

Day 16 - Pride and Humility

Our godliness can often be measured by the line between our pride and humility. Scripture tells us that God has placed a spirit of “fierce desires” in us. Pride can ignite these God-given desires into an occasion for doing wrong. Humility, on the other hand, makes room for God, who tempers and directs our desires, and guides us to lasting fulfillment.

Scripture tells us that Jesus humbled Himself and was obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross (a more humiliating event could not have been imagined). So we practice humility as a way to follow Jesus, and to cast off all our ineffective, prideful attempts at self-promotion, self-salvation and self-satisfaction.

When we remember that Jesus’ death is our only hope, and that all our efforts to save ourselves are at best short-term solutions and doomed to fail, we weep for our condition. But we also need to remember that humiliation and remorse, both appropriate responses to God, are temporary. Through Christ’s resurrection, the humble are lifted up, and those who mourn are comforted with an everlasting comfort.

Additional Reading

James 4:1-10: “What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from your desires that battle within you? You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. Or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us? But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble." Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up."

John 16: 19-22: "Jesus speaks to his disciples before his death) "Very truly, I tell you, you will weep and mourn... you will have pain, but your pain will turn into joy. When a woman is in labor, she has pain, because her hour has come. But when her child is born, she no longer remembers the anguish because of the joy of having brought a human being into the world. So you have pain now; but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you."

Psalms 23 (NLT): "A psalm of David. The LORD is my shepherd; I have everything I need. He lets me rest in green meadows; he leads me beside peaceful streams. He renews my strength. He guides me along right paths, bringing honor to his name. Even when I walk through the dark valley of death, I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me. Your rod and your staff protect and comfort me. You prepare a feast for me in the presence of my enemies. You welcome me as a guest, anointing my head with oil. My cup overflows with blessings. Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me all the days of my life, and I will live in the house of the LORD forever."

- In what area of your life or in what relationship do you need to ask God to grant you humility?
- Is there someone you need to humbly approach and ask for forgiveness?
- Is there an area you need to surrender to God and no longer seek your will, but to trust in Him for His will to be done?

Prayer

God grant me the ability to see myself as You see me. Yet protect me from what I find in my own heart, for surely it is more awful than I can bear. Forgive me, and carry my burden of grief when I see my failings. And God, don't let me take credit for the good things You have given me. In Your mercy help me to see the pride in my own heart. Heal and renew my spirit; refine the passion of my heart; and help me to walk in humility.

Journal

Write what you learned from your study today