

HUMBLE YOURSELF

There is a battle in this world between light and darkness. Before someone comes to God, they are in a state of spiritual darkness (Proverbs 4:18-19; John 3:19-20; Ephesians 5:8), in which they do not see the realities of the wickedness in their lives and in this world. Thankfully, those who believe and obey the truth of Jesus (who is the Light, John 8:12) turn from darkness to light (Acts 26:16-18; John 3:21; Colossians 1:13)! To begin this journey, it is critical to recognize the truth about God to trust that He exists (Psalm 19:1-11) and to embrace the greatness of His acts and His character (Genesis 1:1-2:3; Psalm 145:1-21; Isaiah 40:12-31). When you see God's greatness, you can begin embracing your own smallness. Therefore, as you recognize these things, you must humble yourself before God by embracing that He's God and you're not.

PROVERBS 18:12

You must determine whether you will conduct yourself in pride or humility. Although society often celebrates pride, God warns against a person whose heart (the core of his/her being) has a higher estimation of himself than he/she should. When anyone thinks higher of self than is appropriate (Romans 12:3), devastation will follow (Proverbs 16:18)! For he/she loses touch with reality and acts selfishly (toward God and/or other people). Pride-filled beliefs, words, and actions become self-gratifying, and destruction results in that person's relationship with God and others. Furthermore, the prideful and self-serving lifestyle also wreaks havoc on his/her own life by producing the terrible fruit of foolish living (by rejecting God's wisdom)! In contrast, someone who is humble has a modest estimation of self that yields honor to God and to others above seeking it for himself/herself. Living in this way, though, will result in greater honor than one could achieve by pridefully trying to seek it for self!

LUKE 14:7-11

It is common for people to pridefully lift themselves up so they will be honored in this life. In fact, many believe it is even necessary to lift themselves up so that others recognize their value and importance. This can be seen

in both the situation unfolding before Jesus in this text and in His parable (as people sought seats that demonstrated how they were more important and honorable than others). However, Jesus practically illustrated how pridefully seeking honor for yourself will backfire and lead to your humiliation. Instead, humbling yourself will be the only path to truly being exalted! This is true in physical ways during your life as it relates to how you view yourself in comparison with other people. Then, it is especially true spiritually as it relates to how you view yourself in comparison with God!

JAMES 4:6-7

Humility is not just a necessary characteristic for your physical life, and pride does not just destroy your physical life. Instead, these impact your relationship with God and where you will spend eternity! Those who are filled with pride forget (willfully or negligently) who God really is, how much greater He is than they are, His authority over everything and everyone (including them), and refuse to submit themselves to Him. As such, they will experience God's wrath as His enemy (Romans 2:8-9). In contrast, those who recognize their smallness in comparison with God will remember how great God is, His authority over their lives, and submit (yield) to Him rather than living according to their own desires. These will then experience God's favor and blessings eternally (Romans 2:7, 10)!

JAMES 4:13-17

A person's pride or humility will be visible even in how plans are made. Someone who is proud will talk about their plans as if they are in control (e.g., "tomorrow, I will..."). This kind of talk is arrogant boasting and is evil before God because it fails to recognize how little control you actually have (Isaiah 40:22). The reality is that there are many things about your plans you do not control (e.g., sickness, transportation problems, weather). Ultimately, you do not control whether you will even be alive on this earth tomorrow! Therefore, you must consider your plans with the modest estimation of yourself that recognizes your life on earth is like a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. Instead of planning as if you are in control, your plans should recognize God's authority over your life and whether He will permit you to live and carry out those things (Luke 12:16-21)!

PROVERBS 3:5-7

The issue of pride or humility is ultimately an issue about whether you will trust self or God more. When you arrogantly trust in yourself, you will think you know better than God (at least in those areas you disagree with Him in) and choose to live how you want above the way He says is best and right. However, if you humble yourself before Him to recognize He is greater and knows far better than you (Isaiah 55:8-9), you will trust in Him and submit to His ways above your own. Remember that being wise in your own eyes has led you to devastation and darkness, and you will not be able to fix your mess with more pride. Only humility before God will help you begin seeing the Light (1 Peter 5:5-6)!

DANIEL 4:28-37

King Nebuchadnezzar (a great king of Babylon) dreamed about a large and notable tree in the middle of the earth getting chopped down and its stump being bound (Daniel 4:4-18). Daniel then gave the interpretation of it (Daniel 4:19-27), which was executed in this passage concerning the king. King Nebuchadnezzar became proud and exalted himself, as though he was responsible for all his success and as though his success was for his own glory. However, God humbled him by allowing him to experience a time of insanity. His sanity only returned when he looked up to Heaven and praised God as being higher than himself! Similarly, whenever people make life about themselves and forget God, their pride will result in humiliation and behavior that is insane (senseless, not using a sound mind). This insane behavior (selfish, sinful, wicked, immoral, lacking truth) will continue until people look solely to God for direction in life. Only by humbling oneself and looking to God will a person find true sanity and honor!

CONCLUSION

Pride gets you outside of your true place, while humility maintains your proper place and sense of smallness. Pride results in destruction, while humility results in honor. Pride takes you down the path of darkness, while humility points you toward the true Light. Therefore, if you want true change in the direction of your life and want to experience what God has prepared, you must be humble and trust in God above yourself!

DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

Why does destruction follow pride?

Why does honor follow humility?

What will happen if you pridefully seek honor for yourself?

What impact does pride have on your relationship with God?

What impact does humility have on your relationship with God?

How will humility or pride impact the way you make plans?

How is the issue of humility or pride an issue of trust?

How does pride lead to insanity and humility lead to sanity?

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