

## INTRODUCTION

1. We are looking again at Romans 12:16 tonight, so I would like to invite you to turn in your Bible to that passage as we take a second look at *living in harmony* with one another.
2. **Romans 12:16 (NASB)** <sup>16</sup> Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.
3. We began a look at this verse last week in Romans 12 and saw that Paul is addressing in this section, verses 3-21, the believer and his service.
4. Verse 3 addresses the kind of view that they were to have of themselves of not thinking “more highly...than [they] ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment.”
5. Verses 4-8 addresses their function with one another through their giftedness.
6. While verses 9-21 addresses their relationship with one another and with their enemies.
7. Verse 9 begins this last section of chapter 12.
8. They were to “love without hypocrisy.”
9. In order to do that they were to “abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.”

10. In other words, they were to love and honor one another (vv.9-10).
11. They were to show them their zeal and joy in verses 11-12.
12. They were to share with them according to verse 13, “rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep” (v.15).
13. And then verse 16, live in harmony.
14. Living in harmony involves us being “of the same mind.”
15. In order to do that we must not be partial.
16. This phrase, “be of the same mind toward one another” is talking about impartiality.
17. We noted two things about partiality: God is not partial, and partiality is sin.
18. Now I want us to look at the second part of this verse.
19. He says, “Do not be haughty in mind.”
20. The first phrase has to do with impartiality.

21. This one has to do with being haughty with self-seeking pride.<sup>1</sup>
22. The first is *do not be partial*.
23. The second is *do not be haughty*.

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<sup>1</sup>John Jr MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Word Pub., 1997, c1997). Ro 12:16.

- I. Do Not Be Partial (v.16a)**
- II. Do Not Be Haughty (v.16b)**

“Do not be haughty in mind.”

**Haughty in mind** translates *hupsēla phronountes*, which literally means “minding high things.” But the things to which Paul refers here are not lofty in the spiritual sense but in the sense of self-seeking pride.<sup>2</sup>

We are not to “think high things” about ourselves. This is basically the same as the admonitions in 11:20 and 12:3.

We are to avoid self-aggrandizement, or thinking so highly of ourselves that the desires and opinions of others no longer matter.<sup>3</sup>

Puritan Henry Smith said, “I may say of pride, many sins have done wickedly, but thou surmountest them all; for the wrathful man, the prodigal man, the lascivious man, the surfeiting man, the slothful man, is rather an enemy to himself than to God; the envious man, the covetous man, the deceitful man, the ungrateful man, is rather an enemy to men than to God, but the proud man sets himself against God (because he does against His laws), he maketh himself

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<sup>2</sup>John MacArthur, *Romans* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996, c1991, c1994). 198.

<sup>3</sup>Jack Cottrell, *Romans : Volume 2*, College Press NIV commentary (Joplin, Mo.: College Press Pub. Co., 1996-c1998). Ro 12:17.

equal with God (because he does all without God and craves no help of Him); he exalteth himself above God (because he will have his own will).”<sup>4</sup>

A. Pride is Seeking One’s Own Glory

There are two passages in Proverbs that define pride in this manner:

1. **Proverbs 25:6-7 (NASB)** <sup>6</sup> Do not claim honor in the presence of the king, And do not stand in the place of great men; <sup>7</sup> For it is better that it be said to you, "Come up here," Than for you to be placed lower in the presence of the prince, Whom your eyes have seen.

The NKJV begins this verse by saying, “Do not exalt yourself in the presence of the king.”

2. **Proverbs 25:27 (NASB)** <sup>27</sup> It is not good to eat much honey, Nor is it glory to search out one's own glory.

Both of these passages speak of the same thing. One prohibits exalting yourself in the presence of

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<sup>4</sup>I.D.E. Thomas, *The Golden Treasury of Puritan Quotations*, electronic ed. (Simpsonville SC: Christian Classics Foundation, 1996).

the king and the other says it's not good to seek one's own glory.

John MacArthur says, "In the royal court as in all of life, self-seeking and pride bring one down. Do not intrude into such a place, for the elevating of the humble is honorable, but the humbling of the proud is disgraceful (cf. Luke 14:8–10; James 4:7–10)."<sup>5</sup>

3. Satan sought to exalt himself in **Isaiah 14:13-14 (NASB)**<sup>13</sup> "But you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, And I will sit on the mount of assembly In the recesses of the north. <sup>14</sup> 'I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.'
  
4. God said to Satan in **Ezekiel 28:15 (NASB)**<sup>15</sup> "You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created Until unrighteousness was found in you.

What was the "unrighteousness" found in him? It was pride – Paul identified it as such when saying that a new convert should not be considered for

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<sup>5</sup>John Jr MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Word Pub., 1997, c1997). Pr 25:6.

the office of elder “lest being puffed up with pride  
he fall into the same condemnation as the devil” (**1  
Tim.3:6, NKJV**).

B. Pride is Praising Yourself

1. Solomon said it is better if this comes from  
someone else rather than your own lips
  - a) **Proverbs 27:2 (NASB)** <sup>2</sup> Let another praise  
you, and not your own mouth; A stranger, and  
not your own lips.

This verse further highlights what is behind  
seeking one’s own glory. It hits right at the  
heart of the matter.

- b) When you praise yourself you are no different  
than Nebuchadnezzar walking through his  
palace and saying in **Daniel 4:30-33 (NASB)**  
<sup>30</sup> "Is this not Babylon the great, which I  
myself have built as a royal residence by the  
might of my power and for the glory of my  
majesty?" <sup>31</sup> "While the word *was* in the king's  
mouth, a voice came from heaven, *saying*,  
'King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared:  
sovereignty has been removed from you, <sup>32</sup>  
and you will be driven away from mankind,  
and your dwelling place *will be* with the  
beasts of the field. You will be given grass to

eat like cattle, and seven periods of time will pass over you until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever He wishes.'<sup>33</sup>  
"Immediately the word concerning Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled; and he was driven away from mankind and began eating grass like cattle, and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair had grown like eagles' *feathers* and his nails like birds' *claws*.

2. Paul said this attitude is not wise
  - a) In **2 Corinthians 10:12 (NASB)**<sup>12</sup> For we are not bold to class or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves; but when they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding.

J. Vernon McGee says, "Paul is injecting a little note of humor. A great many folk compare themselves among themselves, which is the reason that many people in our churches think they have arrived. They feel they are really fine, outstanding, spiritual Christians because they compare themselves with other Christians in their group. That is not the yardstick we are to use, my friend.



This is one of the tragedies of the hour. A person can be in a cold church and grow cold himself and yet not be conscious of it because he compares himself with the cold Christians around him.”<sup>6</sup>

So Paul says, “We don’t have anything to do with anything like this because it’s foolish.”

- b) **2 Corinthians 10:18 (NASB)** <sup>18</sup> For it is not he who commends himself that is approved, but he whom the Lord commends.

In other words, the Lord is the standard not ourselves, nor anyone else.

We must measure ourselves by that standard not by any other. This is the truth but pride doesn’t let it be so. It will continue to cause you to want to praise yourself measuring your life on the life of others.

Warren Wiersbe makes some good statements regarding this point. He says, “n His personal examination of the seven churches named in Revelation 2–3, the Lord Jesus measured them far differently than they measured

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<sup>6</sup>J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible Commentary*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1981). 5:135.

themselves. The church that thought it was poor, He considered to be rich; and the church that boasted of its wealth, He declared to be poor (Rev. 2:8–11; 3:14–22).

Some people measure ministry only by statistics. While it is true that the early church did take note of numbers (Acts 2:41; 4:4), it is also true that uniting with the church at that time was a much more difficult (and dangerous) thing (see Acts 5:13). Some years ago, one of America's large denominations had as its theme, "A Million More in '64, and Every One a Tither!" I heard one of their leading preachers comment, "If we get a million more like the last million, God help us!" Quantity is no guarantee of quality.

The Judaizers were great on measuring their ministry, because a religion of external activities is much easier to measure than one of internal transformation."<sup>7</sup>

What happens when you live your life like this is you will begin to despise others who do not meet up to YOUR standard.

- c) Notice the parable that Jesus gave in **Luke 18:9-14 (NASB)** <sup>9</sup> And He also told this parable to some people who trusted in

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<sup>7</sup>Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1996, c1989). 2 Co 10:12.

themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt: <sup>10</sup> "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. <sup>11</sup> "The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. <sup>12</sup> 'I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.' <sup>13</sup> "But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!' <sup>14</sup> "I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

#### C. Pride is Forgetting God and His Grace

Thomas Manton said, "This is certainly pride, for it is a lifting up of the heart above God and against God and without God."<sup>8</sup>

A good illustration of this is found in the OT.

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<sup>8</sup>I.D.E. Thomas, *The Golden Treasury of Puritan Quotations*, electronic ed. (Simpsonville SC: Christian Classics Foundation, 1996).

**Deuteronomy 8:11-19 (NASB)** — this is the chapter where Moses is giving the law to the second generation of those who were to go in and possess the land of Caanan.

<sup>11</sup> "Beware that you do not forget the Lord your God by not keeping His commandments and His ordinances and His statutes which I am commanding you today; <sup>12</sup> otherwise, when you have eaten and are satisfied, and have built good houses and lived *in them*, <sup>13</sup> and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and gold multiply, and all that you have multiplies, <sup>14</sup> then your heart will become proud and you will forget the Lord your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. <sup>15</sup> "He led you through the great and terrible wilderness, *with its* fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water; He brought water for you out of the rock of flint. <sup>16</sup> "In the wilderness He fed you manna which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do good for you in the end. <sup>17</sup> "Otherwise, you may say in your heart, 'My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth.' <sup>18</sup> "But you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth, that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as *it is* this day. <sup>19</sup> "It shall come about if you ever forget the Lord your God and go after

other gods and serve them and worship them, I testify against you today that you will surely perish.

Seeking one's own glory, praising yourself, forgetting God and His grace are all good reasons for *dealing with the sin of pride* in your life. But probably the greatest definition of pride is simply this:

#### D. Pride is Sin

1. Listen to what **Proverbs 21:4 (NASB)** <sup>4</sup> Haughty eyes and a proud heart, The lamp of the wicked, is sin.

John Gill says, The man that looks above others, and with disdain upon them, shows that pride reigns in him, and swells his mind with a vain opinion of himself."<sup>9</sup>

You must understand that pride is sin no matter how you look at it, whether it be in a "haughty look" or a "proud heart." It is also a sin that will not go unpunished.

2. **Psalms 101:5 (NASB)** <sup>5</sup> Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor, him I will destroy; No one

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<sup>9</sup> John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

who has a haughty look and an arrogant heart will  
I endure.

One writer says, “Pride and shame. You’d never know they are sisters. They appear so different. Pride puffs out her chest. Shame hangs her head. Pride boasts shame hides. Pride seeks to be seen. Shame sees to be avoided. But don’t be fooled, the emotions have the same parentage. And the emotions have the same impact. They keep you from your Father. Pride says, ‘You’re too good for him.’ Shame says, ‘You’re too bad for him.’ Pride drives you away. Shame keeps you away. If pride is what goes before a fall, then shame is what keeps you from getting up after one.”<sup>10</sup>

Looking back at Romans 12:16 we see a third phrase that says, “But associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.”

Do not be partial, do not be haughty but...

### **III. Associate with the Humble (v.16c)**

As James also makes clear in the passage mentioned above, partiality is closely related to a reluctance to show respect for, or even to **associate with the lowly**, such as “a poor man in dirty clothes” (James 2:2). The idea is not that we should avoid associating with those in high positions of wealth or influence. But as far as our service to them is concerned, we typically have more obligation to **associate**

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<sup>10</sup> Max Lucado, He Chose the Nails, pp.65-66

**with the lowly**, not because they are more important but because they are more needy.<sup>11</sup>

Paul gives echoes the same point in **Philippians 2:3-4 (NASB)** <sup>3</sup> Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; <sup>4</sup> do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

He urges the Philippians to have a humility of mind (vv.3c-4) or as he says to the Romans, “associate with the lowly.”

The word that Paul uses for “humility of mind” is *tapeinoshrosune*, which literally means “lowliness of mind.” In Acts 20:19 and Ephesians 4:2 it is rendered “humility.”

In secular Greek literature, the adjective *tapeinos* (“lowly”) was used exclusively in a derisive way, most commonly of a slave. It described what was considered base, common, unfit, and having little value.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>John MacArthur, *Romans* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996, c1991, c1994). 198.

<sup>12</sup>John MacArthur, *Philippians* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2001). 112.

This is a deep sense of one's littleness. This indicates self-forgetfulness in serving others, the spirit which most resembles Christ.<sup>13</sup>

“Humbleness of mind is the opposite of pride” (MacArthur). It “stands opposed to that pride or self-valuation which would lead us to strive for the ascendancy, or which acts from a wish for flattery or praise. The best and the only true correction of these faults is humility. This virtue consists in estimating ourselves according to truth. It is a willingness to take the place which we ought to take in the sight of God and man; and, having the low estimate of our own importance and character which the truth about our insignificance as creatures and vileness as sinners would produce, it will lead us to a willingness to perform lowly and humble offices that we may benefit others” (Alfred Barnes, Barnes Notes).

William Barclay says, “There is always the danger that people should work not to advance the work but to advance themselves. It is extraordinary how time and again the great princes of the Church almost fled from office in the agony of the sense of their own unworthiness.

Ambrose was one of the great figures of the early Church. A great scholar, he was the Roman governor of the province of Liguria and Aemilia, and he governed with such loving care that the people regarded him as a father.

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<sup>13</sup>*KJV Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1994). 2437.



The bishop of the district died and the question of his successor arose. In the midst of the discussion, suddenly a little child's voice arose: "Ambrose—bishop! Ambrose—bishop!" The whole crowd took up the cry. To Ambrose it was unthinkable. He fled by night to avoid the high office the Church was offering him; and it was only the direct intervention and command of the Emperor which made him agree to become bishop of Milan.

When John Rough publicly from the pulpit in St. Andrews summoned him to the ministry, John Knox was appalled. In his own *History of the Reformation* he writes: "Thereat the said John, abashed, burst forth in most abundant tears, and withdrew himself to his chamber. His countenance and behaviour, from that day until the day that he was compelled to present himself in the public place of preaching, did sufficiently declare the grief and trouble of his heart. No man saw in him any sign of mirth, nor yet had he pleasure to accompany any man, for many days together."

Far from being filled with ambition, the great men were filled with a sense of their own inadequacy for high office."<sup>14</sup>

#### A. Humility is a Dominant Virtue in the Old Testament

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<sup>14</sup>*The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, ed. William Barclay, lecturer in the University of Glasgow, The Daily study Bible series, Rev. ed. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 2000, c1975). 31.

1. Solomon said in **Proverbs 11:2 (NASB)** <sup>2</sup> When pride comes, then comes dishonor, But with the humble is wisdom.
  2. He said in **Proverbs 16:19 (NASB)** <sup>19</sup> It is better to be humble in spirit with the lowly Than to divide the spoil with the proud.
  3. **Numbers 12:3 (NASB)** tells us that Moses was “very humble, more than any man who was on the face of the earth.”
  4. David said, “For though the Lord is exalted, yet He regards the lowly, but the haughty He knows from afar” (**Psalms 138:6, NASB**).
  5. In another Psalm, he wrote, “The humble will inherit the land” (**Psalms 37:11, NASB**) which is a passage that Jesus quoted in the Beatitudes: “Blessed are the gentle [meek], for they shall inherit the earth” (**Matthew 5:5, NASB**).
- B. The New Testament Teaches that Humility is the Attitude all Believer’s Are to Have Toward God and One Another
1. In **Romans 12:10 (NASB)** Paul tells the believers to “*Be* devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor.”
  2. In **Ephesians 4:2 (NASB)** <sup>2</sup> with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love,

C. Genuine Humility Involves Believers' Not Thinking too Highly of Themselves and Requires that they Regard One Another as More Important than Themselves (vv.3c-4)

1. "Regard" (hegeomai), means more than just having an opinion. It refers to a carefully thought-out conclusion based on the truth. It does not mean to pretend that others are more important, but to believe that others actually are **more important**.<sup>15</sup>

J.B. Lightfoot says it's "each thinking the other better."

Albert Barnes says "This is one of the effects produced by true humility" (Barnes Notes).

Instead of fixing your eyes on those points in which you excel, fix them on those in which your neighbor excels you: this is true "humility."<sup>16</sup>

2. Look also for "the interest of others" (v.4)

"Look" (skopeo), means "to observe something. But, as in this context, it often carried the

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<sup>15</sup>John MacArthur, *Philippians* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2001). 113.

<sup>16</sup>Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, A. R. Fausset, David Brown and David Brown, *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997). Php 2:3.

additional ideas of giving close attention and special consideration.”<sup>17</sup>

It means “to fix the attention upon with desire for and interest in.”<sup>18</sup>

JB Lightfoot renders it “to consult one’s own interest.”

It’s “not keeping an eye on the main chance for number one, but for the good of others” (Robertson’s Word Pictures).

“Others?” is the key to this passage. It is the Christian faith which first made that word *others* important. Why did Christ come from heaven’s glory to this earth? It was for others. Why should we carry the gospel? For others. To think of others rather than ourselves is having the mind of Christ.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>John MacArthur, *Philippians* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2001). 113.

<sup>18</sup>Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament : For the English Reader* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997, c1984). Php 2:4.

<sup>19</sup>J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible Commentary*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1981). 5:301.

An example of looking out for the interests of others is by doing what **Romans 12:15 (NASB)** says, <sup>15</sup> Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

Our liberty is based on others:

Rom.14:19-21 says, “Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.<sup>20</sup> Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a man to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. <sup>21</sup> It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother to fall.” (NIV)

Romans 15:1-2 says, “We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. <sup>2</sup> Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification.” (KJV)

## **CONCLUSION**

1. Paul ends Romans 12:16 by saying, “Do not be wise in your own estimation.”

2. This as he has already stated means that Christians are not to have conceit or feelings of superiority toward fellow believers.<sup>20</sup>
3. The realization that we have nothing that we did not receive should keep us from an inflated ego.<sup>21</sup>
4. We are not to be partial or haughty but to associate with the humble.
5. How are you with this “one another”?
6. Again, the presence of partiality and pride is sin and must be confessed and repented of.
7. It is only God who can remove this from your life.
8. **Romans 8:13 (NASB)**<sup>13</sup> for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.
9. If you’re struggling with “putting to death the deeds of the body” in your life, maybe it’s because you have never truly been born again.

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<sup>20</sup>John Jr MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Word Pub., 1997, c1997). Ro 12:16.

<sup>21</sup>William MacDonald and Arthur Farstad, *Believer's Bible Commentary : Old and New Testaments* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1995). Ro 12:16.

10. My prayer is that God will save you now and that you will humble yourself before Him in true repentance.

11. Let's pray.