



PrIde and Humility

Pride is something that we cannot say we lacked. I, for one would admit that pride is something I have to struggle with everyday. The little Oxford dictionary states that pride is an unduly high opinion of oneself. Basically, pride is just having “I” in the centre of everything else. I can share lots on the issue of pride and name the many pitfalls of it in our everyday life.

However, humility is something that I can never say I have, because the moment I say I do, I don’t. I am definitely not qualified to write about humility, but it is needful to search the Scriptures to see the example of humility in the life of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It is needful that we daily walk in humility with Christ as our example so that we can pass on the right traits to the next generation. We are responsible as teachers, parents, elders, deacons, and leaders etc. to pass the baton to the next generation to continue the good work of the Lord. It will be sad if we don’t. The Israelites in the time of Judges are the classic example of one generation not passing the baton well to the next.

Pride – if you think you don’t have... you do
This is satan’s old trick and he used it right from the beginning of mankind in the Garden of Eden. Sadly, everyday, we are still falling for this ancient-old trick though the devil is shrewd enough to wrap it in different colourful packages.

Eve, the mother of all living, took the forbidden fruit because she “desired to make [herself] wise” and that “[she] shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.” (Genesis 3:5, 6) That is pride. *Eve wanted to be as God.* The consequence she had to pay was that she stumbled Adam and caused him to disobey and brought about sin into the world. Eve also had to bear multiplied sorrow during childbirth and to be ruled over by Adam.

Eve’s son, Cain didn’t fare too well too. When God was not pleased with his offering, he turned his anger unto his brother Abel and killed him; thereby we have the first account of murder in the Bible. What’s was Cain’s problem? *He could not see that the “best” offering he brought was wrong in the sight of God.* Cain then had to face the consequence of being a

fugitive and vagabond for the rest of his life. (Genesis 4:14)

We move on to the time after the great flood when the people were united, of one speech and language (Gen 11:1). They had a project to build the tower to reach the heaven but their motive was not to honour God but *to make a name for themselves.* It is so sad. This people were very knowledgeable in construction. They had the knowledge to make brick and they had slime to make mortar even at their time. Sadly, they did not use their skills for God. The consequence was that God confused their language and the people were dispersed and the project abandoned. That tower was then aptly named the tower of Babel or confusion.

King Saul also fell into the pride trap. In I Samuel 15, despite the Lord’s instruction to destroy the Amalekites, Saul spared the king Agag and the good spoil of the sheep and oxen. His reason was to offer them to God. That showed *his pride to think that he knows best what is good for God.* Another episode displaying Saul’s pride was after the battle with the Philistines. Saul was not happy when the women cheering the homecoming army described David better than him. From then on, he sought to kill David. *From one simple statement, Saul’s pride was hurt* and it led to his downfall. It showed how highly he thought of himself that he would not even let that simple statement go. (I Samuel 18:7, 8)

King David, the man who ascend the throne after king Saul, and the man whom is described to be after God’s own heart, also fell into the snare of pride. In II Samuel 11:1, while his army was out at battle, king David was *complacent* and stayed behind in Jerusalem. While he was at the rooftop of his palace, he saw Bathsheba and desired her. He lost in that temptation. As king, he felt that he could have any women, even a married one. At that moment, *pride caused him to forget God’s commandment against adultery* and later on, to cover up his sin, he also committed *murder.* He had to face the consequence of murder even among his household “because [he] hast despised [God]” (II Samuel 12:10).

From the examples given above, each shows a different aspect of pride but nevertheless, the bottom line is still “I do what I think is right in my own eyes”. Despite our

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pitfalls, God will still use the opportunity to humble us and bring us “back down to earth”. However, we would still have to face the consequences of the sin of pride.

Humility – when you think you have it...you don't

Humility is the opposite of pride. It is having a low estimate of one's own importance. This is in direct disagreement to the world's view of high self-esteem and pride. No one in this world can claim humility of their own. The only example that we can look into is the Lord Jesus Himself. In Philippians 2:6-8, we read that Christ, *“Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”*

Matthew 20:28 says, *“Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”* If God incarnate came to be a servant, how much more we as His children are to learn from His example of humility to serve one another in love.

At the last supper, Christ washed His disciples' feet and said these words, *“...Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.”* (John 13:12-17)

Application

My dear readers, Proverbs 4:23 says, *“Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life”*. We are to guard our heart closely and not let any tempting emotion grow into sin. We are also to guard our thought life so that we can focus on pure and truthful ones (Philippians 4:8). We all struggle daily with tempting thoughts being sown in our minds and hearts. We have a choice to not let them gain root and sprung forth to choke us. These tempting little thoughts are but Satan's booby traps.

Satan does not attack us in big ways. I can testify to that. Satan works subtly in little ways and if we give way to them, it will one day blow up at our faces just like the mine fields when we do not tread carefully.

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In our fast-paced society, many of us, with God's blessing, have risen up the corporate ladder to be “Indian Chiefs” in our individual profession. We are used to giving out orders and making decisions. in the Lord's house, we are to humble ourselves and submit one to another in the Lord. (Ephesians 5:21)

even in the corporate world, the many management courses talk about a leader being a good listener to his team players. How much more so in the Lord's house, we are to humble ourselves and submit one to another in the Lord. *“Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.”* (Ephesians 5:21) Christ has set for us the example to be gentle, humble, kind in word and deed, and most of all, He humbled Himself to the will of God for the glory of His name.

Dear all, let us individually strive to guard our thoughts and heart and to be humble to accept and obey God's will in our life. This is the will of God for the little lively stones (laymen) to the big chunky lively ones (leaders). May we daily walk humbly *coram Deo*, before the face of God.

J Koh

Announcements

- ◇ 26 Nov : SS AGM cum Elections. Lunch will be provided. Please give numbers (including family members) attending lunch to DS by 12 Nov (next Lord's Day).
- ◇ 17 Dec: DS to submit lists of prize winners to Brother Winston Chiam
- ◇ 23 Dec : Christmas celebrations for Pri and Jr Depts. Celebrations in the morning followed by lunch.