***“Pride: A Dangerous Strength”***

Man defines pride as a high regard for one’s own self; many times viewed as a positive for us in a world where a great deal of emphasis is placed on pride in one’s self and pride in one’s work product. However, pride is dangerous and can easily spiral out of control. Proverbs 16:18-20. 18Pride *goes* before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall. 19 Better *to be* of a humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud. 20 He who heeds the word wisely will find good, And whoever trusts in the Lord, happy *is* he.

Pride is a dangerous attribute, which we all have to a certain degree. Sinful pride destroys families, professional lives and more importantly spiritual lives. Luke 12:16-21. 16 And he told them this parable: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. 17-19 He thought to himself, ‘What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops…. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain and I’ll say to myself, “You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.” 20 “But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’ 21 “This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God.”

When we succeed, we tend to place more value in ourselves and we lose sight of where our ability originates. It is easy to take credit for “our” successes and blame God for the failures. We also have to be careful that our pride does affect the way we view others/beware of comparisons. In Luke 18:9-14 we read the familiar story about the Pharisee and the tax collector. “…God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector…” …And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise *his* eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, “God, be merciful to me a sinner!” “…For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” Many times this passage is used to address praying and the attitude we should have when addressing God. I would submit to you this passage also shows how pride can cause one to lose sight of their role on earth – pleasing God – not being seen of men. It also shows how pride in ourselves can bleed over into all facets of our lives – including our service to God.

Psalms 10:3-4 For the wicked boasts of his heart’s desire; He blesses the greedy *and* renounces the Lord. 4 The wicked in his proud countenance does not seek *God;* God *is* in none of his thoughts. Those that are proud have life backwards, but it is an easy trap to fall into. Pride can be habit forming. It is a matter of making small concessions along the way – it doesn’t happen overnight.

In Daniel 4:28-33 we read of God’s attitude towards King Nebuchadnezzar and his pride through interpreted dreams. “…Your royal authority has been taken from you. 32 You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like the ox.” Nebuchadnezzar was one of the greatest kings in power and wealth in history yet God humbled him when he forgot where it all came from. We need to humble ourselves in the sight of the Lord throughout our lives or we will be humbled permanently in judgment.

So how do we humble ourselves?

For those **who are not Christians** you have to follow the steps for salvation:

**Hear**: Matt 13:9

**Believe**: Mark 16:16

**Repent**: Acts 2:36-38

**Confess**: Matt 10:32-33

**Baptism**: Acts 2:38, 41/Acts 8:12

For those **who are Christians** and have gone astray we must: set aside our pride; repent, turning away from our sins; ask for forgiveness and make steps to live an upright life – easier said than done, but we must start today!

**Final Calling**:

Isa. 55:7-9: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts;
Let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. 8 “For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts, Nor *are* your ways My ways,” says the Lord. 9 “For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.

God knows better than us, we better start acting like we know this truth!

Luke 5:31-32: 31 Jesus answered and said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. 32 I have not come to call *the* righteous, but sinners, to repentance.”

Failing to plan is planning to fail, do not be caught unprepared. Today has been given as an opportunity for us, tomorrow is not guaranteed and may be too late (2 Pet. 3:8-10).

**-JW**