

Wisdom for Pride

1. Intro: Pride vs. Humility

- We are now currently part of a society which deems pride as a virtue
- Listen to this quote from a modern philosophy website
 - *Pride is the virtue of respecting oneself. It is a human need to think highly of oneself. Without it, one would have no reason to trust one's ability to live. One would have no reason to accept that one's life is worthy of living.*
- What was once known as one of the so-called Seven Deadly Sins
 - Pride has now been turned into a virtue
 - It is an attitude deemed worthy of having
 - Not only worthy of having, but if we are to take the quote seriously, a virtue that is as much a necessity as air and water
 - In doing so we have turned humility into an undesirable trait ... unworthy of any self respecting person
- We see pride everywhere in life
 - Arrogance of singers like Kayne West
 - *I am God's vessel. But my greatest pain in life is that I will never be able to see myself perform live.*
 - *I will go down as the voice of this generation, of this decade, I will be the loudest voice.*
 - *I feel like I'm too busy writing history to read it.*
 - Sports stars getting paid mega-bucks and thinking that there are social norms that apply to them
 - Pride and arrogance of politicians like Eddie Obeid who think it's okay to use their positions of political power for personal gain
- But of course ... pride is not just out there with everyone else
 - Pride is all too often in us
 - It's a problem we all have
 - Jesus said - out of a man's heart come all types of sin ...
 - "evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, **pride** & foolishness."
 - Pride is a problem we all have
- And when we come the scriptures ... we see that in God's economy ... pride is **not** a virtue ... its a sin

- We're told God hates pride and is against the proud
- And we're warned of the foolishness of pride and the disastrous consequences of being proud
- And so it's good that as we turn again to OT the book of Proverbs ... God gives us wisdom for pride
 - He gives us warnings for pride
 - Shows us the blessings of humility
 - A life of humility

2. Warnings of pride

● **Folly of Pride**

- The first thing Proverbs warns us about is the folly of pride
 - It's foolish to proud because pride leads to all types of ruin in life
- Pride brings disgrace > 11:2 - *When pride comes, then comes disgrace*
 - So often pride blinds us to the realities of life and sooner or later ... it disgrace and ruin follow
 - Lance Armstrong > 2005 won his 7th TDF stood on the podium and said how he felt sorry for all the cycling cynics and the skeptics >
 - *"I'm sorry for you. I'm sorry that you can't dream big. I'm sorry you don't believe in miracles."*
 - 2012 > exposed as having taken PED throughout his career
 - Forced to step down as chairman of charity Livestrong Foundation
 - Lost sponsorship endorsements with Nike, Oakley, Trek worth \$75m
 - Stripped of all his TDF titles
 - When pride comes, then come disgrace
- Pride breeds quarrels > 13:10
 - This is when pride gets in the way of listening to and respecting others
 - Pride causes us to be arrogant > be dismissive > to assume you are right
 - Pride means there is little or no room for being wrong
 - And it leads to arguments and dissension
- Pride also brings destruction
 - 16:18 - *Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.*
 - 18:12 - *Before his downfall a man's heart is proud*

- Pride causes a person to think more highly of themselves than they ought
- To think they're beyond the normal social boundaries of everyone else
- And it leads to his destruction and downfall

- Pride brings humiliation
 - 29:23 - A man's pride brings him low

- Pride is foolish - it brings disgrace, breeds quarrels, goes before destruction and brings humiliation

- ***Sin of pride***
- Underlying our human pride is sin
- 21:4 - *Haughty (arrogant) eyes and a proud heart, the lamp of the wicked, are sin!*
- In fact, you could say that pride is the root of all sin
 - It was the rebellious pride of Adam and Eve in the garden where they refused to trust and obey God but instead tried to be independent of him
 - In their pride they sought self honour and glory rather than God's honour and glory ... and that's at the heart of human sinfulness

- Like Adam and Eve ... it's our pride that makes us
 - Want to have autonomy from God
 - Want to be the ones that determine
 - How we run our life and
 - Which direction we go
 - What our priorities and purposes are

- When we do that we forget who God is and who we are
 - That I didn't create the world > he did
 - That I don't rule the world or even my life > he does
 - And therefore as his creation ... we're subject to him
- And we forget all that and in our human pride ... say
 - No ... I want to be in charge
 - I don't need or want you in my life

- ***Judgment of pride***
- When it comes to the warnings of pride ... Proverbs is very clear about the judgment of pride

- Over and over again ... Proverbs teaches that God opposes the proud and that he will bring them down
 - **15:25** *The LORD tears down the proud man's house ...*
 - **16:5** *The LORD detests all the proud of heart. Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished.*
- Because God is creator and sovereign ... he won't allow the proud to stand in opposition to him forever
- Time and again we see this happen throughout the Bible
- **Illustration - Nebuchadnezzar**
- The classic example of this in the Bible is The Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar¹ was one who fell because of his pride
 - Thought his kingdom was the greatest kingdom and he was the greatest king on earth
 - He erected a gold statue of himself and required his subjects to bow down to it
 - As he walked on the roof of his palace said, "Is not this great Babylon, which I have built by my mighty power as a royal residence and for the glory of my majesty?"
 - And immediately after uttering his boast, God struck him with insanity by God and his kingdom was taken from him
- The proud may ignore and reject God for a while ... but in the end he will make clear that he is the Lord and those who oppose him and reject will not stand
- **Application**
- While we're very aware of the pride of arrogance and self-righteousness ... we see in others ...
- Often there are more subtle forms of pride we can fall into that we don't even recognise or even consider acceptable
- Jerry Bridges in his book 'Respectable Sins' identifies the some of those acceptable forms of pride
- **Moral Superiority**
- This is when we become like the Pharisee in the parable Jesus tells of the Pharisee and the tax collector

¹ Daniel 2-4

- It's when we feel morally superior to others
- Not limited to Christians ... anyone who believes they hold the moral high ground over others in politics, education, family life
- But it can be common among Christians

- We live in a society where sin is often overt and flaunted
 - sexual promiscuity
 - drunkenness
 - drug use
 - assault
- And because we don't commit those sins we feel morally superior and look with disdain on those who do
- Now those are serious sins ... but we sin too when in our pride we become morally self-righteous like the Pharisee

- ***Spiritual Superiority***
- The other area of pride we can fall into is pride of spiritual superiority
 - One thing Sydney Anglicans do well is work hard to understand the Bible and uphold biblical doctrine
 - We seek to stand firm in the faith of the apostolic church and not be swayed and led astray by secular worldviews
 - That's a good thing
- But it can cause us to become proud especially with Christians from other denominations
 - We think ... we've got it right and they don't
- This is a pride on our beliefs and that we're spiritually superior to those who hold other beliefs

- ***Independent Superiority***
- Third way is pride of an independent spirit
- This is often seen in resistance to authority and an un-teachable attitude
- It's a pride that
 - thinks - "I know better"
 - doesn't think others wisdom or views aren't worth listening to
 - dismisses those in authority and their directives

- This is not to say
 - We ought to condone immoral behaviour
 - Accept false doctrine

- Blindly follow those in authority
- But we must be careful not to allow our pride to express itself in moral, spiritual or independent superiority

3. Blessing of humility

- Proverbs not only warns us about the folly, sin and judgment of pride ...
 - Fortunately it gives us the antidote to pride
 - It doesn't leave us dangling over the edge in despair with our pride exposed and condemned
- Because the counterpoint that Proverbs gives to pride is the blessing of humility

● ***Virtue of humility***

- First thing Proverbs shows us is that humility is a virtue that is worth having
 - **16:19** *Better to be lowly in spirit and among the oppressed than to share plunder with the proud.*
 - Better to be humble ... than to be proud and rich
 - **18:12** *Before his downfall a man's heart is proud, but humility comes before honour.*
 - Humility comes before honour
 - That is ... the person who is humble is honoured and respected
 - It's a mark of godliness and character that is desirable and good
 - **11:2** *When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.*
 - The humble person is wise
 - They're willing to listen, to take on board feedback, to accept criticism, to accept they're not always right
 - Such a humility will lead both to godly and worldly wisdom
- Proverbs makes it clear ... it's good to be humble.
 - It's a characteristic we ought to seek and desire

● ***Grace of humility***

- While Proverbs wisdom is to be humble with one another, our greatest need for humility is before God

- It's when a person humbles themselves before God that they can be forgiven
 - **3:34** *God mocks proud mockers but gives grace to the humble.*
- God is gracious and compassionate and forgiving ...
- But that grace of God comes only when we humble ourselves before him in repentance
- **22:4** *Humility and the fear of the LORD bring wealth and honour and life.*
 - Humbling yourself before God and acknowledging Jesus as Lord and saviour ... is the only way we can receive God's grace
- **Illustration - Repentance**
- When I upset Liana ... a sure fire way to keep her upset with me is to be proud and argue my case and refuse to listen to her point of view
 - What I need to do is humble myself > repent > say sorry > ask for forgiveness
 - When I do ... it opens up the way for forgiveness and reconciliation
- This is how it works with us and God
 - If we continue to be proud and keep God at a distance and ignore what he's saying to us ... we will remain his enemies
 - But as soon as we come to him in humility ... then he shows us his amazing grace and forgives us

4. Life of Humility

- **H - Honour God**
- A life of humility starts with honouring God
 - Wisdom and understanding start with a fear of the Lord
 - That is, we're to revere, worship, respect, obey, love the Lord
 - There is no room for pride when we honour the Lord with our life
- This applies to all everyone ... not just those 'outside the church' ... it applies just as much to us 'inside the church'
 - Too often we can have this idea that God is
 - God is love
 - God is our buddy
 - God is our friend
 - Result is we think our relationship with God is nice and casual and chummy

- And we forget he's awesome and holy and sovereign ... and therefore someone to be honoured and revered
- **U - Understand your place**
- A life of humility requires you to understand your place
- The failure to honour God comes from our lack of understanding of who we really are
- The wise person understands that God is creator and sovereign and holy and awesome ... and we're not
 - As Myles often prays > "Dear God, you are big and we are small"
- But in our pride we think 'we are big and God is small'
 - And instead of worshipping and honouring God we worship and honour ourselves
- But when we understand our place in this world ... it automatically humbles us
 - When you look at the stars and see how small we are and
 - When you look at the beauty of the world around us and see how God made all that
 - When you see understand that despite our sin, Jesus was willing to lay down his life for you
 - When you understand your place before God ... it humbles you
- **M - Mimic Christ**
- The third principle in a life of humility is to mimic Christ
- That's what Paul in Philippians 2:5
 - "Your attitude should be the same as that of Jesus Christ"
- This attitude is an attitude of humility
 - v3-5 ³ *Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in **humility** consider others better than yourselves.* ⁴ *Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.* ⁵ *Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:*
- We're to be humble in the way we treat and consider others ...
 - And the model for how we do that is Jesus ... who showed us what humility looks like
 - ⁶ *Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, ⁷ but made himself nothing, taking the*

very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross!

- If God the Son can show that type of humility in seeking to serve others ... then Paul says ... mimic Christ
 - Follow Jesus lead in the way you humble yourself to serve others
- **Illustration - Tooheys New ads**
- Beer ads ... the beer economy > the harder or more significant the work the more beer you got paid
 - Helping your mate with the painting > 1 case
 - Helping your mate clean out porta-loos > 2 cases
 - Helping your mate move toxic waste ... that spills on you > 20 cases
- Suggests that help deserves payment
- But that's not Jesus view of service
 - Jesus gained nothing for himself even though he gave up everything
 - That's how we're to mimic Christ
- So when you
 - help someone in need
 - take on a volunteer role at the kids school or footy club
 - when you serve here at church
 - not to get pats on the back
 - to get a favour from someone
 - get something out of it for yourself
 - It's humbly serving like Christ who showed us the greatest act of love in giving up his life for us
 - Open up your house and do some hospitality
 - Cook a meal for someone in need
 - Get to church early to welcome a new person
 - If you're not serving at church, think about ways you could get involved
- If we are to mimic Christ we serve in humility
- **B - be willing to admit your wrong**
- The fourth principle for a life of humility is ... be willing to admit when you are wrong
- I don't know about you but I find it hard to admit when I am wrong

- In my pride ... I'm stubborn and think I'm right
- It doesn't matter who you are, what education you have, how intelligent you are
 - You won't be right 100% of the time
 - When we're wrong we need to admit it
 - When we've taken something too far ... we must own up to it
 - When we're confronted by someone about what we have said, or what we have done ... we need to take it on board, repent and ask for forgiveness
- A life of humility means we put aside our pride, humble ourselves and seek forgiveness
 - A life of humility means we will humble ourselves and work hard to be reconciled to those around us
- The next time you have an argument with your spouse, or your kids, ask
 - "what did I do that was unhelpful / unloving / inflamed the situation?"
 - "what is the issue for the other person I need to understand?"
- Be willing to admit you're wrong
- The gospel causes us to change
 - The excuses won't cut it
 - This is the way I am
 - This is the way God made me
 - No ... God made you to be like Christ
 - God saved you to be like Christ
- And as we grow to be like Christ we'll humble ourselves and be willing to admit when we are wrong
- ***L - love the unlovely***
- The fifth principle in a life of humility is - love the unlovely
- Again ... this is what Jesus did
 - He loved the sinners, tax collectors and prostitutes
 - He loved the poor, the disabled, the outcasts
 - He washed Judas feet the night he betrayed Jesus
 - He loved us ... even though we were enemies of God
- So our attitude should be the same - love the unlovely

- Our service and love should never be for our friends only
- We are called to love those we wouldn't love normally
 - The stranger
 - The visitor
 - The disabled
 - The outcast
- If we only show love to those who love us, what benefit is that
- If Christ only showed love to those that loved him first none of us would be saved
- But Christ shows that a life of humility means we love the unlovely
- ***E - encourage others (service)***
- The final principle in a life of humility is - encourage other's
- In speaking of humility it can lead us to a great danger
- We can so seek humility for ourselves and for others that we fail to acknowledge and encourage others as they serve
 - We don't want people to get big heads
 - We don't want to encourage pride and boastfulness ... so instead we remain quite

- But we **do** want to encourage each other in acts of service
- We want to acknowledge and encourage others when they've
 - encouraged us
 - helped us
 - spurred us on
 - comforted us
- As we do we build up and strengthen the body of Christ

- If I never tell Liana how much I love her, how supportive she is, how much she encourages me ...
- Then she'll think that I take her for granted and don't appreciate what she does for me
- The same applies for those who serve us at church ... who serve us faithfully and whole heartedly ... not out of obligation, but out of humble love and service
- As we live out humble lives ... it's good to encourage others in their service

5. Conclusion

- So guard your hearts against pride
- Clothe yourself with the virtue of humility

- As you live a life of humility
 - Honour God first and foremost
 - Understanding our place before him
 - Mimic Christ humility in the way that we serve others
 - Be willing to admit when we are wrong
 - Love those we wouldn't normally love; and
 - Encouraging others as they serve God and us

PRAY