

Humility...and Pride

“Humility is the capacity to see myself in God’s light, in the context of his holiness and my sinfulness.

Pride is spiritual blindness, a delusional, inflated view of self. It is unreality on steroids.”

William Farley (Gospel-Powered Humility)

“Humility” Gk. ταπεινοφροσύνη...from compound of “understanding + lowly, abased, of low degree” ..."the having a humble opinion of oneself; a deep sense of one's (moral) littleness; modesty, humility, lowliness of mind"

OT Background...

**Psalm 34:18...The Lord is near to the brokenhearted
And saves those who are crushed in spirit.**

**Proverbs 3:34...Though He scoffs at the scoffers,
Yet He gives grace to the afflicted.**

**Isaiah 57:15 (cf. Psalm 138:6)...For thus says the high and exalted One
who lives forever, whose name is Holy,
“I dwell on a high and holy place,
And also with the contrite and lowly of spirit
In order to revive the spirit of the lowly
And to revive the heart of the contrite.**

**66:1,2..“Heaven is My throne and the earth is My footstool.
Where then is a house you could build for Me?
And where is a place that I may rest?
“For My hand made all these things,
Thus all these things came into being,” declares the Lord.
“But to this one I will look, To him who is humble and contrite of
spirit, and who trembles at My word.**

NT Usage...

**Ephesians 4:1-3...Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to
walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been
called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing
tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity
of the Spirit in the bond of peace**

Philippians 2:1-4...Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, 2 make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

Colossians 3:12,13...So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

James 4:6,7...6 But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

1 Peter 5:5-8...You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

Depicted in a parable...

Luke 18:9-14...note verse 14

And He also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt: "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 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. I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.' 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!' 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."

Demonstrated...

John 3:30...He must increase, but I must decrease.

Exemplified...

John 13:1-17...note verse 17

Philippians 2:5-8...Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Pride...the antithesis

OT Background...

Its nature

Proverbs 8:13 (no fear of the LORD, but rather arrogance and the way of evil), 14:3 (the way of a fool)

Isa 9:9 (stoutness of heart), 16:6 (haughtiness)

Daniel 5:20 (heart lifted up and mind hardened)

And its consequences

Proverbs 11:2 (shame), 13:10 (contention), 16:18 (destruction), 29:3 (being brought low)

Isa 25:11 (brought down by God), 28:1 (pronounced woe by God), 28:3 (trodden under feet)

Obadiah 1:3 (brings self deception)

NT usage

Mark 7:22...that which proceeds out of the evil heart of man and brings defilement

1 Timothy 3:6...ensnares and brings the condemnation of the devil

1 John 2:16...an essential part of the world system (lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and the pride of life)

Excerpts from “Undetected Spiritual Pride-One Cause of Failure in Times of Great Revival”

by Jonathan Edwards

The first and worst cause of errors that abound in our day and age is spiritual pride. This is the main door by which the devil comes into the hearts of those who are zealous for the advancement of Christ...

Pride is the main handle by which he has hold of Christian persons and the chief source of all the mischief that he introduces to clog and hinder a work of God. Spiritual pride is the main spring or at least the main support of all other errors. Until this disease is cured, medicines are applied in vain to heal all other diseases.

It is by spiritual pride that the mind defends and justifies itself in other errors and defends itself against light by which it might be corrected and reclaimed. The spiritually proud man thinks he is full of light already and feels that he does not need instruction, so he is ready to ignore the offer of it.

On the other hand, the humble person is like a little child who easily receives instruction. He is cautious in his estimate of himself, sensitive as to how liable he is to go astray. If it is suggested to him that he is going astray, he is most ready to check into the matter.

Nothing sets a Christian so much out of the devil’s reach than humility and so prepares the mind for divine light without darkness. Humility clears the eye to look at things as they truly are. Psalm 25:9—He leads the humble in justice, and He teaches the humble His way.

Alas, how much pride the best have in their hearts! It is the worst part of the body of sin and death; the first sin that ever entered into the universe and the last that is rooted out. It is God s most stubborn enemy!

Pride: a Secret Enemy

Pride is much more difficult to be discerned than any other corruption because of its very nature. That is, pride is a person having too high an opinion of himself. Is it any surprise, then, that a person who has too high an opinion of himself is unaware of it? His thinking is that he thinks that the opinion he has of himself has just grounds and therefore is not too high...

But, because of the nature of spiritual pride, it is the most secret of all sins. There is no other matter in which the heart is more deceitful and unsearchable and there is no other sin in the world that men are so confident in. The very nature of it is to work self-confidence and drive away any suspicion of any evil of that kind...

Spiritual pride takes many forms and shapes, one under another, and encompasses the heart like the layers of an onion: when you pull off one, there is another underneath. Therefore, we have need to have the greatest watch imaginable over our hearts with respect to this matter and to cry most earnestly to the great Searcher of hearts for His help. **He that trusts his own heart is a fool.**

Since spiritual pride in its own nature is so secret, it cannot be so well discerned by immediate intuition on the thing itself. It is best identified by its fruits and effects, some of which I will make mention of below together with the contrary fruits of Christian humility.

Pride: the Great Fault-finder

Spiritual pride causes one to speak of other persons' sins, their enmity against God and His people, or with laughter and levity and an air of contempt, while pure Christian humility disposes either to be silent about them or to speak of them with grief or pity...

Pure Christian humility causes a person to take notice of everything that is good in others, to make the best of it and to diminish their failings; however, he turns his eye chiefly on those things that are bad in himself and to take much notice of everything that aggravates them.

Pride: Takes Offence Easily

Spiritual pride takes great notice of opposition and injuries that are received and is prone to be often speaking of them and to be much in taking notice of their aggravation, either with an air of bitterness or contempt.

Pure and unmixed Christian humility, on the other hand, causes a person to be more like his blessed Lord when reviled: quiet, not opening his mouth, but committing himself in silence to Him who judges righteously.

For the humble Christian, the more the world is against him, the more silent and still he will be, unless it is in his prayer closet, and there he will not be still.

Pride: Hungry for Attention

Another effect of spiritual pride is to make the subject of it want attention. People often tend to act in a special manner as though others ought to take great notice and regard of them...

The eminently humble Christian thinks he needs help from everybody, whereas he that is spiritually proud thinks everybody needs his help.

Christian humility, under a sense of other's misery, entreats and beseeches, but spiritual pride tries to command and warn with authority.

Excerpts from Tim Challies...10 Sure Marks of Humility

Is there any trait more odious than pride or more precious than humility? Is there any trait whose presence we so highly honor in others and whose absence we so readily excuse in ourselves? Truly, pride is the chief of sins and humility the highest of virtues. Yet the Christian has the joy of seeing the Holy Spirit put pride to death and bring to life the beauty of humility. **Here are 10 sure marks that you are growing in humility.**

A humble person thinks little of himself. Job insists that God “saves the lowly,” which means, literally, “the person of low eyes” (Job 22:29)...

A humble person thinks better of others than of himself. “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit,” says Paul, “but in humility count others more significant than yourselves” (Philippians 2:3). **A humble person thinks better of others than of himself because he can see his own heart and the sin that lurks there better than he can see the heart of any other person. Though he knows the extent of his own depravity, he assumes the best of others. While he searches himself for every vestige of sin, he searches everyone else for every vestige of grace.**

A humble person has a low assessment of his spiritual disciplines. The humble person studies God’s Word and prays fervently, but then repents of his trite study and weak prayers. He knows that even his best moments are still marred by sin and his best efforts are still so weak..

A humble person complains about his heart, not his circumstances. Even when he faces difficulty, his greatest grief is the state of his heart... The more a Christian grows in knowledge, the more he becomes aware of his ignorance, of his lack of faith, and the more he cries out for God’s grace.

A humble person praises God in times of trouble. He praises God even in times of great difficulty and refuses to condemn God for bringing such painful circumstances. With Abraham he says, “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?” With Job, he always refuses to charge God with any wrongdoing, for it is the Lord who gives and the Lord who takes away.

A humble person magnifies Christ. He always ensures that he gives glory to Christ. He deflects all praise away from himself and to his Savior.

A humble Christian can bear the reproach of an enemy and the reproof of a friend. A humble person accepts reproof for sin. A sinful, arrogant person is too high to stoop down to take a reproof, but a godly person loves and honors the one who reproofs

him. As Solomon says, “Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you; reprove a wise man, and he will love you” (Proverbs 9:8). A humble Christian can bear the reproach of an enemy and the reproof of a friend.

A humble person is content to be eclipsed by others. He is willing to have his name and his accomplishments eclipsed by others so that Christ can be magnified and God can be glorified. He deliberately does battle with the ugly sin of envy, saying often, “Let me decrease and let Christ increase.” A humble Christian is content to be put aside if another can take his place and bring greater glory to God.

A humble person accepts the condition God sees best for him. While a proud man grumbles that he has no more, a humble man wonders why he has so much. A Christian looks at his sin and marvels that his condition isn’t far worse...

A humble person will stoop to the lowest person and lowest tasks. He will give time to the lowest person and he will give attention to the most undesirable tasks.

This article was drawn from The Godly Man’s Picture.

A Few Practical Lessons from the Puritans (Tim Challies and Joel Beeke)

Tim Challies: The Puritans went to war against pride. What would they want to teach us about pride and how we ought to put it to death?

Joel Beeke: The Puritans exhort us to love humility because God is Lord. Do we want to approach the King and receive His favor?

Henry Smith proclaimed that the King has declared pride and all her friends to be His enemy, but those who clothe themselves in humility may boldly draw near to Him. For the proud man “sets himself against God . . . he maketh himself equal with God, because he doth all without God, and craves no help of him; he exalteth himself above God, because he will have his own will, though it be contrary to God’s will.” How ugly is pride!

They urge us to treasure humility if we love Christ. Andrew Gray wrote that Christ never offered Himself as a pattern to us so much as in this, that He was humble (Matt. 11:29; John 13:12–14). **Humility is the beauty of Jesus Christ, the servant of the Lord.**

They warn of how subtle pride can be. We get so egotistical about the smallest things. Smith said, “The proud man is proud of a feather.” **Spiritual pride is especially tricky.** Pride can build a throne for itself on the lowest step of humility. Gray said, “It is difficult to be humble in our humility.” Pride can abuse our spiritual mountaintop experiences of God’s glory and twist them into occasions for self-exaltation (2 Cor. 12:7). Therefore we must watch and pray!

The Puritans tell us to humbly receive afflictions from God’s hand, even as those afflictions reveal the sin within us. Gray said, “A Christian never knows the strength of his lusts so well as under afflictions.” But believers must remember that God sends us through the wilderness of sufferings in order to humble us and reveal what is in our hearts (Deut. 8:2).

They call us to remember how little we understand God. John Owen wrote, “Be much in thoughtfulness of the excellency of the majesty of God. . . . how little a portion is it that thou knowest of him!” When Job saw a glimpse of God’s glory, he exclaimed, “I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes” (Job 42:6). Owen said that the most spiritual men on earth “know but a little of him and his glory.” How ridiculous it is for us to be puffed up by our knowledge of theology, when our theology teaches us the infinite glory and incomprehensibility of God!

A Touch of the Grace of Humility (Emphases added)

John Murray

A. B. Bruce in *The Training of the Twelve* said: **‘The whole aim of Satanic policy is to get self-interest recognized as the chief end of man.’ Self-exaltation was the aim of Satan himself: ‘Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty’ (Ezek. 28:17).** He looked upon his own beauty and wisdom. He wanted to glorify himself rather than God. He did not want to serve but to be served. He is cast down to the earth: ‘For thou hast said in thine heart I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God’ (Isa. 14:14)

Satan tempted our first parents after the same manner. He said ‘ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil’ (Gen. 3:5). They wanted to exalt themselves and to rob God of his glory. As a result all mankind fell into sin....

A. A. Hodge declared: ‘All self-consciousness is of the very essence and nature of sin’. The aim of the gospel is to turn us from self-consciousness to Christ-consciousness. Sin is self-love. There is no humility or meekness before there is sin-consciousness. Humility is the logical corollary of sin-consciousness. It is the man who is poor in spirit and mourns for his sin who is humble. A man can never be meek unless he sees himself as a vile sinner. The meek man is not proud of himself, he does not in any sense glory in himself. God is glorified in man’s dependence, as Jonathan Edwards eloquently proclaimed.

Augustine in an answer to a persistent enquirer said: ‘This way is first humility, second humility, third humility.’ In another place Augustine declared:

Humility is the foundation of all other virtues, hence, in the soul in which this virtue does not exist, there cannot be any other virtue except in mere appearance.

A Prayer for Humility

Merciful Father,

Your truth runs counter to our self-exalting world: humble service is the path to kingdom greatness. This truth isn't weak or foolish as the world would think, but is a blessed and honorable gospel garment donned by those who fear You, the One who exalts the humble and brings down the proud. *Oh, that the entire world would live in humility before You and each other!*

While I aspire a life of godly humility, the pull of pride seems too strong to overcome. I so often desire to sit on your throne instead of bowing before You as the only true Sovereign and Holy God. I think highly of myself and my accomplishments and forget I am a man made of dust who at best can be called a servant of a great God. I even diminish the offense of pride by holding it lightly; forgetting that pride cast Satan from Your presence and brought the corruption of your creation. *Oh, Lord, rescue me from foolish pride and help me learn from Your gentle and humble heart!*

Gracious Father, reprogram my soul with your Word to remember the world is all about Jesus and not myself. Help me not think more highly of myself than I ought, but to delight in regarding others as more important. Rescue me from the self-deception of pride by giving me a **realistic** view of my life, talents, and relationship with you; always looking to the cross which reveals both the wrath I deserve and Your costly grace.

In my battle against pride, keep me from a false humility that fails to recognize Your gracious gifts. Rather, help me steward what you have given me as a faithful servant—a servant ready to wear the garment of humility and serve you in whatever way would most help Your Kingdom and bring praise to Your Name.

Lord, Your Son left the pleasures of heaven for a life of service on earth—and He gave his life for undeserving and ungrateful people. Help me have His attitude, remembering that You oppose the proud and give grace to the humble. You must become greater; I must become less—only then does the glorious reality shine forth that Christ is highly exalted above every name in heaven and on earth.

May my entire being bow before You in loving allegiance, confessing You as Lord over all of my life and all of creation, to the praise of Your glory.

AMEN.

<https://www.kevinhalloran.net/a-prayer-for-humility/>