



TODD LEVIN MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

A monthly teaching publication to our partners and friends

SPIRITUAL PRIDE

“Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.”

Proverbs 16:18 (KJV)

Dear Partners and Friends,

The Word of God warns us of the kind of attitude or spirit that will be dominant in the last days just before Jesus comes. In II Timothy chapter 3, verses 1 and 2, it states that, *“in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves,”* or *“self-absorbed”* as the Message translation states.

Yes it is true that before we can love others, we do need to love ourselves. But the danger comes when we become full of ourselves, self-absorbed. In other words, the only person that we look out for is number one – ME. And if that means stepping on or over others to get ahead, then we do it, regardless of the damage and wounds that we may cause. After all, what’s important is that we come out ahead at any cost, as some may believe. We need to keep thinking more of ourselves right? At least this is what the apostle Peter tried to get Jesus to do once Jesus announced that he was going to be tried and put to death.

“Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.”

Matthew 16:22 (KJV)

There are sacrifices that will need to be made in order for God’s plan, purpose and will to be carried out in your life. Everything cannot always center upon us. Once we die to selfishness and let God have his way, then we discover what life is all about – God’s life that is in us. It’s a life of giving, loving and serving others. A life that prefers others rather than oneself. When we learn to get out of the way, then God can have His way.

“Then Jesus went to work on his disciples. “Anyone who intends to come with me has to let me lead. You’re not in the driver’s seat; I am. Don’t run from suffering; embrace it. Follow me and I’ll show you how. Self-help is no help at all. Self-sacrifice is the way, my way, to finding yourself, your true self.”

Matthew 16:24-25 (Message)

The biggest mistake that some have made is having too high of an estimation of them-selves. And in doing so, they have not discerned the rest of the body of Christ remembering that they are only **one part** of the body which contains many members with gifts that differ.

“For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us.”

Romans 12:3-6 (KJV)

I believe John the Baptist is a good example for us to look at today. John was a godly witness. He simply bore witness of Christ the Savior and did not try and be the Savior. John preferred Jesus rather than himself. John was not interested in building his own ministry. He was not in competition with the Lord. He had no jealous bones in his body.

“John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, “This was He of whom I said, He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.”

John 1:15 (NKJV)

When asked of his identify by the Jews, John did not deny but confessed, ***“I am not the Christ”*** (John 1:20). But this answer did not satisfy the Jews. They continued,

“And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” Are you the Prophet? And he answered, “No.” Then they said to him, “Who are you, that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?”

John 1:21,22 (NJKV)

“What do you say about yourself?” What a tempting question this is for many. Here was a grand opportunity for John to sound his trumpet and to boast about his ministry, effectiveness and impact that he had upon so many of his converts. He could have brought out the fact that he was God’s messenger – a prophet – anointed by God – at the forefront of his generation, but this is not how he responded. John knew his identity. ***He knew who he was and who he was not.*** He did not try and pretend, mislead or draw attention to himself. Instead he was busy drawing attention to another – Jesus, the Lamb of God. Listen to John’s own testimony:

“He said: “I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’ as the prophet Isaiah said.”

John 1:23 (NKJV)

“You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, ‘I am not the Christ,’ but ‘I have been sent before Him...He must increase, but I must decrease.’”

John 3:28, 30 (NKJV)

One thing we the body of Christ need more of today is to die to self-exaltation, self-absorption, and self-help. We need to be full of God and not full of self. He must increase, and we must decrease. This means, laying aside our wants, our agendas, our desires, our touchy feelings, and let Christ live in and consume our being.

There's a parable in Luke's gospel of a rich man who thought that life was defined by the abundance of things that he possessed. Notice as you read that this man was consumed with himself, his own self-achievements and what he himself possessed.

"Then he told them this story: 'The farm of a certain rich man produced a terrific crop. He talked to himself: 'What can I do? My barn isn't big enough for this harvest.' Then he said, 'Here's what I'll do: I'll tear down my barns and build bigger ones. Then I'll gather in all my grain and goods, and I'll say to myself, "Self, you've done well! You've got it made and can now retire. Take it easy and have the time of your life!" ' "Just then God showed up and said, 'Fool! Tonight you die. And your barnful of goods— who gets it?' "That's what happens when you fill your barn with Self and not with God."

Luke 12:16-21 (Message)

I believe one characteristic of humility is being able to give honor to whom honor is due. When a person is prideful, they find it very difficult and seemingly impossible to acknowledge the greatness of others because they are too full of themselves. Sadly to say, but some have become so accustomed to always preferring themselves they have never learned how to prefer others; consider another's feelings, wants or desires. Pride is when my estimation of self becomes greater than my estimation of others.

At this stage, we have forgotten the fundamental principle and that is: "God created all men equal." And the blood that Jesus poured out at Calvary for me is the same blood that He poured out for my neighbor, for my brother and for my sister as well.

Is this how Jesus taught the disciples to live, a self-centered lifestyle? Of course not, but rather a life of service to others. Even Jesus our role model stated that He did not come to be served but to serve.

"Whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Mark 10:43-45 (NKJV)

I think it's time that some get off their "high horse" and begin once again to follow after and obey the new commandment that Jesus gave.

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

John 13:34-35 (KJV)

It's only through our love that we demonstrate and communicate to others that we are truly His disciples. Paul stated it this way, *"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."* **Hebrews 12:14 (KJV)** When my ways please the Lord, the Word tells me that even my enemies will be at peace with me. (Proverbs 16:7) However, by not discerning the Lord's body, and walking about with an arrogant prideful, hardhearted and unteachable attitude, I bring judgment upon myself. For remember, *"God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble."* **James 4:6 (KJV)**

When someone is so wrapped up in themselves, continually consumed with their wants, their desires, their opinions and their way of doing things, then they have no room for God and His way of doing things. Pride has clouded their thinking. This person is no longer open to the counsel of others because in their own mind they have too high of an estimation of themselves. And regardless of what others may say, this person is always right and everyone else is always wrong. This person has become completely close-minded, unteachable and hard hearted, refusing to conform their thinking and actions to God's Word. Accountability is no longer in their vocabulary. They answer to no one but to themselves. This kind of person has no bright future but is walking down a lonely dark road that will eventually lead them to destruction.

Then there is one other scripture in the book of Romans that I would like to call your attention to. It's found in Romans chapter 8.

"Focusing on the self is the opposite of focusing on God. Anyone completely absorbed in self ignores God, ends up thinking more about self than God. That person ignores who God is and what he is doing. And God isn't pleased at being ignored."

Romans 8:7-8 (Message)

So what does God think about pride? It's clear that He is not pleased at being ignored by someone who is consumed with them self. Is pride, arrogance and self absorption just something that He turns his head and simply looks away from? Let's look at a few more scriptures and find out.

"These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren."

Proverbs 6:16-19 (KJV)

"The LORD will destroy the house of the proud."

Proverbs 15:25 (KJV)

"Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD."

Proverbs 16:5 (KJV)

"An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin."

Proverbs 21:4 (KJV)

“He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife.”

Proverbs 28:25 (KJV)

“For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth.”

Malachi 4:1-2 (KJV)

“God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.”

James 4:6 (KJV)

So we can see that pride is something that God calls sin, an abomination, a strife agent, something that He will resist and something that will burn up. It seems quite evident that overestimating one self is definitely not the way to go. This is an area we want to steer clear away from or suffer the consequences. I think I've made up my mind, now what about you?

I would encourage you today to examine your own heart and ask what kind of estimation do you have of yourself, verses what kind of estimation do you have of others? Do you value the friendships that God has given you or in your mind is that person lucky to have you as a friend? Are you open-minded to receive any kind of instruction, correction or counsel from others or do you know it all? Do you always feel that you are right and everyone else is wrong? Do you often look around at what others are doing and what others have and compare where you are in life and what you don't have? Would it bother you to come in second place instead of first for a change? Are you jealous when others are happy? Do you have a problem when the Lord uses someone else instead of you? Do you feel you are indispensable and irreplaceable, i.e., no one could possibly do as good of a job as you do?

If the answer to any of these questions is yes, then you have taken the bait of the enemy and the only way out is to swallow your pride, ask God's forgiveness and decide right now to walk in love towards others regardless of what reputation you think you have. Lay it all down and follow Him.

Your Friends and Partners,

Todd & Eva