

Hillcrest Adult Education (Fall 2022): Faith in Action
Walk 4: Listening to God – Pride
Romans 12: 3

Dear teacher,

Bold, italicized comments are the suggestions to help you use this “walk” plan. Sinful Pride is a cause of sin. Pride can be healthy and appropriate also, and there are certainly things we can be proud of. But we need to use Bible based discernment to distinguish the difference.

When I was first asked to prepare this lesson plan I did a word search on “Pride” and “Proud” on Bible Gateway using the English Standard Version. 44 out of 50 verses describe “Pride” as sinful or causing sin, while 39 out of 43 verses picture the “proud” as sinful. It seems to me that this encourages us to beware of sinful pride and be cautious when we find pride to be motivating us to think of ourselves too highly. If we are trying to “listen to God” it I think we need to take heed to the volume of what he says about the dangers of sinful pride. I strongly encourage you to do a word search like I described and study the verses in context. Compare the times God warns us about the effects of sinful pride and the few times people refer to good things or people to be “proud” of.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Participants will become more impressed with the **danger** of sinful Pride (and the desire of Humility)
2. Participants will better appreciate the importance of “sober thinking”
3. Participants will be **warned** by consideration of the effect of sinful Pride in certain scriptures

Here are some “springboard” statements to prompt discussion. Feel free to eliminate any of these if the discussion you anticipate is not fruitful and substitute your own. I have tried to structure this lesson plan for you to facilitate rather than lecture and I think thoughtful discussion can be helpful.

“Oh Lord, it’s hard to be humble when you’re perfect in every way ...” Mac Davis

“What we understand the Bible to mean by Pride and Humility are not taken **seriously** enough by any of us.” Do you agree? Why or why not?

Consider: “Pride in ourselves is the opposite of Trusting in God.” Do you agree? Why or why not?

“Pride is your greatest enemy; humility is your greatest friend.” So said the late John R.W. Stott. But in our society today, “Pride” is held up as a desired attribute. “Humility” is regarded as a weakness.

Hopefully, we will come away from this lesson with a greater fear of sinful Pride and a increased desire for Humility.

As we study the following texts look for “Sinful Pride”, and Pride that is not sinful.

Selected Texts:

Romans 12:3 ³ For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you **not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think**, but to think with **sober judgment**, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. (ESV)

³ God has given me grace to speak a **warning** about pride. I would ask each of you to be **emptied of self-promotion** and not create a **false image of your importance**. Instead, honestly assess your worth by using your God-given faith as the standard of measurement, and then you will see your **true value** with an **appropriate self-esteem**. Romans 12:3
The Passion Translation

³ I’m speaking to you out of **deep gratitude** for all that God has given me, and especially as I have responsibilities in relation to you. Living then, as every one of you does, in pure grace, it’s important that you **not misinterpret yourselves** as people who are **bringing this goodness to God. No, God brings it all to you**. The only accurate way to understand ourselves is **by what God is and by what he does for us**, not by what we are and what we do for him. Romans 12:3 The Message

“For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you **boast** as though you did not?” 1 Corinthians 4:7

⁷⁻⁸ For who do you know that really knows you, knows your heart? And even if they did, is there anything they would discover in you that you could **take credit for**? Isn’t everything you have and everything you are **sheer gifts from God**? So what’s the point of all this comparing and competing? You already have all you need. **You already have more access to God than you can handle**. Without bringing either Apollos or me into it, you’re sitting on top of the world—at least God’s world—and we’re right there, sitting alongside you! 1 Corinthians 4:7

The Message

³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in **humility** count **others** more significant than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also **to the interests of others**. ⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he **humbled himself** by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore God has highly **exalted** him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:3-11

Scripture abounds with examples of sinful Pride bringing about disaster: Lucifer was cast from heaven because of his pride. Eve's pride inspired by Satan's lies caused her disobedience and our condemnation.

Consider the example of Uzziah in 2 Chronicles 26

Uzziah became King of Judah when he was 16 years old and reigned for 52 years.

He "did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, ... He set himself to seek God, was instructed by Zechariah ... as long as he **sought the Lord**, God made him prosper. 2 Chron. 26:4-5

Not only did Uzziah prosper, but Judah did also.

Their armies were huge and victorious. He defeated Philistines, Ammonites and Arabians.

Uzziah built towers and improved weapons and defenses.

The wealth of both Uzziah and Judah increased with water supply, herds, crops, etc.

"But when he was strong, **he grew proud, to his destruction.** (2 Chron. 26:16)

Uzziah went into the temple to burn incense on the altar of incense. Azariah and 80 other priests went in after him and confronted him. Uzziah furiously raged at Azariah and the priests. As a result, leprosy broke out on his forehead. Because of the leprosy his son had to rule in his stead, and he died.

Compare the account of 2 Kings 15:1-7 – Discuss the differences in the accounts.

The figures I gave you before indicated that 90% of the verses mentioning Pride or Proud in the English Standard Version are talking about "Sinful" pride. This scripture illustrates how "the pride of your power" was at the root of a hosts of sins of rebellion by Israel. How many times did individuals or even the community of Israel rebel against God because of their pride?

What examples from the Old Testament do you remember which illustrate this promise from God?

¹⁴ "But if you will not **listen to me** and will not do all these commandments, ¹⁵ if you spurn my statutes, and if your soul abhors my rules, so that you will not do all my commandments, but break my covenant, ¹⁶ then I will do this to you: I will visit you with panic, with wasting disease and fever that consume the eyes and make the heart ache. And you shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. ¹⁷ I will set my face against you, and you shall be struck down before your enemies. Those who hate you shall rule over you, and you shall flee when none pursues you. ¹⁸ And if in spite of this you will not listen to me, then I will discipline you again sevenfold for your sins, ¹⁹ and I will break the **pride** of your power, and I will make your heavens like iron and your earth like bronze. ²⁰ And your strength shall be spent in vain, for your land shall not yield its increase, and the trees of the land shall not yield their fruit. Leviticus 26:14-20-

Do we regard this as a warning to us?

Preparation:

Take two minutes to evaluate how you might have shown evidence of sinful pride in your behavior, or speech. Pray and ask God to help you be honest in your evaluation of yourself.

Review of the Day:

Let's consider what is meant by "sober judgment". Can you identify any characteristics or actions of your own that are evidence of pride? Do we sometimes consider **pride** and **confidence** as the same thing?

What do you think about asking your mate or co-workers if they notice evidence of pride in your behavior?

What do you think about the phrase "**according to the measure of faith that God has assigned**"

Romans 12:4-8 may help us understand that Paul wanted us to evaluate our level of Pride versus Humility by the gifts he enumerates – Functioning as members of **ONE body**, in **prophecy**, **service**, **teaching**, **exhortation**, **contributions**, **leadership** and **acts of mercy**.

Discuss the implications of these gifts and their impact on our "sober thinking". Does our participation in these gifts help us or hinder us in our battle with pride?

Isaiah 2:11 "The **haughty** looks of man shall be brought low, and the lofty **pride** of men shall be humbled, and the Lord alone will be exalted in that day."

Our sinful pride tempts us to be knowingly self-sufficient rather than God reliant.

How can we actively and intentionally seek to "humble ourselves before God and men"?