

How Does Pride Affect Our Lives?

I would like to share with you a topic that concerns everyone: whether he believes in God and no matter how long he has been walking with Him. There are things in our lives with which we will be fighting throughout our whole lives. This doesn't mean that we will not obtain victories. It is about something rooted in us and something that God doesn't like. It is about pride. Pride is something common that all people have, no matter their appearance, race, culture, or habits.

Let us read some verses that talk about it.

“But He gives more grace. Therefore He says:

“God resists the proud,
But gives grace to the humble.” (James 4:6)

“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.” (James 4:10)

“For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” (Luke 14:11)

These passages talk about humility and pride. They say that God resists pride. It is something that He cannot bear. Pride is not manifested outwardly only. It is not a matter of how someone walks, talks, or acts in certain situations. These aspects are obvious manifestations of it, but we will see that it is something much more profound than what we imagine. People who don't know Christ are proud, but also believers have it even though they resist it. I think that God will work all our lives on it. This doesn't mean that we will not advance or have victories. Through Christ and the sacrifice He made, we can comprehend what humility is, and through His strength, we can obtain it. Nevertheless, God will work in our lives and treat us to preserve us from it. Most times, we will not even be aware of it, but He will keep on working so that we can grow and be ready to enter into the

heavenly gates with humility. This type of sin is one of those that we are not always aware of.

Pride precedes failure, and many times, we will not succeed in something because of it. Now, when I talk of success, I am not referring to material prosperity only or some other kind of success but of success in the kingdom of God. Meaning to bring fruit for His glory. There is a passage that talks about it.

⁷ Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. ⁸ This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. (Joshua 1 :7-8)

Here in this passage, we see God giving instructions to Joshua at the beginning of his march toward the promised land. There was a great journey ahead of him in which he had to face his fears, trials, and enemies. He had to obey God and fight for victory to obtain God's promises for his life and God's nation. God told him to take heed of His word and to obey it. That was going to bring him victory, prosperity, and success. I know that there might be people who don't use the word "prosperity" much when using godly vocabulary and talking about godly things. This is because this word might have been misused and used to imply material prosperity while neglecting the rest of God's word. We need to know that, however, this word is biblical, and its proper implementation has to do with the rest of God's word. It needs to be used in its proper context. We are talking about prosperity and success here that has to do with God's glory. We are talking about spiritual success which brings glory to God. We are talking of primarily seeking His kingdom and having success in it, knowing that the rest will be added after (Matthew 6:33). Still, God said that success will come when we meditate and obey His word, following His guidance.

What I want to say is that many times the reason we might not prosper and have success is the pride in us. God wants to preserve us from it, and sometimes, that

might be with the cost of withholding success. He wants to make us humble because, in this way, He can also use us. Who knows how many blessings and victories we might have missed because of pride? Still, a Christian experiences victories and success in his life, but this is only when he is humble. I know that great men of God who accomplished great things were known for their dedication to God and humility. We are talking of humility that He produces in our lives, which is a fruit of comprehending with heart what He is and the sacrifice He made for us. Such situations in which God works in people's lives because of the pride they have happen mostly to believers. God works in their lives because He loves them. Ungodly men, instead, might prosper and grow and be proud, but their success is not for God's kingdom.

Since ancient times humans have been looking for their own glory. We see the example of the tower of Babel. People wanted to reach out to heaven and be like God. He prevented that from happening in a way to preserve them from exalting themselves too much. He knew that would set them apart even more from Him. It is in people's nature to be proud. The only way to resist it is through faith in God. There is a well-known verse in [2 Chronicles 7:14](#) saying:

“if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”

Here, God tells His people what their attitude should be when approaching Him. Humility has to do with the forgiveness we receive from God. It starts with our conversion, and it should be present in future times when we ask for forgiveness. It is not something granted that we obtain mercy. We need to humble ourselves and acknowledge His greatness.

One of the examples in the Bible about pride we can see is the one of King Nebuchadnezzar. He was a King who got involved in Israel's history. He was used by God to correct His nation. That happened unknowingly in his life. While there were also other kings who were used somehow by God to bring about situations so that He could work and treat His nation, this king got even more involved as God started working personally in his life. He even came to know God. Until that happened, God had to work in his life and show him truths about His kingdom in a similar way as He works today in a believer's heart. That probably happened

because King Nebuchadnezzar was involved with godly men such as Daniel and his friends, and he witnessed miracles and prodigies from God ([Daniel 3](#)). The Scripture tells us that he had a dream ([Daniel 4:1-18](#)) that made him afraid, and he asked Daniel to give him an interpretation. Daniel gave him an interpretation of the dream, which warned him of not living in sin and living instead in a godly manner ([Daniel 4:19-27](#)).

What happened next is that as time passed, he forgot about the warning and the meaning of the dream and had an attitude of attributing all the glory of what he was to himself. He didn't acknowledge that all belonged to God, and He reigned above all. Instead of that, Nebuchadnezzar boasted about what he had done. The next verses describe how that occurred.

²⁸ All *this* came upon King Nebuchadnezzar. ²⁹ At the end of the twelve months he was walking about the royal palace of Babylon. ³⁰ The king spoke, saying, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?"

³¹ While the word *was still* in the king's mouth, a voice fell from heaven: "King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: the kingdom has departed from you! ³² And they shall drive you from men, and your dwelling *shall be* with the beasts of the field. They shall make you eat grass like oxen; and seven times shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses."

³³ That very hour the word was fulfilled concerning Nebuchadnezzar; he was driven from men and ate grass like oxen; his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair had grown like eagles' *feathers* and his nails like birds' *claws*.

³⁴ And at the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever:

For His dominion *is* an everlasting dominion,
And His kingdom *is* from generation to generation.

³⁵ All the inhabitants of the earth *are* reputed as nothing;
He does according to His will in the army of heaven

And *among* the inhabitants of the earth.
No one can restrain His hand
Or say to Him, “What have You done?”

³⁶ At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my honor and splendor returned to me. My counselors and nobles resorted to me, I was restored to my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added to me. ³⁷ Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all of whose works *are* truth, and His ways justice. And those who walk in pride He is able to put down. ([Daniel 4:28-36](#))

We see that for the pride he had and not attributing to God all the glory, he lost his mind and started living as an animal. He didn't come back to his senses till he repented, acknowledging that God reigns above all and that He exalts and humbles whomever He wishes according to His justice. Sometimes, believers need to go through a similar process in order to acknowledge some truths and to really glorify God. We need to seek the genuine attitude to be humble and not go through certain situations to be able to acknowledge only then that we need it. We notice that King Nebuchadnezzar wasn't the only prideful man then, but still, God made him go through all of that because He had already started working in his life. This is what He does in the lives of believers as well. He works in their lives because He loves them and because He cares for them. He corrects them, and if there is a need, He will humble them as well. He will eventually do that at the end of time at the final judgment, where He will show to each person that He reigns. The Bible says that every knee shall bow and acknowledge that Christ is Lord ([Philippians 2:10-11](#)). Still, this happens in the present in the life of the believers because, in this way, they will not be humbled when they stay in front of the great white throne. That's why, at times, even if it is not pleasant, God will do all possible so that we can have the right attitude and faith. He will work in us so that we can be humble. Because He accepts those who are humble. From our side, we need to be comprehensive and open to that. We need, in the first place, to seek humility without always being reminded about it. This is important.

So, we see that one of the ways pride manifests is by assigning the glory of some success to ourselves. We cannot do that because if we can achieve something today, it is because of God. Even the usual things we do. We might be thinking that as we have strength, we are able to do it, but it is actually because God gives us life. This example is for the usual things that we do, but it also applies much

more to what is spiritual and what we can achieve for His Kingdom. It is entirely because of Him. We need to glorify Him for that, and if when we examine ourselves, we see that we glorify and boast because of what we have achieved, we need to repent.

I repeat that pride doesn't have to do only with outward manifestations, which consist of the way someone talks or walks, but it is something more profound. Seeing it from this perspective, I cannot also become humble by changing certain ways of my behavior on the outside, such as talking silently and humbly or using good manners. This is a part of being humble sometimes, but it is only genuine if it is done for Christ and, most importantly – if it is produced by Him in our lives. Humility is a fruit of His Spirit living in us. His whole life was a perfect example of humility, and the sacrifice on the cross was intertwined with it. He taught humility, and He walked in it. He washed His disciples' feet and taught them to do so ([John 13:12-17](#)). He took off and abandoned all His majesty and died on the cross. He took the form of a bondservant and paid for something He didn't deserve. To be genuinely humble is something spiritual, and it becomes possible when we accept His sacrifice in our hearts. Then, a way starts for the believer in which he will still have to avoid pride, seek more humility, and pray to God for that. God will also work in his life to make that possible. The message of being humble is not for unbelievers only but, in a huge part, is for those who believe. They could become proud, too.

We have the example of the apostle Paul in which he prays to God to take out a thorn placed in his flesh by Satan. God doesn't take it away but tells him that His grace is sufficient and enough.

⁷ And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. ⁸ Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. ⁹ And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ([2 Corinthians 12:7-9](#))

In these passages, we see that lest he should be exalted above measure by the abundance of revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to him. That came from Satan in his life, but it was with the purpose of humbling him. By this, we see that Christians can become proud, too. In Paul's case, it was because of the abundance of revelations he had received. He could acknowledge that. We don't know what the thorn might represent for each one of us, but we need to trust in the work of God. He wants to make us humble.

As believers, we can never boast of the fact that God has chosen us to be part of His nation and those who are called. This occurred by pure mercy. If it is by mercy, it means that we cannot boast of it because we received it. There is a tendency to boast about God's election. This is what God's word tells us about the nation of Israel. They were boasting because of the fact God had chosen them. This is also the impact they had with Jesus when He began His teachings. Their understanding often clashed with His teachings as He urged them to repent, letting them know that they are not good by themselves alone and had to repent. He was teaching them to be humble, and they didn't want to accept it. John the Baptist told them:

“Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not think to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as *our* father.’ For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.” (Matthew 3:8, 9)

The same lesson is also valid for us today, as Paul teaches us in **Romans 11:16-24** that we can become boastful that God made us part of His nation today by faith. In the Epistle to the Romans, we see an example of an olive tree in which we Gentiles are compared to a wild olive tree that has been grafted into the natural olive tree, which is Israel. It tells us that they had been cut out because of unbelief, and we are inserted because of faith. It warns us, though, not to be haughty about it because we can be cut off, too. Pride is an enemy of faith, and it cannot coexist with it. With time, it eventually prevails and kills it, if we can say so. Faith grows and develops much better in a humble heart. We always need to have the attitude of renewing our hearts in the understanding of His mercy, which will make us humble. Those from Israel who believe will also be saved. They just need to be saved by mercy as us, not by merits or works. Works bring pride, while salvation by grace brings humility. If we start boasting because of it, we lose the purpose and get astray from God's purpose. Born-again believers eventually start

doing works, but they are those who are prepared by God for His glory, and only He can empower them to walk in them ([Ephesians 2:8-10](#)).

¹⁶ For if the firstfruit *is* holy, the lump *is* also *holy*; and if the root *is* holy, so *are* the branches. ¹⁷ And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, ¹⁸ do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, *remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you.*

¹⁹ You will say then, “Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in.” ²⁰ Well *said*. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. **Do not be haughty**, but fear. ²¹ For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. ²² Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in *His* goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off. ([Romans 11:16-22](#), emphasis added)

Here, we see that we are clearly warned not to be haughty but to fear. There is no place for pride when it comes to God’s mercy and election. The word of God clearly declares it. In [Deuteronomy 7:6-8](#), it is said that the Israelites weren’t chosen by God because they were numerous, greater, or more special than any other nation. If there was a reason why they were chosen, it was because God loved them and because He wanted to keep the oath He had with their fathers for His glory. It was because of mercy. As it was back then, so it is today. God keeps on choosing people and showing mercy for the same reason. His character and ways are the same.

⁶ “For you *are* a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. ⁷ The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; ⁸ but because the Lord loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the Lord has brought you out with a mighty

hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. (Deuteronomy 7:6-8)

We see that they were even smaller and weaker than other nations. Today as well the Bible tells us that God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the strong. This should make us humble and grateful. It cannot make us proud or boast of what we are. Even if today, as believers, we can have a spiritual gift and do things for His glory, the last thing we can do is to boast or glorify because of that because this is not from ourselves but from God. Without Him, we cannot do anything because only through Him we can bear fruits (John 15:5). Still, to be proud and to boast is a tendency that humans have, and we need to resist it.

The Bible states that pride precedes failure.

“Pride goes before destruction,
And a haughty spirit before a fall.” (Proverbs 16:18)

“Before destruction the heart of a man is haughty,
And before honor is humility.” (Proverbs 18:12)

This is what happened to King Nebuchadnezzar. His pride came before his fall. That was what caused him to fall. There is also another story from the Bible that confirms this truth.

It is a well-known story about a person who fell low by failing God and sinning. That was King David when he committed adultery with Bathsheba. We find this story in 2 Samuel 11. There, the story tells us that at the time when kings went out to battle, King David sent his general and his army to war, and he remained in Jerusalem. As he walked on the roof of his house one evening, he saw a woman taking a bath. He sent messengers to take her and committed adultery with her. Soon, other sins connected to that one followed. The result and the consequences were disastrous. Years after, King David still had to pay the consequences of what he had done. Many people say that the cause of that sin was that David decided to idle and not go to war, and that is true in part. Still, at times, we need to get deeper into the scripture and examine the causes for which some things happen. What actually caused him to act that way? When interpreting the Bible, we always need to take into consideration the previous or the following passages of the

verse we are looking at. This way, we look at the whole context of the meaning. It will help us to understand God's word more effectively.

In chapter eleven of **2 Samuel**, we see him remaining in his fortress and being tempted by seeing Bathsheba, but could it be something else besides the fact of remaining there that made him sin that way? In chapter ten, we see a war that arose between the nation of Israel and the people of Ammon. The ambassadors from Israel were disgraced by the rulers of that nation when they were sent to them. A conflict was about to spark, and in response to this, David sent his troops to face theirs. The nation of Israel had success in that war, but this time, we see the battle turn out in a different way than the previous ones. There were times in the past when David was still weak in a way and trusted all-heartedly the Lord for the outcome of his battles. We see him doing that in **2 Samuel 5:19** when he asked the Lord if he would succeed when facing the Philistines. In this and on other occasions, the Lord was with him, guiding him and fighting for him. This is how the believer's life of faith needs to be. This time, though, when they had to face the people of Ammon, they performed perfectly, coming up with good war tactics and a plan.

⁹When Joab saw that the battle line was against him before and behind, he chose some of Israel's best and put *them* in battle array against the Syrians. ¹⁰And the rest of the people he put under the command of Abishai his brother, that he might set *them* in battle array against the people of Ammon. ¹¹Then he said, "If the Syrians are too strong for me, then you shall help me; but if the people of Ammon are too strong for you, then I will come and help you. ¹²Be of good courage, and let us be strong for our people and for the cities of our God. And may the Lord do *what is good* in His sight."

¹³So Joab and the people who *were* with him drew near for the battle against the Syrians, and they fled before him. ¹⁴When the people of Ammon saw that the Syrians were fleeing, they also fled before Abishai, and entered the city. So Joab returned from the people of Ammon and went to Jerusalem. (**2 Samuel 10:9-14**)

You can read the whole of chapter ten, which speaks of how the situation unfolded, but in this part, we see that the generals sent by David were able to lead their armies and obtain victory. Still, the difference was that they obtained it thanks to their own strength and capability. They even mentioned the Lord's name, but the battle this time was different. At the end of the chapter, we read that David joined the battle and finished what his generals had started.

Sometimes, we can attain success through our own capabilities and strengths. It might look like it is from the Lord, but it is actually by what we have learned and by the experience we have. This doesn't mean that we glorify God with that. They, in a way, religiously mentioned the Lord's name but without trusting in Him. Pride is manifested also in our self-sufficiency and independence from the Lord. It might come in a way that we almost fail to see it.

The devil was the first one to sin in such a way ([Isaiah 14:12-15](#)). He wanted to become like God and to do things on his own. He wanted to be independent. This is the way that he also deceived the first people, Adam and Eve. He told them that they would be like God. In a way, they didn't want to depend on God anymore and sinned. This is one of the ways pride is manifested. "I feel strong enough and don't want to depend on God." For those who do not believe, this occurs consciously. They do not want to depend on God. For those who believe in God and already walk with Him, this happens unconsciously sometimes. They become strong, or they think they are experienced and start to depend less on God. We as people always need to depend on God. We are always weak. We just don't always recognize it. We might be able to do things and be capable of succeeding in life and in the work of our hands, and we need to glorify God for that as well and thank Him, but for what is spiritual and is supposed to bring fruit for His kingdom and glorify Him, we are certainly not capable. We cannot do it if He doesn't empower us. That's why God works in us to teach us how to depend on Him and make that possible. This is for the purpose of being in communion with Him and to glorify Him. This is the work He performs in us. Human beings are meant to be with God. With Him, we are complete. What the devil told Eve was deceit. They became incomplete by separating from God, and their eyes were opened to evil, not in the way that God meant for them.

Returning to David's story in [2 Samuel 10](#), we see that he obtained victory in that battle through his own strength and wisdom. This fact just shows that he didn't

have that dependence on the Lord as in the past days. When this happens in our life, it makes our faith weak and our relationship with the Lord to grow colder. As Christians, we can start unconsciously trusting in our own capabilities and not trust in the Lord as before. We need to be awakened and reminded to trust again in Him. To David, that happened the hard way. That was also what caused him to remain the next year at his home instead of going to war. He thought that the blessings and the victory were something granted already. He sent again his generals to attend the battle. That was apparently a logical move, as they did well the last year in the battle. Here, we see the attitude that precedes sin. It was independence from the Lord and trusting in his own capability. This is also how pride manifests. When we don't trust in the Lord but in our own strength. This happens often to most people, and they know well they trust in their own strength but to believers, it might happen slowly, and they might still think that they are fine with the Lord. We see the generals sent to the battle in [2 Samuel 10](#), saying in verse 12: ["And may the Lord do what is good in His sight."](#) They used the Lord's name. It looked like they were doing that through His strength and wanted to glorify Him, but they actually did it without trusting in Him. So. Here, in this story, we see that the passages in Proverbs saying that pride precedes failure are confirmed. When we don't trust as much in the Lord and our relationship is not good with Him as happened to King David, we become easy prey for the devil, and he tempts us.

Looking at some of the examples we gave, such as Paul's and King David's, we see that when talking of pride, we speak of something that can occur in believers' lives. Many people might be thinking that as believers have repented and have new lives, pride is not easily manifested in their lives but as we said, it can be manifested in attitudes such as attributing God's glory to themselves or stop relying on God and relying on their strength instead. Pride is not manifested into the lives of non-believers only in a specific outwardly behavior. It is something that occurs in a person's heart. God wants to preserve His children from it and that's why He works into their lives. God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. He will not reject a broken spirit and a contrite heart, as [Psalm 51:17](#) says:

["The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit,
A broken and a contrite heart—
These, O God, You will not despise."](#)

This is the conclusion he came after repenting from the sin he committed with Bathsheba and after trusting in his own strength. At times, we grow in pride, and that attitude leads us to failure, which helps us realize that we are weak and need God.

There is a story I heard from a famous preacher's teaching one day. He said that once he received a great revelation from the Lord and that was a revelation of Heaven. He saw in part how that place would be. He said that not so long after that experience, he went through one of the lowest and toughest stages of his Christian life. He fell into a deep pit of discouragement and experienced plenty of difficulties regarding his faith. He even began doubting his previous experience with the Lord of Heaven. Some people even told him that God was probably working in his life to show him that what he experienced wasn't real. He was confused for a while, but he knew in his heart that his experience was real. He then acknowledged that a person, after being on a high point of faith and being on a mountain, is taken by God to a valley. That is only with the purpose of humbling a person so that he can understand that God is above all and he can really give glory to God. God doesn't do that to hurt us. He doesn't humble us in a way to underestimate us. The Bible says that those who humble themselves will be exalted ([Matthew 23:12](#)). That means that when we humble in God's way, we will also be exalted His way and that it is not as we may imagine it, but when it happens, we will understand our real value the way God sees it. Therefore, He works His work in us for a good purpose. Sometimes, we might think we glorify Him for what we have or what He has done, but inside us are inner attitudes that we cannot control sometimes, and He works in us so that we can really glorify Him, be humble, and believe. This is His work in us, and it is only possible because of Him. This preacher noticed that this is a common occurrence to believers, and many people could go through a time of trial after experiencing a height in their faith and a good time with the Lord.

We also see some of these situations happening to godly people in the Bible. This, most of all, confirms to us that these experiences are from God. We see the disciples going through a storm and fearing for their lives in the sea of Galilee ([Matthew 14:22-33](#)) after participating in one of the biggest events and miracles in the New Testament, which is the multiplication of the bread and the fish

([Matthew 14:15-21](#)). They were sent by Jesus to get on that boat. We often could be going through storms in our lives.

One of the other examples is the one of the prophet Elijah. He had one of his greatest experiences after facing the false prophets of Baal and showing God's power to the people ([1 Kings 18:20-40](#)). He made an offering to God and a fire consumed it before the people standing there. Everyone could see God's majesty. Not so long after that, he was threatened by Jezebel, and he feared for his life. That made him run away in the wilderness ([1 Kings 19:4](#)). He was going through one of the greatest crises he ever had in his life. It happened straight after he had one of his greatest successes. Elijah was eventually encouraged and comforted by God. He works in our lives through these trials and situations. He only knows the purposes, but one of them is to make us humble. At times, these trials and difficulties come before achieving success so that we can know that what happened was because of His grace, and other times, the difficulties come after so that we can have a humble attitude. Obviously, there is not a specific path in which things need to happen the same way all the time. These are just examples in which we see the way God works at times. Our hearts are like deep wells, and only He knows the way to work in them. His purposes are higher, and they are for our good.

There are many passages talking about pride throughout the scripture and God left them to warn us against it. He wants to keep us humble and to create His image in us. Image through which we can glorify Him in the right way and know more about His majesty.

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