

The Proud and Arrogant Are Coming Down

While preaching and elaborating on the dramatic encounter of Saul of Tarsus with Jesus on the Damascus Road, something unusual happened. As I began commenting on Acts 9:6, something stirred deep in my heart. I suddenly stopped in the middle of my message and found myself praying, "O God, bring down the proud and arrogant leaders in our nation, both political and religious."

Acts 9:6 (NKJV) where this experience occurred, reads, "So he, trembling and astonished, said, '“'Lord, what do you want me to do?'"

Saul, who was on his way to Damascus to arrest followers of Jesus, had been struck down by a bright light from heaven. Lying in the dust, he heard a voice saying, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" (Acts 9:4b). Astonished and trembling, he inquired as to the identity of the voice and heard, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting" (Acts 9:5b).

As I elaborated on these passages, I was so taken at how shattered Paul must have been, lying in the dust of the Damascus Road and having encountered the risen Lord. His world had suddenly been turned upside down. It was at that moment that I spontaneously prayed to God that He would bring down the proud and arrogant leaders in our nation, both political and religious.

God Hates Pride

God hates pride, and both James 4:6 and I Peter 5:5 quote Proverbs 3:34, warning, "God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble." Paul warned against putting a "novice" (one new to the faith) into a place of leadership, "lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the *same* condemnation as the

devil" (1 Tim. 3:6).

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Pride is deadly because it asserts the self, or *ego*, against God. The middle letter of pride is "I." Pride is the root of all sin, for the end of all sin is self-gratification. It was pride that brought down the beautiful archangel, Lucifer. It was pride that caused our first parents to declare their independence from God and think they could be gods and make it on their own.

Their prideful action plunged the world into what is theologically known as the fall, which opened the door to sin, evil and death. No wonder Proverbs 16:18 warns, "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."

Pride Destroys Revival

Charles Finney, who has been called the prince of revivalists, commented on how in the midst of a revival Christians often "sin against their own mercies," because they get lifted up with their success, take the credit to themselves, and do not give glory to God." He further elaborated, saying, "Perhaps it has been published in the papers what a great revival there has been in that church, so that they begin to think how high they will stand in the estimation of other churches all over the land, because they have had such a great revival. And they get puffed up and vain and they can no longer enjoy the presence of God. The Spirit of God withdraws from them, and the revival ceases."

Some years ago I was sitting in a "Revival Now" conference when I suddenly had an overwhelming urge to bow down before the Lord. I considered how to respond for it was during a time when people were being invited to come forward and stand to receive prayer. The urge to bow before the Lord intensified and I finally turned and bowed at my seat. As soon as my knees

touched the floor, I heard the voice of the Lord saying,

"I am going to be doing some incredible things in the days ahead; and when you see My power and My glory, this is to always be your posture. You are to bow down and acknowledge that I am the Sovereign Lord of this universe."

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I believe God is dealing with pride in America and in the American church. The proud and arrogant are coming down. Isaiah 2:11 (NIV) says, "The eyes of the arrogant will be humbled and human pride brought low; the Lord alone will be exalted in that day."

The Power of Humility and Prayer

I have done extensive research into America's origins, and one thing that has deeply impressed me was the early emphasis on "prayer and humiliation." For several generations, the first immigrants to America, and later America's founders, would set aside days for what they called "prayer and humiliation."

It was not a time of groveling or self-flagellation, but of confessing the sin of pride and the sin of trusting in themselves and their own strength instead of totally relying on the Lord. Out of their days of "prayer and humiliation" emerged the most powerful nation on earth.

We should not be surprised, for God promises that those who will humble themselves, He will exalt. First Peter 5:6 says, "Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time." Isaiah 66:2b says, "These are the ones I look on with favor: those who are humble and contrite in spirit, and who tremble at my word."

It is time that we as American Christians humbled ourselves

before God, confessed that in our pride we have relied on our own strength and talents, and confess how much we need Him. This is necessary if we are to see another Great Awakening across the land. On the other hand, if we do not humble ourselves, we can expect to be humbled. The proud and arrogant are coming down.

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Dr. Eddie Hyatt is an author, revivalist and Bible teacher. His books, "1726: The Year that Defined America" and "America's Revival Heritage (Second Edition)" document the power of prayer and humility in the founding of America. They are available from Amazon and his website at .