

Week 7: Wisdom and Pride

Primary Passages: Proverbs 8:13, 9:7-8, 14:6, 18:12 and 21:24

“Unchastity, anger, greed, drunkenness, and all that, are mere flea bites in comparison: it was through Pride that the devil became the devil. Pride leads to every other vice: it is the complete anti-God state of mind.”

- C.S. Lewis

LifeGroup Study Guide:

Recap: Have someone read Proverbs 8:13, 9:7-8 and 18:12 and recap the big ideas from this week’s sermon.

- Compare and contrast how the Bible and our culture talk about pride (consider how our culture talks about self-esteem).

Leader Notes: Don’t be surprised if someone in your group immediately wants to push back on this question and declare that self-esteem is good and necessary. In our culture, the common belief is that there are only two categories: 1.) self-esteem or 2.) self-hatred. Of those two options self-esteem seems like the obviously best choice.

However, Biblically there is a third category of **God-esteem or godly humble confidence**. Biblically we are sinners and need to be suspicious of our hearts and our motives. Seeing our sin in sight of a holy God should breed incredible humility in us. And at the same time, seeing the incredible love God has shown to us in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus should give us an external source of incredible confidence. This allows us to avoid the pitfalls of prideful self-esteem and self-consumed self-hatred. It also means our performance doesn’t have to be the source of our own sense of confidence and worthiness. Jesus gives us that freely as a gift of grace.

- In the sermon, we mentioned that pride can show itself in an arrogantly high view of self, but also in a self-consumed low view of self. Which of these do you tend to struggle with more? What root do both of these share in common?

Leader Notes: We tend to think of these things as opposites. A very pompous arrogant person seems on the surface to share little in common with a lowly, insecure, shameful person. However, they have the same root of thinking of yourself too much. Biblical humility is not just thinking less about yourself; but moreso thinking about yourself less overall. As our world becomes centered on God, He becomes the central and most frequent object of our thoughts.

Diagnosing Pride: Take some time to individually pray through these diagnostic questions.

Leader Notes: Set aside some group time to give everyone time to work through these diagnostic questions and encourage them to think of specific examples (not just answer yes or no or sometimes.) This will make your confession time much more robust.

- Are you easily angered or annoyed? _____ .
- Are you easily offended? _____ .
- Are you slow to ask for help when you need it? _____ .
- When you are forgotten, neglected, or overlooked, do you feel a disproportionate sting and hurt at the insult? _____ .

- How often do you compare yourself to others? (Consider intelligence, ability, looks, success, status, possessions, etc.) _____ .
- Are you caught up in any secret sin and refuse to confess it because you're concerned with how you would be viewed? _____ .
- How much do you bring up yourself or make yourself the center of the conversation? _____ .
- When you are corrected, is your first reaction to defend yourself and/or attack the other person? _____ .
- At work, do you think more about how frustrating your job is or do you think more about how grateful you are that God has provided work for you? _____ .
- How much of your life is marked by prayerlessness? (Prayerlessness exposes the prideful belief that you can handle life on your own.) _____ .
- Are you holding any bitterness against anyone? (Bitterness is the prideful act of putting your pain above God's command to forgive.) _____ .

Confess: Work through the diagnostic questions as a group, confessing any that stood out as particularly insightful or apparent in your life. Encourage each other with the gospel.

Read Philippians 2:5-11. How does meditating on Jesus' highly exalted glory (v. 9-11) help us to have the same humility that Jesus walked in while on earth (v. 5-8)? How can we encourage each other to repent of our pride and walk in humility?

Pray for God's Spirit to give us eyes to see our pride. **Pray** for our minds and hearts to be filled with an awe and love for Jesus that flows into natural concern and love for others.

Read Proverbs 9:7-8 and Proverbs 13:1. When are times in your life where you responded poorly to correction? Are there any specific areas of your life that make you feel particularly attacked if someone confronts them? If so, which ones and why?

Read Proverbs 11:12 and 13:10. In what ways do you find yourself frequently competing with and comparing yourself to the people around you?

Read Proverbs 16:18 and 18:12. How does pride lead to destruction in both the short-term and the long-term?

- Where are you most tempted to say "Here. Look at _____. That's why I'm a good person." How are these internal justifications pride-based rejections of the gospel?
- How can we encourage each other as a LifeGroup to seek gospel-fueled humility and repentance from our pride?

Pray that God would lead us into humility and wisdom; that our church would think most about God and others and least about ourselves.