

**Module** : Understanding, Accessing and Growing in GRACE

**Session 15** : God Resists the Proud For Pride is a Grace-Repellant

**Focus** : Understanding Pride and Why It Repels Grace

## ❖ THE ESSENCE AND ANATOMY OF PRIDE

In our study on humility, we observed the following: Humility is God-ward, in-ward and then man-ward; for one to be humble in reference to others relationally, one has to have the correct appraisal of yourself inwardly, something which is only possible if your posture toward God Himself is established in humility.

Similarly, if pride is opposite to humility, the following could be said of pride: Pride is God-ward, in-ward and then man-ward; for one to be proud in reference to others relationally, one has to have an inaccurate estimate of yourself inwardly, something which results if your posture toward God Himself is established negatively in independent pride.

### ▪ Greek Definitions (New Testament):

**Proud** = **Huperephanos**  
 = Derived from hupér = 'over, above', and phaínō = 'to shine, show'  
 = **Arrogant**<sup>1</sup>  
 = Used five times: Luke 1:51; Rom. 1:30; 2 Tim 3:2; James 4:6; 1 Pet.5:5

**Pride** = **Huperephania** = **haughtiness**<sup>2</sup> (akin to 'proud' above)  
 = Occurs once: Mark 7:22

**Pride** = **Tuphoo**  
 = To envelop with *smoke*, that is, (figuratively) to **inflate with self-conceit; high-minded**, be lifted up with pride, be proud<sup>3</sup>.  
 = To swell or inflate with pride<sup>4</sup>.  
 = Used 3 times: 1 Tim 3:6; 6:4; 2 Tim. 3:4

**Pride** = **Alazoneia**  
 = **Empty, braggart talk**.  
 = An **insolent and empty assurance**, which **trusts in its own power and resources** and shamefully despises and violates divine laws and human rights.  
 = An impious and empty presumption which trusts in the stability of earthy things<sup>5</sup>.  
 = Used twice: 1 John 2:16 'pride of life; James 4:16

## Modern-day Synonyms for Pride

Arrogance, high-mindedness, haughtiness,  
big-headedness; conceit; self-centredness;  
narcissism; egotism; self-adulation;  
snobbery; self-admiration; vainglory;  
self-importance; hubris

### ❖ DISOBEDIENCE = PRIDE

If true humility is expressed and evidenced in obedience, then pride's ultimate indicator is DISOBEDIENCE.

**Ps. 119:21** You rebuke the arrogant, the cursed, Who wander from Your commandments.

**Wander = sagah =** to stray, to go astray, to err, to deceive, to make a mistake, to reel; a misleading mentally (i.e., being a deceiver or the deceived); this word depicts moral corruption.<sup>6</sup>

The proud WANDER AWAY from God's principles. The proud rationalise a position in the mind which is opposed to God's view on a matter. Being deceived that they are right, in the error of their way, they progressively stray away from God's way, and so degenerate into greater moral corruption.

**Psalms 119:10** With all my heart I have sought You; Do not let me wander from Your commandments.

**Jer. 13:9-10a** Thus says the Lord, 'Just so will I destroy the pride of Judah and the great pride of Jerusalem. This wicked people, who refuse to listen to My words, who walk in the stubbornness of their hearts ...

## ❖ THE PROUD LOOK

Pride is especially linked to certain body parts: the heart, the mouth and the eyes. David expresses his sheer intolerance for one who has a 'proud look', i.e. a proud person who looks condescendingly upon others.

**Psalm 101:5** Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor, him I will destroy; No one who has a haughty look and an arrogant heart will I endure.

**Prov. 21:4** A haughty look, a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked are sin. (cf. Is. 3:16)

**Psalm 18:27** For You save an afflicted people, But haughty eyes You abase.

**Prov. 30:13** There is a kind - oh how lofty are his eyes! And his eyelids are raised in arrogance.

Pride includes conceit, self-righteousness and contempt for others.

## ❖ GOD STANDS IN OPPOSITION AGAINST THE PROUD

One has to consistently guard oneself against becoming proud at any level. Pride includes a sense of superiority over others, who are deemed less than yourself in some respect. This proud position impedes the flow of and reception of a greater grace.

If the grace of God is expressed in His posture of preference, kindness, favour and empowerment towards you, then pride, which cuts one off from this grace, has the repercussion of God standing in direct opposition to you.

Refer James 4:6 and 1 Pet. 5:5 quoted earlier. God gives a greater grace to the humble but stands in conscious opposition against the proud.

**Oppose = antitasso =** To set an army in array against, To arrange in battle order. To set oneself in opposition to or in array against, To resist<sup>7</sup>.

The scariest thing we know about a person who is proud is that God opposes them. It is probably the most frightening thought to have God arrange Himself deliberately, as in fighting a significant war, against you. It is one thing to have a human being in opposition to you, yet still another thing to have demonic opposition. Any mature son of God could deal with these two kinds of opposition. But it is inconceivable to have God Himself resist you.

## ❖ PRIDE IS DISGUSTING TO THE LORD

**Prov.6:16** These six things the Lord hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him:  
A proud look, ....

**Prov. 16:5** Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord; Assuredly, he will not be unpunished.  
(NASB)

**Prov. 16:5** Everyone who has pride in his heart is disgusting to the Lord: he will certainly not go free from punishment.  
(BBE)

## ❖ PRIDE DEFILES MAN

**Mark 7:21-23** For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.

To defile means to be rendered unclean, profane and common.

## ❖ PRIDE COMES BEFORE A FALL:

The most predictable thing we know about pride is that God will bring it down in humiliation. The proud shall be opposed and humiliated. We either humble ourselves before God, or experience humiliation by God.

**Prov.11:2** When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with the humble is wisdom. (ESV)

**Prov.16:18** Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. (NKJV)

**Prov.29:23** A man's pride will bring him low, But a humble spirit will obtain honor (NASB)

**Isaiah 2:12** For the Lord of hosts has a day against all that is proud and lofty, against all that is lifted up - and it shall be brought low. (ESV)

**Prov. 13:10** By pride comes nothing but strife, But with the well- advised is wisdom. (NKJV)

**Matt 23:12** Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted. (NASB)

***“It’s better to be an adjective than a verb. It’s better to be humble than be humbled.”  
(Tom Nelson)***

Humility results in increased grace; pride leads to dis-grace. The humble will be grace-full, whilst the proud will be grace-less.

The intent of God’s humiliation is never punitive in the sense of eternally damning you, but rather it is redemptive, in the hope that when He humbles you because you failed to humble yourself, you will embrace humility as your preferred disposition and only option – and even at this juncture the choice is still yours. His humiliation is then, in its intent and motivation, redemptive and an expression of His love, for He anticipates that this would be the process that perhaps would ultimately convince you to change from pride to humility. Consider the lost son who ‘came to himself’ only when he landed in the pigsty (Luke 15:17). Another case in point would be God’s humiliation of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4 - he only changed after a seven-year humiliation process.

#### ❖ PRIDE DISPLACES LOVE FOR THE FATHER

1 John 2:15-17      Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the **one who does the will of God lives forever**.

The ‘**boastful pride of life**’ is listed as one of three things in the world we ought not to love, for it displaces any potential for the love of God to reside within us. In other words, it is impossible to love the world and things in it and simultaneously claim to love God the Father. One cannot **maintain a position of unrepentant pride and at the same time hope to love God**, the Father. The two positions are incompatible, the one working against other. The presence of pride makes complete love for the Father impossible.

God dispenses grace to the humble, for humility is something eternal even within His being as God. There is an eternal servant-hood, an expression of humility within Deity (Study Phil. 2). Jesus described Himself as humble and meek. Pride then is deplorable to God because it is seriously antithetic to His own internal disposition of humility. He finds pride abhorrent and will oppose it at every turn. Pride is not a light thing. It is a blatant affront to the nature of God, and hence God is evoked to displeasure in reference to it.

## ❖ THE JORDAN RIVER AND HUMILITY

The name 'Jordan' means '**descending; flowing down**'; (root = to go down; to flow down); **descending rapidly**'<sup>8</sup>. This denotes humility – a lowly position. Biblically, the River Jordan has symbolic significance in the following areas:

### 1. It was in the middle of a fertile valley.

Lot settled in the Jordan Valley because it was well watered and fertile. Two principles are key here:

- a) Firstly, within the context of humility, you will be most fertile and productive because you will be 'well-watered' by the water of God's Word, which you highly esteem and subscribe to obediently. Pride on the other hand leads to barrenness.
- b) Secondly, Lot arrogantly disconnected from Abraham in pride but tried to abide in an environment of humility. You cannot cloak yourself externally in humility when it has not become an internal reality. He positioned his tent towards Sodom, depictive of unbridled carnal, sensual indulgence. Some use false humility as a mask to cover their prideful intent and preoccupation with fleshly pursuits.

### 2. The Jordan River is a boundary, indicating a separation of two realms.

This is indicated by clusters of passages that speak of "beyond Jordan," "on this side of the Jordan," "on the other side of Jordan" and "over Jordan." Often, humility would be the defining line separating us and thus delineating our distinction from that which may be displeasing to the Lord. Pride often results in a blurring of clearly defined protocols or boundaries governing righteous and acceptable behaviour.

### 3. The issue of 'crossing' is connected to it.

This is related to the previous image of Jordan as a boundary. It was a boundary of the Promised Land. Joshua 3-4 describes how, after forty years in the desert, Israel, led by Joshua, made a decisive crossing of the Jordan from the east, opposite Gilgal and Jericho.

#### Joshua 3:13-17

- 13 "It shall come about when the soles of the feet of the priests who carry the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, rest in the waters of the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan will be cut off, *and the waters which are flowing down from above will stand in one heap.*"
- 14 So when the people set out from their tents to cross the Jordan with the priests carrying the ark of the covenant before the people,
- 15 and when those who carried the ark came into the Jordan, and the **feet of the priests carrying the ark were dipped in the edge of the water** (for the Jordan overflows all its banks all the days of harvest),
- 16 the **waters which were flowing down from above stood and rose up in one**

**heap, a great distance away at Adam**, the city that is beside Zarethan; and those which were flowing down toward the sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, were completely cut off. So the people crossed opposite Jericho.

- 17 And the priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan while all Israel crossed on dry ground, until all the nation had finished crossing the Jordan.

As the feet of the priests, who bore the Ark of the Covenant, touched the waters, the waters were heaped upstream at the city of Adam where the Jabbok River enters the Jordan from the east. Jabbok means 'emptying, pouring out'<sup>9</sup>. Self-emptying is essential to stand in humility. Entrance into the next phase of God's purposes and promises demands that we adopt an intensely strong disposition of humility. One cannot enter God's purposes or the fulfillment of some prophetic plan with pride.



It is noteworthy to regard the fact that the priests stood in the middle of the Jordan while the entire nation crossed the Jordan River on dry ground. The priests here are representative of spiritual leadership or of a representative leadership. It is incumbent on leaders that they, more than anyone else, be first and frontline in modeling sincere humility. The passage of entire communities of God's people into prophetic destiny and purposes is contingent upon the humility and self-emptying of their leaders.

### ❖ PRIDE - A NOTABLE FEATURE OF THE LAST DAYS

#### 2 Tim. 3:1-5

But realize this, that **in the last days** difficult times will come. **For men will be lovers of self**, lovers of money, **boastful**, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, **conceited**, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; **Avoid such men as these**.

Besides the obvious characteristics of pride in men listed above, every trait in the entire list is rooted in pride, e.g. being 'ungrateful' is a manifestation of pride, as is one who is a lover of self, boastful, a malicious gossip, conceited, 'irreconcilable', etc.



## ❖ MORE INDICATORS OF PRIDE

The line between pride and humility is extremely thin. The moment you think you have humility, you have just lost it (S. Govender<sup>10</sup>). Humility is that one virtue, which because of its very nature, you cannot boast about. One can so easily be deceived into pride. We should all be very vigilant that we do not cross the threshold mentally or behaviourally into pride. None of us would readily admit to our pride. It takes the Lord to highlight this. When revealed, we must acknowledge pride and repent of it.

**Prov. 21:2** Every man's way is right in his own eyes, But the Lord weighs the hearts.

**Isaiah 49:16b** "... the arrogance of your heart has deceived you ..."

**Jer.17:9,10** "The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it? "I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give to each man according to his ways, According to the results of his deeds.

Spiritual virtues must be identified by observable or notable characteristics. Humility has outward indications. So does pride. In the two sessions to follow, we will deal specifically with some indicators of pride.

## ❖ "I WILL REMOVE THE PROUD FROM YOUR MIDST"

Zephaniah 3:11,12 prophetically points to a day where every trace of pride will be thoroughly expunged from our corporate existence, so that there results a "humble and lowly" people.

**Zeph.3:11b,12** "In that day you will feel no shame because of all your deeds by which you have rebelled against Me; For then **I will remove from your midst Your proud**, exulting ones, and you will **never again be haughty on My holy mountain**. "But **I will leave among you a humble and lowly people**, And they will take refuge in the name of the Lord."

May we not be among the 'haughty', who shall be removed, but among the 'lowly' who shall remain.

May all grace and peace abound to you,  
Randolph Barnwell

[See Endnotes Overleaf]



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## **ENDNOTES**

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