

PRIDE IS THE PROBLEM
Proverbs 16:18 / Luke 18:9-14
“Skillful Living”
Phil de Martimprey

Last week we looked at how foolish and destructive it is, to attempt to live without regard to the “manufacturers guidelines”. Yet, despite how clearly foolish it is, it is the path that most people take. In our western culture today, there is a widespread embrace of “relativism”. Relativism is the idea that there is no objective/absolute truth, and that each person can determine their own, equally valid, truth to live by. We can see the impact of this all over our country today, particularly in the context of human sexuality. However, from the very moment of creation, God established a different and correct way to live. This is called the way of righteousness and is found at every turn through the book of Proverbs.

Clearly, the arguments for relativism become self-defeating and almost laughable at times, as its proponents seek to prove the objective, universal, and absolute nature of their claims of “total relativism”. One of these objective claims that rings throughout our culture, which I believe is especially deceptive and damaging, is the foundation for the topic we will discuss today. In our study this week, we will be looking at the subject of Pride. One of prides foundational lies, that our culture is saturated in, is that **“you are perfect the way you”**. For the last 20+ years, our society has been obsessed with making people, particularly young people, feel self-satisfied, self-reliant, and self-centered, *regardless* of its negative impacts. This lie is at the root of what it means to be Proudful or Haughty, and it numbs us to one of the most powerful truths any person can accept... that we are deeply and entirely broken, and in need of someone to save us. As we look at Pride today, we will see how it destroys the desire to live the righteous life, we will see how to diagnose it in our lives, and how scripture reveals we can fight against and defeat it.

DEFINING PRIDE

Knowing what we do of our cultures intentional deviation from the Truth, it will come as no surprise, that our culture defines pride in a positive manner. We have gone as far as labeling the entire month of June as “Pride” month, where we celebrate the many deviations from God’s established order, relating to human sexuality. However, pride is certainly not something to be celebrated, and the bible gives us a true description of pride. From the many examples of pride in the scriptures, I want to use the following definition of Pride in our study today. Pride is **“Thinking and acting, as if we are God”**. In Pride, there is no honest self-evaluation, there is no desire to improve, there is no recognition of shortcomings and inward sin, there is no bending the knee in confession or repentance. These things should be as common as breathing among God’s children! There is, of course, One who has no shortcomings, no need for confession and repentance, no need to bend the knee, and that One is God. So when

we lose sight of those things in our lives, we move closer and closer to **thinking and acting, as if we are God**. This will always lead to our destruction.

Proverbs 16:18

“Pride comes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before the fall”

DIAGNOSING PRIDE

Hopefully, we are convinced of the seriousness and pervasiveness of pride in our lives. So what would the signs be if we struggle with Pride? How would we know? As a point of immediate encouragement, if you are honestly asking this question of yourself then you have already begun the battle! Continue to prayerfully partner with the Holy Spirit in self-reflection, confession, and repentance. That is where life is found! Here are some symptoms to look for in your life that point to pride.. This certainly is not an exhaustive list, but it is some of the more apparent examples: Judgmentalism, a quick temper, rarely (if ever) apologizing, bending the truth to make ourselves look better, more aware and vocal about the faults of others than about our own, lack of desire to read and apply the Word of God. I'm sure we each could quickly add to this list out of our own experience. Jesus also gave us a parable to illustrate how pride comes into even the most “religious” among us. See Luke 18:9-14.

DEFEATING PRIDE

Defeating pride begins with centering our lives on some of the most profound yet simple truths in the word of God. First and foremost, is the truth that we are CREATED beings, and God is the CREATOR. **We are not, and never will be, God!** This truth is the bedrock upon which a proper relationship with God is established. When Lucifer thought and acted like he was God, then subsequently deceived Eve into believing that she could also be like God, the order God had established at creation broke irreparably. Because of pride, sin entered into the world and has infected every human heart since then!

The second bedrock truth is an honest recognition that we have violated God's law and need someone to save us from His wrath. This truth leads us to Jesus, who willingly took the wrath of God upon himself, on our behalf.

When these two truths are firmly established in our souls, there is no place for pride. We become far more aware of the places in our lives God is seeking to transform, and we rejoice in His mercy and grace. Out of the soil of these two truths grows a life of humility, willfully and joyfully submitting to the scriptures and caring about others as more important than ourselves. May we all work to defeat the pride that would so quickly destroy us.