a 'Humble Orthodoxy.'

III. You Might Have Tasted Success to the Point that You Still Say 'Hasn't God Blessed Us?' But You Really Think You Did It

Proverbs 13:4 "The soul of the sluggard craves and gets nothing. While the soul of the diligent is richly supplied."

There is a connection between hard work and success, but the same Bible that teaches hard work also teaches that any success you have still falls squarely under the sovereignty of God! God gave you those circumstances leading to your success!

Psalms 75:4-7 "I said to the boastful, 'Do not deal boastfully'... For exaltation comes neither from the east nor from the west nor from the south. But God is the Judge: He puts down one, and exalts another."

Deuteronomy 8:11-18 "¹¹ Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments, His judgments, and His statutes which I command you today, ¹² lest—when you have eaten and are full, and have built beautiful houses and dwell in them; ¹³ and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold are multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied; ¹⁴ when your heart is lifted up, and you forget the LORD your God... ¹⁷ then you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth.' ¹⁸ And you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth..."

I Corinthians 4:7 "Who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If you then received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?"

You don't have anything that didn't ultimately come to you as a gift from God!

IV. You Better Get in Place in Your Life Some Specific Habits that Will Keep You Attacking Pride – and Cultivating Humility

There has to be purposeful **APPLICATION** if there's ever going to be genuine **TRANSFORMATION**. We want there to be lasting change.

John Stott, "At every stage of our Christian development pride is our greatest enemy and humility our greatest friend."

Practical ways to attack pride and cultivate humility:

A. Study The Attributes Of God

Job 26:7-14 “He stretches out the north over empty space; He hangs the earth on nothing. He binds up the water in His thick clouds, yet the clouds are not broken under it. He covers the face of His throne, and spreads His cloud over it. He drew a circular horizon on the face of the waters... indeed these are the mere edges of his ways, and how small a whisper we hear of Him! But the thunder of His power who can understand?”

I Timothy 1:17 “Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever, amen.”

These are choice incommunicable attributes. God is eternal, immortal, invisible, independent! He doesn't need us, but we can't live one second without Him!

“The grand difference between a human being and a supreme being is precisely this. Apart from God I cannot exist. Apart from me God does exist. God does not need me in order for Him to be. I do need God in order for me to be... we are dependent, we are fragile... no human being has the power of being within himself. Life is lived between two hospitals. We need support system from birth to death in order to sustain life. We are like flowers that bloom and then wither and fade, and this is how we differ from God. God does not wither. God does not fade. God is not fragile.” **R.C. Sproul**

The more aware we become of the infinite **distance** between us and God the more **humility** we'll EXPERIENCE and EXPRESS.

Recommended reading: *Knowledge of the Holy* by A.W. Tozer, *Attributes of God* by A.W. Pink, *Knowing God* by J.I. Packer, or *Pleasures of God* by John Piper

B. Every Day Survey the Wondrous Cross on Which the Prince of Glory Died

“Nothing in history or in the universe cuts us down to size like the cross. All of us have inflated views of ourselves...until we have visited a place called Calvary. It is there, at the foot of the cross that we shrink to our true size.” John Stott, *The Message of Galatians* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVartisy, 1968), 179

I Cor. 1:18 “For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”

Philippians 2:5-11 v. 8 “And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God has also highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Isaiah 53:4-5, 10-11 “Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed... Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief, when You make His soul an offering for sin... He shall see the travail of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many.”

Recommended books: *The Cross of Chris* by John Stott, *Comforts from the Cross* by Elyse Fitzpatrick, and *The Cross Centered Life* by C.J. Mahaney

C. Consistently Practice the Spiritual Disciplines

Practicing the spiritual disciplines of Bible reading, prayer, Scripture memory makes a huge statement: You're saying, "God, I need You!"

"God, what I just did make absolutely no contribution to the basis of my justification, but what I just did is a statement of my need for you and dependence on You." **C.J. Mahaney**

D. Invite and Pursue Correction

- If there was something God wanted to tell you through your spouse or others, could He do it?

"Pride is a deep-rooted and a self-preserving sin; and therefore is harder to be killed and rooted up than other sins. It hinders the discovery of itself... It will not allow the sinner to see his pride when he is reproved; neither will it allow him to confess it if he sees it; nor... to loathe himself and forsake it... Even when he recognizes all of the evidences of pride in others, he will not see it in himself... If you would go about to cure him of this or any other fault, you shall feel that you are handling a wasp or an adder; yet when he is spitting the venom of pride against the reprove, he does not perceive that he is proud; this venom is a part of his nature and therefore is not felt as harmful or poisonous..." **Richard Baxter**

"And don't be put off when a friend's observations may not be 100% accurate. I've found that there's truth to be gleaned at times even from an enemy's critique. Humility doesn't demand mathematical precision from another's input; humility postures itself to receive God's grace from any avenue possible." **Humility – True Greatness**, by C.J. Mahaney. p. 134

Prov. 10:17 "He who keeps instruction is in the way of life, but he who refuses correction goes astray."

Prov. 15:31-32 "The ear that hears the rebukes of life will abide among the wise. He who disdains instruction despises his own soul, but he who heeds rebuke gets understanding."

Prov. 29:1 "He who is often rebuked, and hardens his neck, will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."

E. Recognize Your Relative Unimportance & Prepare to be Replaced

Whatever you have – and however God is using you – it has been temporarily delegated to you!

F. Cultivate the Habit of Gratitude

"Thankfulness is a soil in which pride does not easily grow." *Michael Ramsey*

"We also want to continue throughout the day expressing gratefulness for the innumerable manifestations of God's grace. It's as if God is placing sticky-notes in our lives as daily reminders of His presence and provision... how perceptive of them are you? An ungrateful person is a proud person." C.J. Mahaney, **Humility**, p. 71