

How To Kill Your Pride

Through the years of our ministry in the church, I always wanted everyone to think the best of me. I wasn't comfortable up on the platform when my husband would call me to join him and greet the people. I worried about the opinion others would have of me; I was shy and afraid.

When revival broke out at Brownsville Assembly of God, I watched huge numbers of people come for a refreshing and a touch from the Lord. And not just laypeople; pastors, too, came from all around the world. They had given their lives to the ministry, but there was meager fruit in their congregations. Discouraged, empty and wounded, they came to Pensacola and returned home refreshed and rejuvenated—to a congregation that did not want any part of what the pastor had received.

You may not see any similarity between my reluctance to stand in the pulpit and a congregation's resistance to a move of God. But there is one, and a very sinful one at that. Just like a congregation that won't budge at the promptings of the Holy Spirit, I was guilty of pride.

Pride is a powerful weapon, but not one to be used by believers as we engage in spiritual warfare. Instead, it's a weapon the enemy uses against us to hinder us from being all God has called us to be.

PRIDE IN DISGUISE

Despite its many disguises, pride is something all of us must face eventually. We may think it's not a problem area in our lives, but once the Holy Spirit begins to bring it to light, we can't help but see it for what it is. Inferiority and self-consciousness, for example, can be forms of false humility.

That's the form of pride I discovered in myself. God revealed

my heart and showed me that my hesitancy to stand in the pulpit with my husband—fearing what others would think of me—was rooted in pride.

When someone asks you to do something, do you reply, “Oh, I can’t possibly do that”? God has just opened the door for an avenue of ministry, but you won’t allow Him to use the gifts He has deposited in you.

What if Mary, the mother of Jesus, had responded that way? Don’t let pride detour you or rob you of God’s purpose in your life.

The same warning can be applied to churches. Most often, pride is at the root of conflicts in the body of Christ. It hinders churches from receiving from the Lord or experiencing revival. In fact, the greatest hindrance to God’s moving powerfully in a church is pride!

Many of the pastors who have visited Brownsville have discovered that the members of their congregations prefer for the church to remain “respectable” rather than receive the refreshing the pastor brings back with him.

These people are uncomfortable with kids shaking under the power of the Spirit, people dancing before the Lord, demons screaming out and dirty, homeless people messing up their pristine church.

A very familiar verse in Scripture reads: “If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land,” (2 Chron. 7:14, NKJV).

The word “if” in this verse is an important word, one that shows God’s promise is contingent upon an action. But sometimes it is really hard to do what we know is right. It involves humbling ourselves.

Remember, too, that “My people” refers to God’s set apart people, not those in the world who do not know Him. He offers a promise to us; the Bible states that “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble”

How do we humbles ourselves? It helps to be able to recognize the various ways in which pride manifests itself in a believer’s life. Here are some characteristics of pride to be on the lookout for:

Prayerlessness can often be a manifestation of pride. If you have no prayer life, take some time right now to evaluate your relationship with the Lord. It takes humility of heart to pray and admit you can’t make it on your own.

The fear of man is also a form of pride. Pride thrives on man’s approval. But you will never please man—and even if you could, he is not the one you ought to be living for. It is God whom you must please. If you are married, you please God by serving your husband. If you are a parent, you please God by nurturing your children. If you are single, then you are free to love God and serve Him only.

The inability to receive from others is another evidence of pride. Most of us love to give gifts, but receiving them can be a humbling experience. In our ministry, people have shown their love by bestowing gifts on us. It humbles us to accept their gracious giving.

Judging others reveals pride. We say, “Oh, I would never do that!” Who is exalted when we make such a comment? Not the Lord. In saying it, we exalt ourselves and our supposed resistance to sin.

Good works can cause pride. You think highly of yourself for all the work you do in the church.

For whom are you working? Must you blow a trumpet to announce your dedication, or do you work joyfully and silently unto the

Lord? Remember what Jesus had to say about those who served God only for show: "Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward" (Matt. 6:5).

Not waiting on God is a form of pride. It demonstrates an independence from God's timing, a rebellious heart and a desire to do things our own way. Many times we are on the brink of a miracle, but we forfeit it because we give up on God or take control of the situation in an attempt to help God out.

If we don't wait on the Lord, we'll get ahead of Him and cause trouble. Sarah didn't wait on God, and she brought heartache to her own family and to the Jewish people. We'd better not think we can chart our own course!

There are times in our Christian walks when God does not answer our prayers at the moment and in the way we expect Him to. There is danger of becoming hurt or offended at God and pulling away from Him because we do not understand His ways. We must press into God and let Him help us. It is at the point of saying "I'm sorry" that pride begins to diminish; in humility we must admit our feelings and allow the Lord to change us.

Contention is also evidence of a prideful spirit. Proverbs 13:10 reads: "Only by pride cometh contention, but with the well advised is wisdom" (KJV). It's interesting that the Word of God states "only by pride." That leaves out any other issue that can bring about contention.

"Contention" is defined as "a point advanced or maintained in a debate or argument." Contention arises when someone is not willing to back down from a confrontation. Take a look at your home, your church, your work, your ministry.

Is there contention anywhere? If there is, I guarantee you there is pride involved, and God wants to pull that ugly spirit down. If Satan can ensnare us with pride, then he can

use us for his purposes.

OUR PRIDEFUL WAYS

If pride made a devil out of an archangel, what can it do to you? Lucifer lost his home because of pride. If we do not deal with our pride, it will cost us. If we don't change our prideful ways, we run the risk of reproducing in our children those attitudes we refuse to allow the Lord to deal with. Ezekiel 16:49 says, "Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom. She and her daughter had pride, fullness of food and abundance of idleness; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy."

We should humbly sow seeds into the poor and needy. The Bible says that when we do God's work, our light will break forth (see Isa. 58:6-12, esp. v. 8 and 10), and we will see the blind healed and the lame walk!

I want to see God's miracles. Do you?

Let's say, "God, I'm with You. I want to do Your works." Let's get rid of all the pride. We are so near to the coming of Christ! Let's allow Him to search our hearts now so we'll be ready!

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