

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

**Session 16** : Indicators of Pride (Part 1)

**Focus** : God Opposes the Pride of King Uzziah

### A Case Study of the Pride of Uzziah

King Uzziah is a sad case study highlighting the perils of pride. Grace attended him during the early part of his fifty two year reign because in humility, he sought God. But he became strong in his own eyes and refused to acknowledge that his strength and success was in God. Pride in him led him to act corruptly and he died a leper, being ex-communicated from the people of God and the purposes of God. His story illustrates well how God OPPOSES THE PROUD. Instead of accessing GREATER GRACE through humility, he experienced DISGRACE and HUMILIATION.

**NOTE:** Uzziah is also known as Azariah in 2 Kings 15.

### 2 Chron. 26

- 1 And all the people of Judah took Uzziah, **who was sixteen years old**, and made him king in the place of his father Amaziah.
- 2 He built Eloth and restored it to Judah after the king slept with his fathers.
- 3 Uzziah was sixteen years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-two years in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Jechiliah of Jerusalem.
- 4 He did right in the sight of the Lord according to all that his father Amaziah had done.
- 5 He continued to seek God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding through the vision of God; **and as long as he sought the Lord, God prospered him.**
- 6 Now he went out and warred against the Philistines, and broke down the wall of Gath and the wall of Jabneh and the wall of Ashdod; and he built cities in the area of Ashdod and among the Philistines.
- 7 God helped him against the Philistines, and against the Arabians who lived in Gur- baal, and the Meunites.
- 8 The Ammonites also gave tribute to Uzziah, and **his fame extended to the border of Egypt, for he became very strong.**
- 9 Moreover, Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the Corner Gate and at the Valley Gate and at the corner buttress and fortified them.
- 10 He built **towers in the wilderness** and hewed many cisterns, for he had much livestock, both in the lowland and in the plain. He also had plowmen and vinedressers in the hill country and the fertile fields, for he **loved the soil.**
- 11 Moreover, Uzziah had an **army ready for battle**, which entered combat by divisions according to the number of their muster, prepared by Jeiel the scribe and Maaseiah the official, under the direction of Hananiah, one of the king's officers.
- 12 The total number of the heads of the households, of valiant warriors, was 2,600.

- 13 Under their direction was an elite army of 307,500, who could wage war with great power, to help the king against the enemy.
- 14 Moreover, Uzziah prepared for all the army shields, spears, helmets, body armor, bows and sling stones.
- 15 In Jerusalem he made engines of war invented by skillful men to be on the towers and on the corners for the purpose of shooting arrows and great stones. Hence his fame spread afar, for he was marvelously helped until he was strong.
- 16 But when he became strong, his heart was so proud that he acted corruptly, and he was unfaithful to the Lord his God, for he *entered the temple of the Lord to burn incense on the altar of incense.*
- 17 Then Azariah the priest entered after him and with him eighty priests of the Lord, valiant men.
- 18 They opposed Uzziah the king and said to him, " It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the Lord, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron who are consecrated to burn incense. Get out of the sanctuary, for you have been unfaithful and will have no honor from the Lord God."
- 19 But Uzziah, with a censer in his hand for burning incense, was enraged; and while he was enraged with the priests, the leprosy broke out on his forehead before the priests in the house of the Lord, beside the altar of incense.
- 20 Azariah the chief priest and all the priests looked at him, and behold, he was leprous on his forehead; and they hurried him out of there, and he himself also hastened to get out because the Lord had smitten him.
- 21 King Uzziah was a leper to the day of his death; and he lived in a separate house, being a leper, for he was cut off from the house of the Lord. And Jotham his son was over the king's house judging the people of the land.
- 22 Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah, first to last, the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz, has written.
- 23 So Uzziah slept with his fathers, and they buried him with his fathers in the field of the grave which belonged to the kings, for they said, "**He is a leper.**" And Jotham his son became king in his place.

**King Uzziah exhibits the following indicators of pride, which is explained overleaf.**

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|---|---|
| 1. Focus on Economic and Physical Welfare to the Total Disregard of Spiritual Welfare | 6. Independence of God and Self-Reliance                      |
| 2. Incomplete or Partial Obedience  | 7. Strong in One's own Eyes / Strong in One's own Strength    |
| 3. Having Fame and Influence, but no intention of using it for Kingdom Advancement    | 8. Becoming Strong and Proud                                  |
| 4. No Mastery over Carnal Fleshly Nature  | 9. Acting Corruptly   |
| 5. Refusal to Acknowledge God as the Source of Success                                | 10. Unfaithfulness to the Lord                                |
|   | 11. Crossing the Boundary of one's Function and Grace Calling |
|   | 12. Refusal to Accept Correction                              |
|   | 13. Uncontrollable Anger                                      |

## Indicators of Pride in Uzziah

### 1. Focus on Economic and Physical Welfare to the Total Disregard of Spiritual Welfare

All his reforms were economic, military and political. None of his priorities were spiritual in nature. Pride manifests when most of our energies are taken up with consolidating our economic or political welfare without any or no concern for our spiritual development. It is prideful to disregard our spiritual state because we are too preoccupied with the busyness of life. If we are too BUSY to attend the gathering of the family of God, too busy to read/study our bibles, and too BUSY to pray, we are simply TOO busy. Our pride deceives us into thinking that if we are well physically, economically, etc. that we may forgo our need to strengthen ourselves spiritually through the biblical means available to us.

### 2. Incomplete or Partial Obedience

While he did right in the sight of the Lord, he only did so up to a point. He did not remove the places of idolatry from the nation of Israel and thus accommodated mixture and worship of false gods in the nation.

**2 Kings 15:3-4**     He did right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father Amaziah had done. Only the high places were not taken away; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places.

His 'walking right in the sight of the Lord' was after the example of his father, Amaziah.

**2 Chron. 26:4**     He did right in the sight of the Lord according to all that his father Amaziah had done.

Amaziah's pattern of obedience was not complete or heartfelt. He, too, entertained idolatry in the nation. He also succumbed to pride in thinking that he was undefeatable (2 Chron. 25:19).

The Scripture says about him ...

**2 Chron. 25:2**     He (Amaziah) did right in the sight of the Lord, yet not with a whole heart.

His early acts of obedience was not a reflection of the internal state of his heart. Many obey and do right purely to appear compliant outwardly, yet their hearts are not in it. It is pride to 'obey' with your heart detached from the act of obedience. 'Wholeness' of heart must characterise our obedience.

We are in a season in which God is expecting us to complete our obedience. Aspects of disobedience we had once neglected or rationalised that we need not give them priority, are now being addressed in a very frontal manner by the Lord. Every aspect of our lives must be brought into alignment with the requirements of God. To “do that which is right in the sight of the Lord” only for certain areas in our lives and blatantly walk in disobedience in other areas is an expression of pride.

Jesus commended the Pharisees in tithing but chided them for neglecting weightier issues of justice, mercy and faithfulness.

**Matthew 23:23** “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have **NEGLECTED THE WEIGHTIER provisions** of the law: **justice and mercy and faithfulness**; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others.

We cannot be RIGHT in some areas and WRONG in others. Pride is having some things right, knowing other things are wrong, but justifying the wrong things as right or refusing to rectify the wrong things.

**Challenge:** Be like Caleb, of whom God said .... ‘HE WHOLLY FOLLOWED THE LORD’.  
(See Num. 32:11,12; Deut.1:36; Josh 14:8-14)

### **3. Having Fame and Influence, but no intention of using it for Kingdom Advancement**

**2 Chron. 26:8** The Ammonites also gave tribute to Uzziah, and his fame extended to the border of Egypt, for he became very strong.

He became extremely famous and well known. He should have used this to advance God’s purposes. Joseph in Egypt used his position of power to protect and facilitate the purposes of God in the nation of Israel. Esther used her position as Queen to aid God’s intention to preserve His people. Both Joseph and Esther regarded their need for spiritual fathering in the execution of God’s purposes in and through their positions of influence. Uzziah lacked a fatherly voice to direct him.

### **4. He did not Master His Carnal / Fleshly Nature**

‘He loved the soil’ – v.10b.

**2 Chron. 26:10** He also had plowmen and vinedressers in the hill country and the fertile fields, for he loved the soil.

The soil speaks of the dust of the ground or the fleshly nature in man that rivals the life of the Spirit. The dust or soil is the food of the enemy, satan.

**Gen. 3:14** The Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, Cursed are you more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you will go, And dust you will eat all the days of your life;

The work of the devil in us is fueled by the measure of flesh or carnality we provide for him. The strength of his destructive agenda in us is aided by the measure of carnal or fleshly thinking and behaviour we provide for him.

## 5. Refusal to Acknowledge God as the Source of His Success

He was initially open to prophetic direction as is hinted at by the phrase 'he sought **God in the days of Zechariah**, who had understanding through the vision of God" – v5).

In his early development, he exhibited an earnest seeking after God. As long as he sought the Lord, God prospered him. He probably realised that his prosperity was because of his seeking after God. He would start to enjoy widespread economic, military and political success. This would intoxicate him, especially as he would not credit God for his success. He is a classic case of one who is blessed because of humility, but because pride enters his heart, it leads to his downfall. His **breakthrough** became the start of his **breakdown**. We must all learn from his negative example.

Compare Prophet Azariah's warning to King Asa:

**2 Chron. 15:1-2** Now the Spirit of God came on Azariah the son of Oded, and he went out to meet Asa and said to him, "Listen to me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin: THE LORD IS WITH YOU WHEN YOU ARE WITH HIM. And if you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you.

## 6. Independence of God and Self-Reliance

**2 Chron. 26:7** God HELPED him against the Philistines, and against the Arabians who lived in Gur- baal, and the Meunites.

It clearly indicates here that God helped him, but later he did not recognise nor acknowledge it.

Uzziah was not just HELPED by God, he was 'MARVELOUSLY HELPED':

**2 Chron. 26:15b** Hence his fame spread afar, for he was MARVELOUSLY HELPED until he was strong.

David **acknowledged** God's HELP.

**Psalm 121:1,2** I will lift up my eyes to the mountains; From where shall my help come? My help comes from the Lord, Who made heaven and earth.

### **Psalm 24**

1. "Had it not been the Lord who was on our side," Let Israel now say,
2. "Had it not been the Lord who was on our side When men rose up against us,
3. Then they would have swallowed us alive, When their anger was kindled against us;
4. Then the waters would have engulfed us, The stream would have swept over our soul;
5. Then the raging waters would have swept over our soul."
6. **Blessed be the Lord**, Who has not given us to be torn by their teeth.
7. Our soul has escaped as a bird out of the snare of the trapper; The snare is broken and we have escaped.
8. Our **HELP IS IN THE NAME OF THE LORD**, Who made heaven and earth.

May the following words of Samuel forever be our constant expression of our acknowledgement of God as the source of our help: "Hitherto has the Lord helped us."

**1 Samuel 7:12** Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, **HITHERTO HATH THE LORD HELPED US. (KJV)**

## **7. Strong in His own Eyes / Strong in his own Strength**

Here is the meaning of his name ...

**Uzziah** = Strength of the LORD; Might of Jehovah; The LORD my strength.<sup>1</sup>

Instead of being strong in the Lord, he becomes strong in his own might and this leads to his downfall. He started off right but ended off wrong. He was initially strong in the Lord but became strong in his own eyes. It is not how you start that matters, but how you end. He that endures to the end shall be saved.

## **8. When He became Strong He became Proud**

**2 Chron. 26:16a** But when he became strong, his heart was so proud that he acted corruptly, ...

Before his kingship was firmly established, whilst he was still consolidating his rule and growing in political and military strength, he was humble. As soon as he became strong, he became proud. It is easy to be humble when you have nothing; but hard to be humble when you have everything and are relatively successful or strong in key areas, e.g. financial. The real test of humility is not when you are on the path to development, but when you have attained some degree of strength.

**Jer. 9:23** Thus says the Lord, "Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things," declares the Lord.

## 9. He Acted Corruptly

'He acted corruptly' could also be read as 'His heart became corrupted'.

**Corruptly = shachath =** To spoil, to ruin, to destroy, to pervert<sup>2</sup>.

Pride leads to the corruption and spoiling of our hearts. We start to lose our innocence and purity. The beauty of the nature of spirit we once had now starts to be 'ruined' or soiled'.

His inability to bring widespread reform and change to the nation is evidenced by the widespread 'corruption' of the nation of Israel during the reign of His son, Jotham.

**2 Chron. 26:2** He did right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father Uzziah had done; however he did not enter the temple of the Lord. But the people continued acting corruptly.

Uzziah's corruption was so strong, it became amplified in a whole nation in future generations. The singular corruptness of King Uzziah in his time led to the corporate corruptness of a whole nation in the next generation.

## 10. He Became Unfaithful to the Lord

**2 Chron. 26:16** But when he became strong, his heart was so proud that he acted corruptly, and he was UNFAITHFUL to the Lord his God, for he entered the temple of the Lord to burn incense on the altar of incense.

Pride is the doorway to unfaithfulness to the Lord in many different areas.

Unfaithful = maal = to violate one's duty<sup>3</sup>.

This word is also used of marital unfaithfulness (Num.5:12) – so it references a breaking of covenantal commitment. We break our covenantal commitment to the Lord every time we ‘violate our duty’. Our duty is to OBEY HIM in everything. Faithfulness, amongst many things, means trustworthy, reliable, and dependable. Maintain your faithfulness in the specific DUTY God has called you to. God seeks faithfulness in His servants.

## 11. He Crossed the Boundary of his Function and Grace Calling

**2 Chron. 26:16** But when he became strong, his heart was so proud that he acted corruptly, and he was UNFAITHFUL to the Lord his God, for he entered the temple of the Lord to burn incense on the altar of incense.

He was king, but assumed priestly functions and went into the temple to burn incense, something only a consecrated priest could do. His pride in the kingly realm deceived him into thinking he could dismiss others in an assigned position and take over their function. The grace of God within him involved kingship and not priestly function. He crossed the border that God’s grace in Him prescribed where he should function. Pride sometimes manifests when we assume roles and responsibilities for which God has not called us and thus not equipped us for, yet we do so presumptuously based upon the success we enjoy in the area for which we have been graced.

Paul knew that the grace of God in him was geared toward ministry to Gentiles, and the grace of God in Peter was geared toward Jews. Paul had his greatest ministry successes among Gentiles and not Jews, because God’s grace in him had its apostolic focus on Gentiles and not Jews. Don't mix issues. Stay focused on the primary area of your calling.

**Gal.2:8** For the same God who worked through Peter as the apostle to the Jews also worked through me as the apostle to the Gentiles. (NLT)

## 12. He Refused to Accept Correction

Read 2 Chron. 26:16-20.

Uzziah was corrected by Azariah, the chief priest, along with 80 other priests who were valiant men. They cautioned him about the inaccuracy and presumptuous nature of his actions. They then advised him to graciously leave the sanctuary. At this precise point, he should have recognised their God-given priestly authority to advise and correct him, even though he was king. Had he repented, God would have forgiven him. Instead, he became enraged in an outburst of anger. Immediately, God smote him with leprosy on his forehead, judging him for his prideful inability to be corrected.

One of the hallmarks of spiritual maturity is the ability to receive correction.



**Job 5:17** Behold, how happy is the man whom God reproves, So do not despise the discipline of the Almighty.

Most often God will correct and discipline us through the voice of our spiritual father.

**Heb. 12:5-11** and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, Nor faint when you are reproved by Him; For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, And He scourges every son whom He receives." It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness. All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

**Prov. 15:5** A fool rejects his father's discipline, But he who regards reproof is sensible.

**Prov. 15:5b** '... whoever learns from correction is wise.' (NLT)

### **Warnings:**

**Prov. 29:1** A man who hardens his neck after much reproof will suddenly be broken beyond remedy.

**Prov. 3:11** My son, do not reject the discipline of the Lord Or loathe His reproof,

### **13. He became ANGRY**

Anger, whilst not a sin in itself per se, makes one prone to sin.

**Eph. 4:26,27** **Be angry, and yet do not sin;** do not let the sun go down on your anger, and **do not give the devil an opportunity.**

Anger does not attain the righteousness of God.

**James 1:19,20** This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; for the **anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.**

Anger – a manifestation of the fleshly nature.

**Gal. 5:19** Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions ...

Anger must be 'put away':

**Eph. 4:31** Let all bitterness and wrath and **anger** and clamor and slander **be put away from you**, along with all malice.

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## **RESULTS OF UZZIAH'S PRIDE**

### **a) LEPROSY**

**2 Chron. 26:20** Azariah the chief priest and all the priests looked at him, and behold, **he was leprous on his forehead**; and they hurried him out of there, and **he himself also hastened to get out because the Lord had smitten him.**

Leprosy mars the skin or image of a person and leads to disfigurement, making the person unappealing/unattractive to behold. Leprosy then represents a disfigurement of God's image, glory and representation in us. It highlights an incapacity to represent God accurately.

Lepers were ostracised from normal societal life and lived in leper colonies because of the contagious nature of the disease. Spiritually, this alludes to one who cannot be assimilated into the family life of the corporate community of the Body of Christ because of having all the negative principles embodied within Uzziah. Many just cannot fit into the communal family culture of Kingdom life within a local church/household because they violate key principles celebrated by and governing that context.

### **b) CUT OFF FROM THE HOUSE OF THE LORD**

**2 Chron.26:21** King Uzziah was a leper to the day of his death; and he lived in a separate house, being a leper, **for he was cut off from the house of the Lord.**

'Cut off from the House of God' alludes to being disconnected from ...

- Spiritual Purpose.
- Spiritual Fathering.
- Spiritual Family - Brothers and Sisters.
- Divine Mandate Attendant with the House.

### c) PREVENTED OTHERS FROM SEEING THE LORD

Isaiah the prophet confessed that in the very year when King Uzziah died, he (Isaiah) SAW THE LORD. It seems to suggest that Uzziah prevented revelation of God to Israel.

**Isaiah 6:1** It was in the year King Uzziah died that I saw the Lord. He was sitting on a lofty throne, and the train of his robe filled the Temple.

All the prideful sins of Uzziah in you and I need TO DIE if we are ever going to see God in a greater measure. In Isaiah chapter 6, not only does Isaiah see God, but he receives more intense purification from the view of God he saw. His tongue or speech is cleansed; his company or friendships are purified; and his commissioning as a prophet is given greater and more widespread focus.

Our mandate in God will be enlarged when the 'Uzziah' principles in us die. The more we see God, the greater and more intense will be our refinement and preparation for ministry globally. Like Isaiah heard the call, do I hear the saying "Whom shall I send and who will go for us" (Isaiah 6:8). Isaiah responded "Here am I Lord, send me" – he could not have said this whilst Uzziah was alive.

There are instructions, mandates and callings we will never hear from God until pride is thoroughly expunged from us.

May grace and peace abound to you,  
Randolph Barnwell

[See Endnotes Overleaf]

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## ENDNOTES

1. Smith, S., & Cornwall, J. (1998). The Exhaustive Dictionary of Bible Names (3). North Brunswick, NJ: Bridge-Logos.
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