

INTRO: Pride can be a sneaky thing that will enter the picture before one realizes it. There is confidence and then there is pride and when we allow pride to take over, we will always suffer for it. Especially in a Christian's life, they must carefully guard and carefully look at themselves in the manner in which God sees them or they will certainly be heading for a fall. **IN THE SUMMER OF 1986, TWO SHIPS COLLIDED IN THE BLACK SEA OFF THE COAST OF RUSSIA. HUNDREDS OF PASSENGERS DIED AS THEY WERE HURLED INTO THE ICY WATERS BELOW. NEWS OF THE DISASTER WAS FURTHER DARKENED WHEN AN INVESTIGATION REVEALED THE CAUSE OF THE ACCIDENT. IT WASN'T A TECHNOLOGY PROBLEM LIKE RADAR MALFUNCTION--OR EVEN THICK FOG. THE CAUSE WAS HUMAN STUBBORNNESS. EACH CAPTAIN WAS AWARE OF THE OTHER SHIP'S PRESENCE NEARBY. BOTH COULD HAVE STEERED CLEAR, BUT ACCORDING TO NEWS REPORTS, NEITHER CAPTAIN WANTED TO GIVE WAY TO THE OTHER. EACH WAS TOO PROUD TO YIELD FIRST. BY THE TIME THEY CAME TO THEIR SENSES, IT WAS TOO LATE.** Not only did this cause numerous deaths, but even the captains who refused to change because of pride suffered the consequences. In our lives, when we are so stubborn, due to pride, we refuse to give in and often this causes not only problems for us, but it may affect others as well. And in some case, in an extremely terrible way.

In 1863, Abraham Lincoln spoke: **WE HAVE BEEN THE RECIPIENTS OF THE CHOICEST BOUNTIES OF HEAVEN; WE HAVE BEEN PRESERVED THESE MANY YEARS IN PEACE AND PROSPERITY; WE HAVE GROWN IN NUMBERS, WEALTH, AND POWER AS NO OTHER NATION HAS EVER GROWN. BUT WE HAVE FORGOTTEN GOD. WE HAVE FORGOTTEN THE GRACIOUS HAND WHICH PRESERVED US IN PEACE AND MULTIPLIED AND ENRICHED AND STRENGTHENED US, AND WE HAVE VAINLY IMAGINED, IN THE DECEITFULNESS OF OUR HEARTS, THAT ALL THESE BLESSINGS WERE PRODUCED BY SOME SUPERIOR WISDOM AND VIRTUE OF OUR OWN. INTOXICATED WITH UNBROKEN SUCCESS, WE HAVE BECOME TOO SELF-SUFFICIENT TO FEEL THE NECESSITY OF REDEEMING AND PRESERVING GRACE, TOO PROUD TO PRAY TO THE GOD THAT MADE US.** Benjamin Franklin once said **THERE IS PERHAPS NO ONE OF OUR NATURAL PASSIONS SO HARD TO SUBDUCE AS PRIDE. BEAT IT DOWN, STIFLE IT, MORTIFY IT AS MUCH AS ONE PLEASES, IT IS STILL ALIVE. EVEN IF I COULD CONCEIVE THAT I HAD COMPLETELY OVERCOME IT, I SHOULD PROBABLY BE PROUD OF MY HUMILITY.** Pride can present itself in such a manner that one cannot see it themselves. It can destroy a Christian walk, it can destroy a loving home, a marriage, a business, a friendship and when we boil it down to its basics, it is nothing more than selfishness, which is the mother of all sins. Self gratification, self-pleasing, a seeking of our own gratification simply for the pleasure of the gratification and sin will always be the result from such an action.

A. Acts 12:21-23: **"And on an appointed day Herod, having put on his royal apparel, took his seat on the rostrum and began delivering an address to them. and the people kept crying out, 'The voice of a god and not of a man!' And immediately an angel of the Lord struck him because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and died."** Notice he took the glory upon himself and did not give the glory to whom it belong, God Almighty.

1. Notice in our text the result of such pride in the life of an individual, they are setting themselves up for a fall and for dishonor by the time it is over for pride will eventually win the day. A man whom God has given the gift of life decides they know what is best in the situation and because of their high opinion of themselves, they figure everyone else does not have the knowledge that they possess and they become a law within themselves, refusing to listen, refusing to compromise, refusing to change their minds, even when God warns them of their fall. Isaiah 2:11 reads, **"The proud look of man will be abased, and the loftiness of man will be humbled, and the lord alone will be exalted in that day."**

2. We read in Daniel 4 about Nebuchadnezzar and his exalting of himself when he saw the wonders of the Babylon which he imagined himself to have built. He was immediately driven by God away from mankind and **"began eating grass like cattle and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven, until his hair had grown like eagles feathers and his nails like birds claws."** At the end of the period that God had foretold he would wonder in such a condition, Nebuchadnezzar learned a lesson when he said, **"And I Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever...Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise, exalt, and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His way just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride."**

B. Let us bring this home a little closer as even professing Christians can become proud and never realize it and in reality, is there such a thing as a proud Christian? The sooner we realize we do not know

everything, the sooner we realize we are not always right, the sooner we realize God and this world existed before we were born and will exist when we die, the sooner we realize the sun does not rise and set because of us, the sooner we realize we are not the smartest and do not have all the answers, the sooner we realize we are not super spiritual and everyone else is a little below us spiritually, the sooner we realize we cannot "lord" it over someone else because of our "dedication" that is so much greater than theirs, the sooner we realize we are still capable of falling and God's kingdom can continue without us, the sooner we realize there are individuals that could help us if we would just listen, the sooner we realize we are not God's chosen "man of the hour", the better we will be.

1. Notice in our text where wisdom comes from, "**...but with the humble is wisdom**". It did not say humiliation, it said with the humble. The humble is exalted. As with the proud there is folly and shame, with the humble or the lowly there is wisdom and honor and respect. We live in a nation of egotist but Jesus Christ, the ruler of the universe, displayed a spirit of humility and meekness, the Bible says He was lowly of spirit, He washed the feet of His disciples and urged them to show this same attitude of humility and servant hood to others. We have religious leaders of our day that are apparently "too good" to do the lowly things that need to be done in the kingdom of God, we have too many that have set themselves up as the judge and the jury in the affairs of life and refused to even listen to the Word of God.

2. Those that are proud refuse to accept even loving criticism, choosing rather to justify their own position as if it was impossible for them to err. I have walked with God for well over 50 years now and though I try to be as perfect as it is possible for a human to be, I have enough sense to realize I am not infallible, and I can still and often do make mistakes or unwise decisions from which I have to go back and change and try and make right. I have realized my purpose in this life is to glorify God and not myself for I am simply a servant of God, nothing more, nothing less -- just as we all are.

CONCLUSION: Pride in a professed Christian will destroy their walk with God, their relationship with others and themselves in the process. For the destination of the proud will always be hell, not heaven. We will not collapse and die if we utter the words, "you're right, I'm wrong." "I'm sorry, I was wrong." "Please forgive me." But you will be surprised how much better you will feel and how much better things will go when we accept that we are just children learning to walk with God and we would often be much better off listening rather than speaking. It is generally true that this "super-saint" attitude will often be in new converts and they are so excited about the things of God that they think everyone else is backslidden and need to be revived because they do not seem to be as excited about God's kingdom. But this same attitude can also be in those that have walked with God for so long that they begin to think they know everything and that desire to please God and that zeal they had in the beginning begins to wane as they become familiar with God and begin to look upon themselves as so much wiser than the young. Pride is clever, and it is something that will sneak into lives and take over if we are not on the guard constantly. Everyone has issues in their lives that God is dealing with them about and when we think we have arrived at that place where we cannot fall, where we cannot be wrong and where we cannot see our own weakness, we are headed for a disastrous fall. **ANYONE WHO TRAVELS TO EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND WILL FIND EDINBURGH CASTLE A TOWER OF SEEMINGLY INSURMOUNTABLE STRENGTH. BUT THE TRUTH IS THAT THE CASTLE WAS ONCE ACTUALLY CAPTURED. THE FORTRESS HAD AN OBVIOUS WEAK SPOT WHICH DEFENDERS GUARDED--BUT BECAUSE ANOTHER SPOT WAS APPARENTLY PROTECTED BY ITS STEEPNESS AND IMPREGNABILITY, NO SENTRIES WERE POSTED THERE. AT AN OPPORTUNE TIME, AN ATTACKING ARMY SENT A SMALL BAND UP THAT UNGUARDED SLOPE AND SURPRISED THE GARRISON INTO SURRENDER. WHERE THE CASTLE WAS STRONG, THERE IT WAS WEAK.** How do you see yourself, do you have all the answers? That is pride. Are you unwilling to give in or accept that someone else may have a good point? That is pride. Do you refuse to listen to anyone else's idea and always insist upon your own way? That is pride. Do you think you are better than someone else? That is pride. Do you think you are the most spiritual in the church? That is pride. Do you think if everyone was as you are, it would be a better world? That is pride. Do you always want the attention and is your mind always focused upon you, your problems, your life? That is pride. Are you concerned over the welfare of others more than your own? That is humbleness. Are you always seeking God's will in every situation? That is humbleness. Are you willing to take the place of less honor? That is humbleness. Can you see others as being more intelligent than you and even with better answers than you? That is humbleness. Are you always seeking God's glory and not your own? That is humbleness. Those that are humble will enter into the Gates of that heavenly city, the one that is proud will enter into a place filled with other proud people called hell. Be careful, pride will destroy you, it can destroy the greatest of saints if allowed to grow in our lives.