

OVERCOMING PRIDE

Perhaps no other spiritual obstacle is quite like this one. Why? Because the challenge to overcome pride may be the only common denominator on every one of our spiritual “to do” lists. A simple reason exists for its Goliath proportions: **PRIDE IS SATAN’S SPECIALTY!** It is the characteristic that most aptly describes him. Pride is the issue that had him expelled from heaven. It is still one of Satan’s most successful tools in discouraging people from accepting the gospel of Jesus Christ. Let’s not fool ourselves into thinking that pride is a problem only for the lost. **The most effective means the enemy has to keep believers from being full of the Spirit is to keep us full of ourselves.** No wonder the Bible states and restates that **God hates pride.** It is the enemy of genuine ministry. It is the end of many homes.

Scripture exhorts believers, “Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand” (1 Pet. 5:6). God’s Word also makes that very unsettling statement in Daniel 4:37: “Those who walk in pride he is able to humble.” I believe the sum total of those two verses is this: **We can humble ourselves, or God can humble us.** God won’t put up with pride in His own children very long without dealing with it. He’s much too faithful. And far too much is at stake. I know one thing from personal experience: **humbling ourselves is far less painful than inviting God to humble us.** He tends to make sure His lessons “take.” I am absolutely convinced that the most painful season God has taken me through to date was primarily to shatter my yoke of pride. A yoke, incidentally, I didn’t even recognize I had. Believe me, I’m on the lookout for it now every single day.

In some ways, Christians have to be more alert to pride than anyone. If we don’t presently have an issue that is actively humbling us, we veer with disturbing velocity toward arrogance and self-righteousness. We are wise to remember that **Christ never resisted the repentant sinner. He resisted the religious proud and Pharisaic.** Remember, pride wears many masks. I once spoke on pride only to have someone remark afterward that she had far too little self-esteem to have pride. **Pride is not the opposite of low self-esteem. Pride is the opposite of humility. We can have a serious pride problem that masquerades as low self-esteem. Pride is self-absorption whether we’re absorbed with how miserable we are or how wonderful we are.** We are wise to be on the constant lookout for pride in our lives. I believe we can safely say that **if we’re not deliberately taking measures to combat pride, it’s probably doing something to combat humility.**

If I could have addressed only a few strongholds in this book, pride would have been one of them. I’ll tell you why. Pride is the welcome mat in every figurative prison cell. **All we have to do to remain bound in any area is to refuse to take responsibility for our strongholds and repent of the sin involved. Pride is a monumental boulder in the path toward breaking free.** No matter what stronghold you are seeking to demolish, you might consider praying a few Scriptures out of this chapter every day, adding a few of your own on the page provided. **We will never waste our time when we pray about our tendency toward pride and seek to humble ourselves before God.**

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I'd like to share a little added initiative to demolishing the stronghold of pride. These are some thoughts God gave me on the subject several years ago. May He use them to speak about **the biggest injustice of pride: IT CHEATS WHEREVER IT PLAYS!**

My name is Pride. I am a cheater.

I cheat you of your God-given destiny... because you demand your own way.

I cheat you of contentment... because you "deserve better than this."

I cheat you of knowledge... because you already know it all.

I cheat you of healing... because you're too full of me to forgive.

I cheat you of holiness... because you refuse to admit when you're wrong.

I cheat you of vision... because you'd rather look in the mirror than out a window.

I cheat you of genuine friendship... because nobody's going to know the real you.

I cheat you of love... because real romance demands sacrifice.

I cheat you of greatness in heaven... because you refuse to wash another's feet on earth. I

cheat you of God's glory... because I convince you to seek your own.

My name is Pride. I am a cheater.

You like me because you think I'm always looking out for you. Untrue. I'm looking to make a fool of you. God has so much for you, I admit, but don't worry... If you stick with me You'll never know.

PRAYING GOD'S WORD:

Father, Your Word says You will break down stubborn pride and make the sky above the proud like iron and the ground beneath him like bronze. (Lev. 26:19) Lord, Your Word is drawing a vivid picture of the arrogant life. Prayers lifted to heaven will seem to hit a ceiling of iron, and life beneath the feet will be hard. Help me to be humble before you, Lord. The life of the proud will eventually and undoubtedly become very hard.

Father, Your Word asks the questions, "Who is it you have insulted and blasphemed? Against whom have you raised your voice and lifted your eyes in pride? Against the Holy One of Israel!" (2 Kings 19:22) Please help me to have a proper respect for You, O God.

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Lord, according to Your Word, after Uzziah became powerful, his pride led to his downfall. He was unfaithful to the Lord his God. (2 Chron. 26:16) Please help me to not allow pride to be my downfall.

Lord, Your Word says that Hezekiah repented of the pride of his heart, as did the people of Jerusalem; therefore the Lord's wrath did not come upon them during the days of Hezekiah. (2 Chron. 32:26) Thank You for forgiving me when I repent of the pride of my heart.

Father, according to Your Word, in his pride the wicked does not seek You; in all his thoughts there is no room for You. (Ps. 10:4) Please help me to always make room in my thoughts for You, God. Don't allow me to continue on in pride that stops me from seeking You.

Lord, Your Word speaks of the wicked wearing pride as their necklace and clothing themselves with violence. (Ps. 73:6) You indicate a link between pride and violence. Please cause my life to be void of both these evils.

Father, You've said that to fear the Lord is to hate evil; You hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech. (Prov. 8:13) Help me to have a healthy fear of You that abolishes pride and arrogance.

My faithful Father, You've warned me that when pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom. (Prov. 11:2)

Father, You're teaching me that pride only breeds quarrels, but wisdom is found in those who take advice. (Prov. 13:10) Help me to discern the pride that is involved when I am quarrelsome.

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God, I know that a man's pride brings him low, but a man of lowly spirit gains honor. (Prov. 29:23) Help me to understand what You mean by a humble or lowly spirit. I want to be a person who gains honor in Your sight.

Father, help me to understand that the pride in my heart is deceiving me (Jer. 49:16)

Father, Your Word says that pride hardens the heart. (Dan. 5:20) Your desire for me is that I be tenderhearted. (Eph 4:22) Please melt any hardness in my heart.

Moore, Beth. Praying God's Word (pp. 57-61). B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.