

BATTLES CHRISTIANS FACE: PRIDE

Discuss in groups:

1. Is it good to be proud? If yes, when?
2. Is being proud a sin? If yes, why?

WHY DOES GOD HATE PRIDE SO PASSIONATELY?

Pride is when sinful human beings aspire to the status and position of God and refuse to acknowledge their dependence upon Him. Pride is so serious that it does not just clash with other people; it clashes with God himself. Instead of God being the centre of everything, the proud person becomes / aspires to be the centre of all things.

“As long as you are proud, you cannot know God. A proud man is always looking down on things and people; and, of course, as long as you are looking down, you cannot see something that is above you.” — C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity

Pride was the first sin:

1. **Before Creation:** the fall of Satan / Lucifer: Isaiah 14: 12-15, Ezekiel 28: 13-17
2. **After Creation:** The Garden of Eden. Genesis 3:5 – “for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil”.

Pride not only appears to be the earliest sin, but it is at the core of all sin:

John Stott: “Pride is more than the first of the seven deadly sins; it is itself the essence of all sin.”

Stop to think:

Social media (Facebook) / Selfies!! How does this make us proud?

TYPES OF PRIDE:

1. **Pride of Self:**
 - Garden of Eden: Genesis 3
 - Tower of Babel: Genesis 11: 1-9. Pride was the problem not the universal language or building the tower
 - Nebuchadnezzar: Daniel 4: 29 -33. The humbling of a proud king
 - Rich man: Luke 12:16-21. "Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry. But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you'"

2. **Spiritual pride – Pharisee & Publican.** Luke 18: 9-14
 - The Pharisee thanked God that he wasn't like the publican. **How many times have you read that story and thought, "Thank God that I'm not like that Pharisee!"**
 - **Discuss: What may be the features of spiritual pride?**
 - Spiritual arrogance: All too often the religious are known more for their pride than their piety.
 - Guard against spiritual pride by remembering that salvation is by grace alone

Jonathan Edwards: "The first and worst cause of error that prevails in our day is spiritual pride. This is the main door by which the devil comes into the hearts of those who are zealous for the advancement of Christ. It is the chief inlet of smoke from the bottomless pit to darken the mind and mislead the judgment, and the main handle by which Satan takes hold of Christians to hinder a work of God."

MANIFESTATIONS OF PRIDE (from Vaughan Roberts – Battles Christian Face)

1. **Pride distorts your view of yourself. Don't let it.** (Mark 9:33-35)
 - Who is the greatest? Easy for us to identify with this.
 - Jesus' answer
Mark 9: 35: "If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all"
Mark 10:44 – 45: "And whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many".
Philippians 2:8: He humbled Himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross!
 - Don't let Pride distort your view of yourself. Jesus challenges us to follow His example.

2. **Pride distorts your treatment and opinion of others. Don't let it.** (Mark 9:36-41)

- How do we treat our neighbours / friends / elderly / disadvantaged / poor / refugee / minorities / those not in our "clique" / unbelievers?
- Jesus' answer: Using the visual aid of children who had no rights in first century Palestine (treatment of others) and the attitude towards the man casting out demon's in Christ's name.

Mark 9:37: "Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me." Jesus is again turning the standards of the world upside down.

Mark 9:39: "Do not stop him"

Don't let pride distort your treatment of others. We naturally are only interested in the great and the good. As His followers, we are called to suppress our pride and humbly serve those whom we would regard as beneath us.

- Our opinion of others matter. Don't let our pride distort it.

HOW DO WE OVERCOME PRIDE?

1. **Adopt a correct view of God:**

- God is infinitely superior to us. He is perfect and we are not (Job 25:4-6)
- God has supreme authority over us. He determines our eternal future (Isaiah 29:16)

2. **Revise your false beliefs:**

- Do you think you are better than others? (I Cor 4:7)
- Do you think you are indispensable? (Rom 12:3)
- Do you think your accomplishments and position entitle you to special favour? (Prov 25:27)

3. **Repent of your sin:** The hardest thing for a proud person to do is admit that he or she is wrong. Are you prepared to do that? If so, give your type of pride a specific name (conceit, vanity,.....)

4. Focus on the cross:

Rom 5:8, Rom 8:32, Philippians 2:6-8

Martyn Lloyd-Jones: "The best corrective against pride ... is to know God, His character and the truth about Him." And the main place to behold the kindness and severity of God is at the cross. There the severity of His righteous judgment did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all (Rom. 8:32).

"When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride".

GOOD PRIDE: HOW SHOULD WE BOAST?

- Romans 15: 17-19. Paul was proud of the churches he had established. He made clear that his accomplishments were the fruit of God's grace to him and through him.
- 2 Corinthians 11:22 – 12:10: Paul does not boast about his own knowledge, speaking skills, or other abilities, rather about how much he has suffered for the sake of Christ. *"But [the Lord] said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me"*
- 1 Corinthians 15:10: But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. **We can all say this, whatever our accomplishments!**

"Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see