

How Pride Can Blind Us to Blessings

Like everyone else in the world, there are times in my life when the Spirit of G-D directly confronts me to point out a sin issue in my life. Let me clarify a little more.

What I should have written is that there are times in my life when I am listening to the Spirit of G-D, and I am confronted by a sin in my life. I clarified because the truth is that the Spirit is constantly confronting us to point out sinful activities or thoughts, but unfortunately too often we are too busy or distracted by the cares of this world to listen to G-D's voice. This confrontation was so meaningful and forceful that in my mind it reminded me of the time when Baalam was confronted by the messenger from G-D in Numbers 22.

In order for you to understand the importance of this encounter, please allow me to share my experience. I was watching a news report about poverty and, while watching, I noticed that the children who were being shown in the video were laughing, playing in the same ways that my grandchildren laugh and play.

The parents were busily working in their fields and around the simple homes. While watching, I began to think about and compare their lives with mine. I thought about their home, which was not much more than a tent-type structure, and not much larger than a single room in my house. They were using a donkey for transportation, while I drive a truck. They were carrying water into their home in buckets, whereas I have running water. They didn't have electricity, air conditioning, a refrigerator, a television or internet service.

As I compared their life to mine, I began to feel badly for them. As I continued to think about the differences between

their lives and my life, I felt a little guilty that I had been born in a country and to a family that had so many blessings compared to so many in other parts of the world. It was at that moment of allowing myself to begin to transition from guilt to shame because of where I was born and what I possessed that I heard the voice of the Spirit of G-D speaking to me.

The words I heard in my heart and mind cut me to my core: "You need to lay down your pride."

My thoughts were thrown for a loop. There I was, brokenhearted because I had once again been reminded that there are millions of people who are not blessed with all of the things I have been blessed with. I asked G-D: "How can my concern for those less fortunate be considered prideful?"

His reply stunned me. The Spirit responded, "Why do you consider the things you have to be blessings, and why do you believe that those without them are less fortunate?" This question caused me to review the scene from the news report again in my mind. The families I saw had food; they looked healthy and happy. They clearly loved one another and were enjoying themselves. They did have difficult jobs and simple homes without modern conveniences, but were they less fortunate?

I was forced to ask myself, "Why do I consider myself more blessed because I have more stuff?" The answer was that I had allowed pride to rise up within me. My pride caused me to use myself and my stuff as a means of measuring G-D's blessings. I had allowed ungodly pride to cause me to believe that how I lived (or at least the norms of how people live where I live) to become the way to recognize if G-D's blessings were present in the lives of people.

I had let pride get such a foothold in my heart that I allowed myself to question why G-D withheld His blessings from so many

people. The truth is, He didn't withhold His blessings from them. They were just as blessed, if not more blessed, than I was. They just didn't have the same stuff I had.

The more I thought about their lives compared to mine, the more I realized that many of the things I had cost me so much time and money that having them actually kept me from enjoying the simple blessings which the people on the news story were enjoying while I watched feeling badly for them.

The Spirit that day awoke me to the reality that my pride was causing me to measure G-D's blessings not by the things I had but by the things that had me. This pride caused me at that moment to judge G-D as unfair and unjust because it seemed unfair that everyone didn't have access to the same blessings.

I realized that day that everyone does have the same access to G-D's blessings; we just don't all have the same stuff. {eo}

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