

THE DECISION IS YOURS #5

“The Decision for Humility”

Introduction

A. Pride and Humility

You might be surprised to see how much the Bible has to say on the subject of 2 spiritual attitudes competing within the human heart: Pride and Humility.

Pride and Humility are “attitudes”.

“Attitude”

A settled way of thinking or feeling about someone or something, usually reflected in a person's behavior

The natural condition of the human heart is *pride*. It comes so naturally to us we don't even know we have it.

But the natural condition of the born again human heart is humility. We saw this in the description of the Christian when we studied the Sermon on the Mount...

Blessed are the *poor in spirit* for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are the *meek* for they shall inherit the earth.

Matthew 5:3, 7

There is no greater sign of the sons of Satan than PRIDE.

There is no greater sign of the sons of God than HUMILITY.

But even if you are a child of God, Pride is always at the door!

We cannot walk in humility unless we make a decision to do so!

I. We Make the Decision For Humility

- Because God *requires* it
- Because God *commands* it
- And because our decision (to do it or not do it) determines how God treats us!

A. God Requires Humility

1. The Old Testament prophet Amos said that there are 3 things God requires of us...

**He has shown you, O man, what is good;
And what does the Lord require of you but
to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?
Micah 6:8 NKJV**

a. To require means “to demand as necessary or essential”.

2. Notice God’s requirements involve body, soul, and spirit:

- a. Of the Body: Do or act justly; live right
- b. Of the soul-Love mercy; an attitude of forgiveness (last week)
- c. And of the spirit-the bottom line, to walk with God in humility!

3. God not only requires humility...

B. God Commands Humility

1. God commands humility and connects it with a promise.

**Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord and He will lift you up.
James 4:10**

2. Humility is a decision we make; to humble myself is my personal responsibility before God.

**Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."
1 Peter 5:5**

a. Submission is a decision. And Peter uses a powerful metaphor here of putting on our clothes. I decided to wear this tonight. I didn’t ask you. Then I put it on. I didn’t ask you to do it for me!

“To clothe yourself is *your* responsibility. We don’t ask other people to dress us! We know it is *our* responsibility.”

Derek Prince

b. J.B. Phillips translation says: “Wear the overall of humility.”; the Greek word refers to “the white apron of a slave”. Look at the verse again...

Be clothed with humility, for God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.

1 Peter 5:5

c. God looks at what we’re wearing; He notices our attitude and treats us accordingly. If he sees us in pride, He Himself will resist us! But if He sees a heart clothed in humility, He treats us with grace.

3. God requires humility, He commands humility, and thirdly...

C. Warning: If We Do Not Humble Ourselves God Will Do It For Us

1. Jesus gave us many warnings about pride:

**Whoever honors himself shall be humbled
And whoever humbles himself shall be honored.
Matthew 23:12 God’s Word Translation**

a. Here we have 2 options with 2 results: to honor ourselves and have God humble us, or to humble ourselves and let God honor us! The Decision is Ours!

b. This reminds me of the message on forgiveness last week; if I don’t forgive others, God won’t forgive me. This says if I do not humble myself, God will humble me!

c. I must choose forgiveness to be forgiven; I must choose humility to be honored!

2. The Book of Proverbs tells us Pride is a Destroyer; Humility a Promoter

**Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall.
Proverbs 6:18**

(I like this verse in the Message Bible)

First pride, then the crash; the bigger the ego, the harder the fall.

a. How many scandals have we seen fall upon the high, the mighty and the proud just in the last year?

Proverbs 11:2 and Proverbs 18:12

**When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.
Proverbs 11:2**

**Before a downfall the heart is haughty, but humility comes before honor.
Proverbs 18:12**

c. Pride opens the door for disgrace and downfall; humility opens the door for wisdom and honor. The decision is yours!

3. The opposite principles of Pride and Humility are perfectly expressed in 2 biblical persons: Lucifer, who was cast out of heaven for the sin of Pride; and Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was exalted into heaven because of His humility!

II. Pride and Humility as Modeled by Satan and Christ

A. Satan: The Model of Pride

1. The Bible tells us that he who is now called Satan was originally Lucifer, one of the Archangels of God. But he became prideful of his own beauty and wisdom and rebelled against God which cost him His place in heaven. The prophet Isaiah writes...

5 Steps of Pride and Self-Exaltation Isaiah 14:12-17

**"How you are fallen from heaven,
O Lucifer, son of the morning!
How you are cut down to the ground,
You who weakened the nations!**

How did he fall? Why was he cut down?
Pride! In 5 steps of self-promotion:

For you have said in your heart:

1. 'I will ascend into heaven,

- 2. I will exalt my throne above the stars of God;**
- 3. I will also sit on the mount of the congregation
On the farthest sides of the north;**
- 4. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds,**
- 5. I will be like the Most High.'**

- a. A sure sign of Satan's children is pride and self-promotion!
- b. Pride is rebellion against our proper placement; a distortion of who God made us to be.
- c. But God promised He will humble the proud! He answers Satan's 5 steps of Pride with 5 judgments of Humiliation!

5 Steps of Humiliation

Isaiah 14:15-17

- 1. Yet you shall be brought down (from on high)**
- 2. to Sheol, (low)**
- 3. To the lowest depths of the Pit. (the lowest)**
(Not only brought down but mocked and scorned)
- 4. Those who see you will gaze at you (look down with contempt)**
- 5. And consider (judge you as small), saying:**
'Is this the man who made the earth tremble,
who shook kingdoms, who made the world as a wilderness
and destroyed its cities,
Who did not open the house of his prisoners?'

Isaiah 14:15-17

This is the destruction that awaits all the sons of Satan!
All who walk in pride and self-promotion will suffer humiliation.
Now contrast Satan and the model of pride with...

B. Christ: The Model of Humility

1. In Philippians 2, Paul tells the Christians at Philippi to "Let this mind" (attitude or way of thinking) be in you which was in Christ Jesus; then beginning in v.5, describes the HUMILITY of the Lord in 7 steps:

7 Steps of Humility

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who...

(1) being in the form of God, did not consider equality with God a thing to be grasped, (2) but He emptied Himself, (made Himself of no reputation,) taking the form of a slave, and (3) coming in the likeness of men. (4) And being found in appearance as a man, (5) He humbled Himself and (6) became obedient to the point of death, (7) even the death of the cross.

a. Notice that Lucifer and Jesus both begin in heaven; but while Lucifer's pride drove him *to rule* men, the humility of Jesus sent Him to *serve* men!

b. Satan wanted to be as God and grasped for the throne; Jesus was already equal with God but chose to let it go.

b. Satan wanted to fill himself with a higher place; but Jesus "emptied" Himself and "made Himself of no reputation"!

(NIV-He made Himself nothing)

c. Jesus, as God, should be served; but He "took the form of a servant; He humbled Himself to take on the "likeness of men", and lived a life of perfect submission and obedience to the point of death; even the most humiliating kind of death, death on the Cross!

2. Notice: Satan tried to be highest of the high and ended up lowest of the low; He took 5 steps up and was judged to suffer 5 steps down; but Jesus took 7 steps down and beginning in v.9, was rewarded with 7 steps up!

7 Steps of Exaltation

"Therefore"

(What is the therefore there for? Because Jesus perfectly, as in 'the # 7, humbled Himself, God will perfectly exalt Him with 7 steps up!)

**(1) God also has highly exalted Him and
(2) given Him the name which is above every name,
(3) that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
(4) of those in heaven, and
(5) of those on earth, and
(6) of those under the earth, and
(7) that every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
Philippians 2:9-11**

3. Satan proves Pride will bring you down; Jesus proves humility will lift you up!

“It was pride that changed angels into devils; it is humility that makes men to be as angels.”
Saint Augustine

4. The Son of God made a DECISION to humble Himself to come down to earth, and in the form of a baby, weak and dependent!

- He humbled Himself for 30 years in the carpenter shop where the Bible says He submitted Himself to His parents

5. Then, at age 30, He launches into His earthly ministry:

- **He washed His disciple’s feet; a picture of the incarnation:**

And He rose from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself about. Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet,
John 13:4-5

He did this to model humility for them...

For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.
John 13:15

- He warned His disciples about seeking the high seat...

Luke 14:8-11 NLT

When you are invited to a wedding feast, don't sit in the seat of honor. Instead, take the lowest place at the foot of the table. Then when your host sees you, he will come and say, 'Friend, we have a better place for you!' Then you will be honored in front of all the other guests. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.

- He humbled Himself in the Garden of Gethsemane;

Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done. Luke 22:4

6. Satan is the model for Pride; Jesus is the model for humility, which wise men have called the “prince of graces”.

“Pride is the oldest and commonest of sins; humility is the rarest and most beautiful of graces.”

J.C. Ryle

7. So let me close with...

III. A Laundry List of Litmus Tests

A. How I Test My Humility Quotient

#1. Do I have an attitude of serving others?

**The Son of man came not to be served, but to serve.
Matthew 25:28**

**Whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant,
And whoever wants to be first must be your slave.
Matthew 25:26-27**

Testimony to the Servants Among Us

#2. Am I easily offended?

**“If you are humble nothing will touch you, neither praise nor disgrace,
because you know what you are.”
Mother Teresa**

#3. Am I self-centered?

- Am I doing too much of the talking
- Is it all about me?
- Do I have “false humility”? Acting like a worm? Putting myself down to others? That’s not humility!

**“Humility is not thinking less of yourself, it’s thinking of yourself less.”
C.S. Lewis**

#4. Do I grasp for position or reputation?

- Am I bragging?

“I believe the first test of a truly great man is humility.”

John Ruskin, English Author
(Testimony: Ministers I admire)

“A great man is always willing to be little.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

5. Do I always have to be “right”?

“Pride is concerned with who is right. Humility is concerned with what is right.”

Ezra T. Benson

#5. Do I tend toward prejudice?

a. Prejudice is rooted in pride, looking down on others!

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Philippians 2:3-4 NIV

“There is no respect for others without humility in one’s self.”

Henri Frederic Amiel, Swiss Poet

b. Humbling myself is easy when I admit who I really am!

“In reality, humility means nothing other than being complete honesty about yourself.”

William Countryman

#6. Have I made the decision to humble myself?

“The decisive element for humility is the will, not the emotions.”

Derek Prince

HUMILITY IS THE STARTING POINT FOR DECISION MAKING

We taught on the Decision to Praise--and you cannot praise without humility!
We taught on the Decision to Repent--and you cannot repent without humility!
We taught on the Decision to Forgive--and you cannot forgive without humility
So this teaching on Humility is really the foundational attitude for everything else!

a. One man said...

“Humility is the gateway into the grace and favor of God.”
Harold Warner

b. God says...

**"This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit,
and trembles at my word.
Isaiah 66:2 NIV**

b. God loves humility; and as the great Jonathan Edwards said...

“Nothing more sets a person out of the devil’s reach than humility.”
Jonathan Edwards

COMMUNION AND PRAYER

**Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may
exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.
1 Peter 5:6 NKJV**

(Optional)

2 Chronicles 7:14