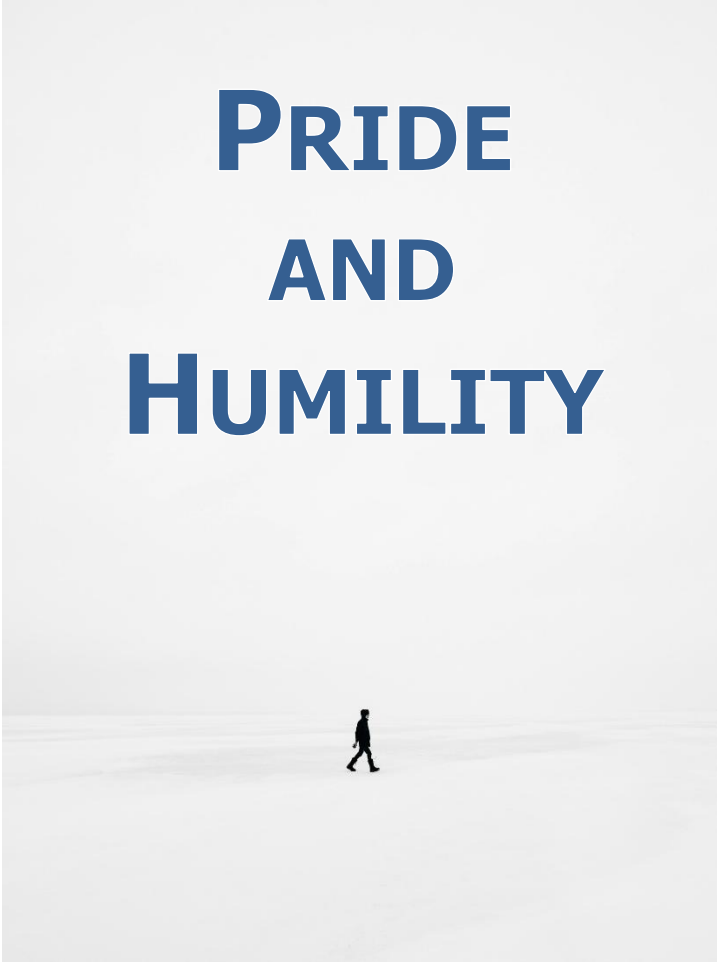


PRIDE AND HUMILITY



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‘Pride and Humility’
by
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PRIDE AND HUMILITY

Both pride and humility are significant in God's eyes for different reasons. James 4:6 says – *'God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.'* I'm sure, like me, you don't want God to resist you and that you would love more grace. So, we need to make sure we're not proud, but are humble. When we're in pride, we're doing things our way. God still loves us, but He won't bless what we're doing. But when we are truly humble before Him, we will be doing what He wants, in His way, and He will bless that.

What is Pride?

Pride is all about self. It's exalting ourselves above others and above God. It's exalting our own opinions above those of others and above God's truth. It is thinking we have all the answers and know better than anyone else, including God. Psalm 10:4 says – *'The wicked, in the pride of his face, has no room in his thoughts for God.'* The ultimate definition of pride is living our lives without reference to God or His Word. Psalm 14:1 tells us that – *'The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God."'* Those who are so proud as to discount God are actually fools, which is the complete opposite of how they view themselves in their pride.

Low Self-Esteem

Before going onto humility, I believe it's important to look at low self-esteem. When you think about it, low self-esteem is also all about self. People with low self-esteem will think thoughts like – "I'm nobody," "I can't do anything," "I don't deserve anything," "I'll keep quiet and hope no-one notices me," "No-one will be interested in me," "I'm not clever enough or important enough."

Just like the proud, people with low self-esteem are self-focused and this distorts how they see their relationship with others and with God. For example, instead of saying, “Thank You God for loving me,” they’ll think, “God can’t possibly love me.” Instead of expecting to see God’s promises manifest, they’ll think, “They will work for other people, but they won’t work for me.” They are actually saying that when God demonstrated His love for the world through the Cross, it wasn’t sufficient for them. That is a very prideful attitude. It’s saying “God needs to do something extra for me.” It is thinking that what I think about me overrides what God says about me – that I am loved and redeemed and seated with Him in heavenly places. We are called to take our eyes off ourselves and look to God – to believe we are who He says we are, no more in pride and no less in low self-esteem.

God Resists the Proud

Pride and low self-esteem are both all about ‘me’, and when we are focused on ourselves, God resists us. James 4:6 says – ‘*God resists the proud.*’ God loves everyone and has won forgiveness for all, so He won’t resist us as people; but He will resist our prideful actions. He will never promote anything that is rooted in pride. If we say, “I’m going to do this my way even though I know it’s not God’s way,” He will resist those actions and actively work against them.

James 4:7 tells us – ‘*Be subject therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*’ Proud people don’t submit to God and therefore they can’t resist the devil and see him flee. But when we submit to God, we are saying, “I’m going to see myself the way You see me – no more and no less.” Then we can resist the devil in the name of Jesus and see him flee from us.

In Proverbs 8:13 God says – *‘I hate pride, arrogance, the evil way, and the perverse mouth.’* Because God hates pride, we are called to do so too. The first part of the verse says – *‘The fear of the LORD is to hate evil.’* We’re not told to hate proud people, in fact we are told to love others, but hating pride is part of reverencing God, because it’s lining our attitude up with His.

What is Humility?

Let’s look at what humility isn’t first. It isn’t being a doormat and allowing people to trample over you. Deuteronomy 28:13 says – *‘The LORD will make you the head, and not the tail. You will be above only, and you will not be beneath.’* Nor is it low self-esteem as we’ve already seen. It isn’t humiliation. Humiliation is done to us by someone else – we have to humble ourselves. So don’t ask God to make you humble – it’s not an appropriate prayer. But as you choose to humble yourself, ask God to help you and He will.

So what is humility? It is putting God and others before ourself. Philippians 2:3-4 tells us to be – *‘doing nothing through rivalry or through conceit, but in humility, each counting others better than himself; ⁴each of you not just looking to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others.’* It is seeing ourself the way God sees us. Hebrews 2:6-8 says – *‘What is man, that you think of him? Or the son of man, that you care for him? ⁷You made him a little lower than the angels. You crowned him with glory and honour. ⁸You have put all things in subjection under his feet.’* That’s us. The Greek word that is translated as ‘angels’ here was translated ‘God’ in many other places. If we say, “I’m equal to God,” that’s pride. And if we say, “I can’t possibly be crowned with glory and honour,” that’s low self-esteem. God hates both attitudes because they deny the truth. He wants us to humbly agree with Him and accept the truth of who we are in Him.

Numbers 12:3 says – *‘Now the man Moses was very humble, more than all the men who were on the surface of the earth.’* That’s some statement. But what’s even more amazing is that Moses wrote it! Then surely that’s pride. But no, he was simply writing the truth as God had shown him. That’s humility. When we see ourself the way God sees us, we can put others first because we are secure in who we are, in how loved we are, in our position in Jesus and we don’t need the approval of others.

Jesus is our ultimate example of humility. Philippians 2:5-8 says – *‘Have this in your mind, which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, existing in the form of God, didn’t consider equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men. ⁸And being found in human form, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, yes, the death of the cross.’* When we are truly humble, we will want to obey God and will do so.

God Gives Grace to the Humble

James 4:6 says – *‘God ... gives grace to the humble.’* This sounds really good, but what does it mean? Grace is often described as **God’s Riches At Christ’s Expense**. Because Jesus took all our punishment on the Cross, we are able to receive and enjoy all the benefits. We don’t have to earn them or deserve them; we just have to believe and receive – that’s grace and that’s how we’re born-again. (To read about being born-again, go to the end of the booklet.) Grace is God’s unconditional love and blessings flowing over us and in us. I would love more of that.

We might think that being humble is giving up things we enjoy. Well, it is giving up our own ways and submitting to God’s, but His ways are so much better than ours, so that’s a positive thing

to do. Isaiah 29:19 says – *‘The humble also will increase their joy in the LORD.’* Pride does not bring joy, but true humility does; and it’s not worldly happiness, but everlasting and fulfilling joy in the Lord, flowing from God’s amazing grace.

James 4:10 says – *‘Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he will exalt you.’* Do you want to be lifted up by God? I do. The way to be exalted isn’t trying to promote ourselves in the eyes of the world. It’s humbling ourselves before God so He can lift us up. When we humble ourselves, the responsibility for promotion becomes God’s, not ours. That’s a good deal.

Proverbs 22:4 says – *‘The result of humility and the fear of the LORD is wealth, honour, and life.’* The proud think they deserve all this so they try and get it by their own efforts and demands. Those who are humble before God put themselves in the place where God can provide it all for them. That is so much better.

How to Humble ourselves

1 Peter 5:5 says – *‘all of you clothe yourselves with humility and subject yourselves to one another; for “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”’* To humble ourselves, we need to put God’s ways above ours; to obey Him and follow His guidance rather than our own; to agree with Him about who He is and who we are in Jesus; to trust Him in every circumstance; to consider others ahead of ourselves. Many Christians will go with their own ideas and then ask God to bless them. But humility seeks God’s will first and follows that, knowing it is already blessed.

1 Peter 5:6-7 says – *‘Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time, ⁷casting all your worries on him, because he cares for you.’* So if we worry, we aren’t trusting God and are in pride. Don’t be condemned by

that – we are all prone to worry and can find it hard to fully cast all our cares on God. When you find yourself worrying, take hold of your thoughts and turn them round. Consciously cast your cares on God. “Thank You Lord for taking my cares. Thank You that You are able to deal with them and will guide me in what to do. Thank You for Your peace that passes understanding. I choose to trust You.” 2 Corinthians 10:5 tells us to be – *‘throwing down imaginations and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.’* Each time you’re tempted to worry, cast those thoughts down and turn your focus back to God. The more you do it, the easier it becomes and God will give you more grace. If we admit that we can’t sort things out ourselves and hand our cares over to Him, then we are being humble.

In Matthew 18:3-4 Jesus gives us a picture of humility – *“Most certainly I tell you, unless you turn and become as little children, you will in no way enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. ⁴Whoever therefore humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.”* We need to be like a little child. A young child trusts their parents without thinking about it. When their father carries them, they don’t worry in case he drops them. When their mother feeds them, they don’t worry whether there’ll be another meal or not. They accept what their parents say is true without doubting it. This is how we need to be with our Father God, and then, when we are humble, we become *‘the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.’* Now that’s something! Pride leads to a fall, but humility leads to promotion in heaven. In God’s Kingdom, the way up is down and it’s a way of joy and peace, not striving and frustration. Let’s choose to humble ourselves before God and others and trust Him and then we can receive more grace.

Contrasting Pride and Humility

Pride = all about self

Humility = all about God and others

Pride = independence from God — I don't need God

Humility = dependence on God — I need God

Pride = taking glory to yourself

Humility = giving glory to God

Pride = exalting your own opinion above God's truth

Humility = exalting God's truth above your own opinion

Pride = exalting self

Humility = exalting God

Pride = not submitting to God

Humility = submitting to God

When we sin, pride says, "It doesn't matter," or, at the other extreme, "How can God possibly forgive someone like me?" But humility runs boldly to God to receive forgiveness, knowing it is freely available because Jesus has already won it. Hebrews 4:16 says – '*Let's therefore draw near with boldness to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace for help in time of need.*' That's humility.

Psalm 138:6 – '*For though the LORD is high, yet he looks after the lowly; but he knows the proud from afar.*'

Proverbs 11:2 – '*When pride comes, then comes shame, but with humility comes wisdom.*'

Proverbs 29:23 – '*A man's pride brings him low, but one of lowly spirit gains honour.*'

Humble Yourself and Receive More Grace

Some people live in pride or low self-esteem all or most of the time. However, we have all been proud at times, such as worrying instead of casting our cares on God. I don't want God to resist me and the fact that you're reading this, suggests that you don't want that either. We need to learn to recognise prideful thoughts before they become words or actions and deal with them quickly. Don't beat yourself up if you find yourself in pride or low self-esteem. Just turn away from it, receiving your forgiveness, and choose to focus on God in humility and He will lift you up. When our attention is fully on Him and His ways and not on ourselves and our ways, He gives us more of His wonderful grace. Thank You Lord.

Being Born-Again

When you accept Jesus as your Lord and Saviour you become born-again. God becomes your Father and you His child, and you can start to enjoy your personal relationship with Him.

Romans 10:9 says – *'If you will confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.'* Say this prayer out loud and believe it in your heart – "Jesus, I declare that You are Lord and that God raised You from the dead to live forevermore. Thank You for dying for me personally. I receive my forgiveness and my salvation now. Thank You Jesus, my Lord and Saviour."

You are now born-again and Jesus has come to live in you. All your sins are forgiven, past, present and future, and you have a new perfect spirit. And after this life is over, you'll live in love, peace and joy with your Father God for ever.

Life in Jesus

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God tells us that He resists the proud
but gives more grace to the humble.

But what is humility exactly?
You might be surprised by the truth.
And how do we humble ourselves?
Discover the answers to these questions
so you can receive
more of God's grace.



Katherine Hilditch has been teaching in local churches for many years. In 2013 she wrote her first booklet and since then has written many more. She created her website to make all the booklets freely available to everyone. They can be read online or printed out. Katherine's threefold purpose is to help people understand more about Jesus and all He has done and won for them, to encourage them to go deeper in their relationship with God and to provide material to help them share their faith with others. To read her story and find all the booklets go to –

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