

Practical Steps for Killing Pride and Putting On Humility

“God has two plans for us: God’s Plan A is humility. His Plan B is humiliation.”

You can see Plan B – Daniel 4:28 – 4:37

“The sin of pride carries with it God's swiftest and most severe judgment. It blinds you to other sins in your life and hinders you from repenting of them. Pride is the "Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome" or the (AIDS) of the soul. When a person dies as a result of acquiring AIDS, he doesn't really die of AIDS rather, he dies of an AIDS-complicated illness like pneumonia, tuberculosis, or meningitis. Not unlike a cataract, the AIDS virus somehow blinds the eyes of its victim's bodily defense system. This prevents his auto immune system from seeing and consequently destroying those deadly viruses and bacteria that ultimately kill him. Like AIDS, pride blinds you not only to itself, but to every other sin tucked away in the recesses of your heart and life. It causes you to hate correction and reproof. It hides your sin from you, it justifies your sin, it excuses your sin, and it keeps you from repenting of your sin. It deceives you into thinking that you're spiritually well when, in fact, you have deadly cancer and are in desperate need.” *The Complete Husband*, Lou Priolo, p. 21-22

Isaiah 66:1-2 “Thus says the Lord: ‘Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest? For all those things My hand has made, and all those things exist,’ says the Lord. ‘But on this one will I look: on him who is humble and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word.’”

I. You Better Stay Conscious of the Horrible Consequences of Pride

Pride is the ESSENCE of all other sin. It appears to be the most SERIOUS sin... and if I’m reading my Bible correctly then there’s no sin God hates more than pride.

In **Prov. 6:16-17** you see where the proud man heads up the seven abominations found there.

“These six things the Lord hates, yes, seven are an abomination to Him: a proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that are swift in running to evil, a false witness who speaks lies, and one who sows discord among brethren.”

A stronger word for God’s hatred of this sin cannot be found in the Bible. He calls it an abomination.

Make no mistake about it... Pride has many FORMS but only ONE END – ultimately self-glorification!

And here’s the tricky part - normally we spot pride in other people much more quickly than we do in ourselves. But remember - it’s not a question of IF pride exists in your life. It’s just a matter of WHERE does pride exist in your life... and HOW MUCH does pride exist in your life... and my life.

II. You Need to Get Excited about the Incredible Promise of Humility

Look in v. 2 again... “But on this one will I look!” This phrase “this is the one to whom I look” is amazing. Basically - God is telling us what catches His attention. God is telling us what causes Him to stop what He was doing and take a second look.

Humility is what captures God’s attention. Nothing escapes God’s **NOTICE**. Not a thing. But one thing captures His **ATTENTION**.

III. You Need to Put into Place in Your Life **Specific Habits** that Will Keep You Attacking Pride – and Cultivating Humility

John Stott, “At every stage of our Christian development pride is our greatest enemy and humility our greatest friend.”

- So what are some practical ways you can be attacking your greatest enemy – pride, and cultivating your greatest friend – humility?

Practical Suggestions from *Humility – True Greatness, C.J. Mahaney*

1. Study The **Attributes Of God** – especially the incommunicable ones – the ones that are not like us!

C.S. Lewis ‘Every other sin in comparison to pride is just a fleabite.’ Also, ‘Pride is the complete anti-God state of mind.’

Job 26:7-14 “He stretches out the north over empty space; He hangs the earth on nothing. He binds up the water in His thick clouds, yet the clouds are not broken under it. He covers the face of His throne, and spreads His cloud over it. He drew a circular horizon on the face of the waters... indeed these are the mere edges of his ways, and how small a whisper we hear of Him! But the thunder of His power who can understand?”

Isaiah 40 – Big God chapter – filled with incommunicable attributes

“Thoughts that reach up toward the excellency of God's majesty are beautiful and delicious to the soul, but they come with unpleasant side effects. Even a hint of His greatness shows us up as grasshoppers, dust, and ‘less than nothing’ in comparison (Isaiah 40:12-25). No one wants to go out of his way to feel small, weak, and defiled; but this strong medicine gives us hope against sin. In this humiliation our sin withers... Our puny minds can't take Him in. And that helps, because it humbles us before Him... Can you walk up to the edge of infinity and not feel vertigo? Can you stare at the sun and not go blind?” ***The Enemy Within***, Kris Lungaard, P&R, 1998, p. 128-129

I Timothy 1:17 “Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever, amen.”

“The grand difference between a human being and a supreme being is precisely this. Apart from God I cannot exist. Apart from me God does exist. God does not need me in order for Him to be. I do need God in order for me to be... we are dependent, we are fragile... no human being has the power of being within himself. Life is lived between two hospitals. We need support system from birth to death in order to sustain life. We are like flowers that bloom and then wither and fade, and this is how we differ from God. God does not wither. God does not fade. God is not fragile.” R.C. Sproul

“Pride is a telescope turned the wrong way. It magnifies self and makes the heavens small.” –C.S. Lewis

Psalm 10:4 “The wicked in his proud countenance does not seek God; God is in none of his thoughts.”

The more aware we become of the infinite **distance** between you and God the more **humility** you’ll EXPERIENCE and EXPRESS. Arrogant... prideful people don’t know God very well... and don’t think about God very often!

So at some point in your lifetime – read A.W. Tozier’s *Knowledge of the Holy* or A.W. Pink’s *Attributes of God*... or J.I. Packer’s *Knowing God*... NOT just so that you can know God... but so that you can know yourself... and be putting to death pride.

2. Every Day Survey the Wondrous Cross on Which the Prince of Glory Died

“Nothing in history or in the universe cuts us down to size like the cross. All of us have inflated views of ourselves...until we have visited a place called Calvary. It is there, at the foot of the cross that we shrink to our true size.” John Stott, *The Message of Galatians* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVartisy, 1968), 179

“God deliberately designed the gospel in such a way so as to strip me of pride and leave me without any grounds for boasting in myself whatsoever... Nothing suffocates my pride more than daily reminders regarding the glory of my God, the gravity of my sins, and the crucifixion of God’s own Son in my place... Pride wilts in the atmosphere of the gospel.” *The Gospel Primer*, Milton Vincent, pgs. 27, 29

Read slowly some of the great passages about the cross of Christ –like you’re reading them for the first time: I Corinthians 1, Galatians 2, Philippians 2, Isaiah 53

Philippians 2:5-11 v. 8 “And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God has also highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Isaiah 53:4-5, 10-11 “Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed... Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief, when You make His soul an offering for sin... He shall see the travail of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many.”

Read some books like... “The Cross of Christ” by John Stott, “Comforts from the Cross” by Elyse Fitzpatrick or “The Cross Centered Life” by C.J. Mahaney

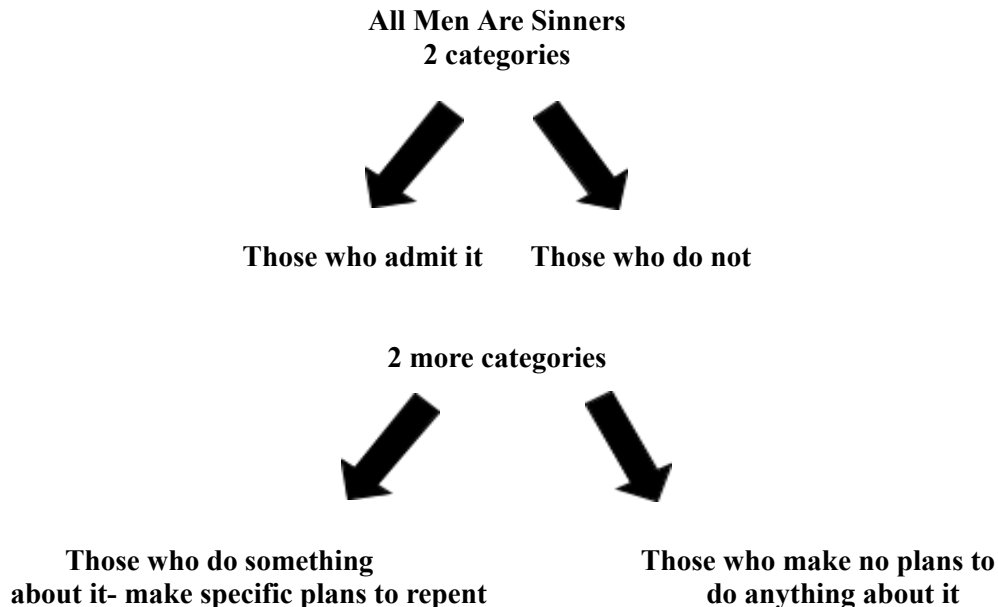
3. Study and Apply The Doctrine Of Sin to Your Own Life

- Read Romans ch. 1,2,3!
- Read a book like “The Enemy Within” by Kris Lungaard – which is a modern synopsis of the Puritan John Owen’s Vol. 6 on temptation and mortification of sin

“I have a theory: Behind virtually every case of marital dissatisfaction lies unrepented sin. Couples don't fall out of love so much as they fall out of repentance. Sin, wrong attitudes, and personal failures that are not dealt with slowly erode the relationship, assaulting and eventually erasing the once lofty promises made in the throes of an earlier (and less polluted) passion.” *Sacred Marriage*, Gary Thomas, p. 96-97

- Are you confessing sin **specifically**?
- And are you confessing sin **fully**?
- Or is your confession **selective** and partial (which means that it’s ultimately **misleading**)?

“Men do not like to admit their faults, nor confess they are sinners. I am guilty on both counts. But the sooner we admit and confess, the quicker we can deal with our pride. The taxonomy of the problem looks like this. Premise: All men are sinners. Upon further examination we find that sinners fall into two distinct classes, those who admit their sin, and those who don’t. Those who admit themselves to be sinners fall into two more classes, those who do something about it, and those who do not. It is only those who deal with their soul’s true dire need before God who may make progress out of their sin.” **Mike Renchan**, *Tabletalk* magazine



If you won’t confess it to the appropriate individuals - in His time and not yours - He will make it VERY PUBLIC – because He opposes the proud, but He gives grace to the humble.

James 4:6 “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

Numbers 32:23 “... be sure your sin will find you out.”

4. Consistently Practice the Spiritual Disciplines

Practicing the spiritual disciplines of Bible reading, prayer, Scripture memory makes a huge statement: You’re saying, “God, I need You!”

It’s a statement of my need for Him. It’s a statement of my dependence on Him. And so it becomes a powerful and daily means of mortifying pride and cultivating humility.

When you skip the spiritual disciplines in your life you are saying with your actions – if not with our lips – that you DO NOT NEED HIM. And that’s pride.

C.S. Lewis recognized how the very act of cultivating our inner life could become a trap that keeps us from seeing the truth about ourselves.

“Keep his mind on the inner life... Encourage this. Keep his mind off the most elementary duties by directing it to the most advanced and spiritual ones. Aggravate that most useful human characteristic, the horror and neglect of the obvious. You must bring him to a condition in which he can practice self-examination for an hour without discovering any of those facts about himself which are perfectly clear to anyone who has ever lived in the same house with him or worked in the same office.” *The Screwtape Letters*, C. S. Lewis, P. 21

5. Invite And Pursue Correction

You will not defeat this sin of pride on your own because you can’t even see it as much as you need to see it in your life, and that’s why God gave us each other!

- How consistently and aggressively do you PURSUE and INVITE correction in your life?
- Would your spouse and others close to you say you are EASY to entreat, that you’re APPROACHABLE?
- If there was something God wanted to tell you through your spouse, could He do it?

Prov. 12:1 “Whoever loves instruction loves knowledge, but he who hates reproof is stupid.”

Prov. 29:1 “He who is often rebuked, and hardens his neck, will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.”

6. Use Unflattering Illustrations of Yourself

7. **Recognize Your Relative Unimportance & Prepare to be Replaced** – No one is indispensable.

Charles DeGaul “Graveyards are filled with indispensable men.”

8. **Learn to Laugh at Yourself with Others**

“Laughter is a divine gift to the human who is humble. A proud man cannot laugh because he must watch his dignity; he cannot give himself over to the rocking and rolling of his belly. But a poor and happy man laughs heartily because he gives no serious attention to his ego.” Terry Lindvall, *Surprised by Laughter*, p. 130-131

9. **Cultivate the Habit of Gratitude**

To God and others! “Thankfulness is a soil in which pride does not easily grow.” *Michael Ramsey*