

Dealing With Pride

by George Verwer

The sermon emphasizes the dangers of pride and the importance of humility, brokenness, and repentance in the Christian life.

Duration: 44:48

Scripture: 1 Peter 5:1

Topics: "Humility And Pride", "Christian Discipleship"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding God's work in universities in order to understand Britain. He highlights the significant number of conversions that occur among students, often due to the love shown by their peers. The speaker then directs the audience to 1 Peter 5:1-10, a passage that has personally impacted him and brought him to repentance. He mentions the need for humility, lowliness of mind, and esteeming others as better than oneself. The sermon also touches on the importance of how we speak and act towards others, sharing a story of someone who was hurt and turned away from God due to a negative experience at a church. The speaker emphasizes the need for ongoing teaching and guidance to help people grow in their faith and live in accordance with biblical principles.

Transcript

There's so many things I would like to share. Normally I would have a time of prayer and sharing, but this is a heavy message that I need the maximum time for. So I want you to open your Bibles starting at Isaiah chapter 14, Isaiah chapter 14.

This is a very, very important passage of Scripture, not only when we think of the subject of pride, but we think on the subject of Satan, because it seems to speak of the pride and the rebellion of Lucifer, and therefore the origin of Satan. I'm sure that different commentators will have different views upon this, starting at verse 12. How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, sun of the dawn, you have been cut down to the earth, you who have weakened the nations, but you said in your heart, I will ascend to heaven, I will raise my throne above the stars of God, I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north, I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will make myself like the most high God, nevertheless you will be thrust down to shale to the recesses of the pit, those who see you will gaze at you, they will ponder over you saying, is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook the kingdoms, who made the world like a wilderness and overthrew its cities, who did not allow his prisoners

to go home, all the kings of the nations lie in glory each in his own tomb, but you have been cast out of your tomb like a rejected branch, clothed with a slain, who appears with a sword, who go down to the stones of the pit like a trampled corpse.

I don't want to get into a discussion on this passage, but it's one of those passages in the Old Testament that brings out that pride is truly the great crippler, certainly in our evangelism, so often it is pride that keeps people from coming to Christ. I'm often speaking at universities, I was at Bangor University last Friday, so few follow the Lord in these universities among the faculty, among the great scientists and the great brains of this country, there are some, and often people in the Christian union are mocked, I don't know if you realize how criticized some of these Christian unions are, especially a year or so ago there was some difficulty concerning homosexuals and the homosexuals went against the Christian unions and this got in, I guess, at least in the student press and I know some CU's now are not even allowed to meet in the union buildings because of something to do with their position on righteousness and I hope you will pray for the student work in this country because I think history will show that the Christian union movement certainly would be among the major backbones of the entire British Evangelical Church. You cannot understand Britain unless you understand what God has done in and at the various universities and the number of key people that are converted at university, it's quite amazing, often in their first year and often because other students show them love.

That's another subject for another day. Let's look at some other scriptures, 1 Peter 5, 1 through 10, and if you could write at least the references down, meditate on these things, that would be encouraging. This is a passage again and again has broken me down, humbled me, brought me to repentance and then brought me out of the fog or the difficulty.

I think we ought to read the whole passage, 1 through 10, it's so powerful and there's a dozen different truths in this passage. I'm reading from New American Standard. Therefore I exhort the elder among you as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ and partaker also the glory that is to be revealed.

Shepherd the flock of God among you exercising oversight not under compulsion but voluntarily according to the will of God and not for sordid gain but with eagerness nor yet as loyally over those allotted to your charge but proving to be an example to the examples to the flock and when the chief shepherd appears you will receive the unfading crown of glory. You younger men likewise be subject to your elders and all of you clothe yourselves with humility. There's the key sentence, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another for God opposed is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble.

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God that he may exalt you at the proper time casting all your anxiety. When I read this passage my anxiety goes up so I thank God for verse 7. Casting all your anxiety upon him because he cares for you. Be of sober spirit be on the alert your adversary the devil prowls like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour but resist him firm in your faith knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world and after you have suffered for a little while the God of all grace who called you to his eternal glory in Christ will himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you to him be dominion forever and ever amen.

What a great passage of scripture. There are a number of also important exhortations in the book of Proverbs concerning pride. We haven't time to look at all of them.

One that's especially relevant is it talks about the fact that so often pride comes before a fall. We're warned also in the New Testament when we look at someone else who's fallen on their nose spiritually it says take heed lest you also fall. Another passage tucked away in Isaiah that might be good to look at is in Isaiah 57.

Isaiah 57 verse 15. This could even be somewhat of a prayer. 57 verse 15.

For thus says the high and exalted one who lives forever whose name is holy. I dwell on a high and holy place and also with the contrite and lowly of spirit. What a powerful promise that God will dwell among those who are contrite and lowly of spirit in order to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.

I think you remember Psalm 51 but let's turn to it to see the example of David and the prayer of David after he is confronted by Nathan and he repents of his sin and he is restored. Verse 10. Creating me a clean heart O God.

Shouldn't that be our prayer this morning? And renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from thy presence. Do not take thy holy spirit from me.

Restore to me the joy of thy salvation. He didn't pray for his salvation to be returned but for the joy of his salvation. And sustain me with a willing spirit.

Then I will teach transgressors thy ways and sinners will be converted to thee. Deliver me from blood guiltiness O God. Thou God of my salvation.

Then my tongue will joyfully sing of thy righteousness. O Lord open my lips that my mouth may declare thy praise. For thou does not delight in sacrifice otherwise I would give it.

Thou art not pleased with burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit. This is a book about brokenness.

A broken and a contrite heart. O God that will not despise. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit.

A broken and a contrite heart. I think there was a definition of brokenness by Andrew Murray said that brokenness was humility's response to the touch of God. Don't be confused by the word brokenness.

I'm sure it means different things to different people. One of the best ways to explain it is simply the ability and the strength to say I'm sorry. To admit when you're wrong.

That is one of the hardest things for human nature to do. To simply admit you have been wrong or at least admit you've been half wrong or 25% wrong. If you deal with your 25% maybe the Holy Spirit will use you to deal with the other person's 25%.

Again and again when I've dealt with the percentage in my lack of understanding of myself where I thought I was wrong and just repenting. Not even mentioning the other thing. You don't say to the person now look you're 75% wrong.

You're going to deal with that but I'll at least get one up on you and repent on my 25%. No that's not how you do it. When God is dealing with your sin it will be such an awesome sight you won't even see.

At that moment you won't even see that other man sin. And I know when this has happened to me on different occasions sometimes in tears the Holy Spirit in his sovereign purposes not because it was some kind of strategy brought revival and brought a renewal of relationship. And I think to be quite honest that my own heart over the years in a deceptive way at times has been hardened.

I think I used to be more broken and more quick to repent in my marriage. Not easy to say my dear wife here. Whereas now I do something in the home that I know is wrong.

I say something I know is wrong but I'm hardened to it. I've been living with myself in this marriage for 28 years. I'm accustomed to these beret and sins of the tongue and the temperament and the disposition.

And there's not always the brokenness and Lord have mercy on me. Not that you want to have a great drama in your home you know every time you sin or make a movie. But certainly the last thing we want to do is harden our hearts.

There are a number of other passages I would like to read but and we need a week on this subject. But I think I should move on and just try to touch on some of the kinds of pride. I think it's more easy it's easier to understand pride if we speak a little bit about some of the kinds of pride.

Especially that are such a great hindrance in the work of God. We think of this whole thing of national pride. When I first went to Spain I was warned that the Spaniards were really proud and I'd have to be careful.

And then when I went to work and live in France I was warned really I'm not exaggerating about French pride and that this was something really special in Europe. Of course they were all warned about American pride. And when I went to live in the Netherlands I was told about Dutch pride.

And as I ministered all over Germany especially in the 60s I was warned about the unique German pride. I decided it's all the devil's pride. That's all the devil's pride.

On the other hand I think there is such a thing as national pride and I think it's difficult to deal with because there is nothing wrong with a person respecting his or her country. There is a sense that pride is a word that leads us into a semantic jungle because it means different things to different people. If someone says to you I'm proud of my country I don't think you ought to jump on them you know with Isaiah 57 or Isaiah 14 and compare them with Satan.

There is a sense there is a place for what I would think of as human factor pride. However speaking about this especially in international environment is incredibly difficult and is sometimes downright hurtful and confusing. There are things that we should keep in our Paul Cornier a brilliant author not pushed near enough because I guess he's not fundamentalist enough or evangelical enough or doesn't cross his T's in the same place as whoever has a lot of brilliant things to say and he has a book on the subject of secrets and surely there is a place for secrets and maybe sometimes some of the things we feel deep about in regard to our own nation our own nationality should be well kept secrets or at least shared at the appropriate time in the appropriate way.

So many of our problems as Christians are not what we say it's how we say it. This has been my struggle only for 33 years since my conversion. How to say something when you have my kind of engine my kind of excitement to say something that a shy reserved person of another temperament doesn't misunderstand.

So let's as we move together especially in OM beware of national pride which of course is tied in with nationalism. We can say is there any place for nationalism among God's people? What do we mean by nationalism? It's a difficult area. I would need another whole hour just to define and talk to you about nationalism.

If it wasn't for nationalism many nations would not exist and that's a difficult political jungle that I'm not willing to get into this morning. Let's move on to some other areas of pride that I think are more perhaps more relevant spiritual pride. This is what at times OM had overdoses of and the dosing was so subtle we didn't think we had it.

We had people with forsaking all pride. Somebody who forsook a house only God knows their motives and launched out forsaking all for Christ came into the work and discovered somebody else down the road owned their own house. I can tell you that brings a few interesting vibrations.

One of the ways that your motives get tested is when you meet people who have done just the opposite and feel they were letting God to do just the opposite from what you have done. There's such a wide range of ways that God works today. To have strong spiritual convictions and yet remain teachable and humble is something that I personally am still learning about.

So if you have arrived you can write me your few pages for my new book on how I became humble. I have three or four pictures of me on the cover and I'll be autographing copies at the bookshop on Saturday. Spiritual pride.

I was so helped through Eugenia Price still one of my favorite authors and it's often male chauvinistic pride that keeps us men from learning from the women. May the Lord cleanse our wretched hearts and may the women not get too proud in the process. But Eugenia Price said if you're sitting with someone who says something that you know really stirs you that maybe you should just realize that they have never had any light on that particular subject.

Maybe a babe in Christ. Maybe someone in says something that you feel is so off the wall and extreme and rather than getting all reactionary because our troubles are not generally our actions as much as our reactions. If I can get even 50 seconds to think something through I can usually by the grace of God come up with the right action not all the time but the reactions when I only get split seconds over the telephone.

That I'm in great need of further growth. So let's beware of spiritual pride. Every one of these areas I'm touching on it is possible to react and get in to extreme on the other end.

Overreacting to spiritual pride so that you glory in your rebellion. Bible colleges are filled with people. They glory in being the Bible college rebel.

They announce on the floor that they have just broken the social policy. Boy they're so proud. They have a badge they pin on you for breaking the social policy.

And they're not going to be manipulated by this strong leader and they know how to bad mouth a leader and they know how to pull a carpet from underneath the Bible college president. We had professionals at Moody Bible Institute when I was a student who could reduce any teacher. It's amazing where did the whole thing of nicknames get born.

It must have been born in secondary school or primary school where every teacher has to have a nickname. I wonder if all these teachers we got professional graduate teachers here they could give us a lecture on handling nicknames and how to remain humble as a headmaster. I'm sure that's a whole separate book.

But this is something we need to understand it is possible so easily to overreact to some pride we see in one person and then we end up in another pit. Then I've written here family pride and background pride. And you ever made a study on the difference between dignity dignity and pride.

Now the moment I say that I think of Sukja. I warned her about the English lesson for this morning. Any of you who are learning English we may have joining ICT this summer a professional English teacher who speaks American English to keep it in balance.

Which we know is a problem but we know that God is giving great grace to the British. To walk in all humility and lowliness of mind esteeming others as better than yourself then we just to give the same grace to the Americans. There was a film on TV the other day showing a tremendous strength when Winston Churchill united with Roosevelt.

And though Dandy and Burr had no illusions of grandeur we would like to see the united strength of British and Americans two major groups in Bromley and Britain united together with all the other strengths from Korea and Germany and Switzerland and Argentina and every other nation thrown in. Tremendous possibilities both for great things and for terrible things. Let's make the difference through repentance and brokenness.

But people need a sense of dignity. I don't think I got into the word dignity until I got under Dr. Schaeffer. I don't think it was a word that I understood.

The dignity of man. People went into extreme with that great Calvinistic point the depravity of man. And some of these old sanctification books don't bring out the dignity of man too well.

And even some of the old hymns we end up classifying ourselves as worms and we're nobodies and I'm unworthy. All this kind of terminology is good if it's kept in balance. We were created in the image of God.

The dignity of man. And as we think of our own families and our own background I think there is a place for dignity. As we rode up the high street today we saw a rubbish we call in America garbage truck.

What do we call over here? Yeah that's the word I wanted. But I wanted to make a comparison between what it used to be called and what it's called now. But anyway on the side of that lorry on the high street there was waste management.

I think it's great. Big money in it. We've been working on it across the road.

Yesterday you can see our waste management expert Wayne Thomas. But isn't it good that those who go around collecting rubbish today had some degree of dignity. Now you may say no that's dangerous.

These people are going to become proud. They'll bring an insurrection. They'll take over our homes.

Well that's another political problem that I don't think we'll get into this morning. I think there is a place for dignity without revolution. I believe many of the problems we have in management and labor in this country and every other country is because traditionally people in management have looked down upon

people who have been in labor.

They see their mistakes. Of course they're there. They see their sins, their blunders.

I'm absolutely convinced that things like we've had in Dover all these past days could be completely avoided in our society. Forgive me for my idealism. It's good to have still some in the 40s.

There's always problems on both sides. There's always usually loss of temper, often behind the scenes, hurtful statements and the belittling of other people. And that's something that we as God's people want to be so careful we don't belittle other people.

Belittling other people says whether you mean it or not you are better than they. Educational pride, background pride, snobbery, a very overused term perhaps. There can be no place for it in the work of God.

Again this isn't something we can expect people to change overnight. As we become more idealistic, which is the danger of this kind of message and reading this kind of book, the Bible, unless with it comes love and patience and understanding, then instead of leading us into holiness it leads us into judgmentalism. And I actually am frightened by some of the idealism that comes out in our Christian circles that often just leaves people with overdoses of guilt.

Moving on from there, I want to say a word about racial pride. This is certainly still one of the greatest problems in our society. OM is dominated by the white race, less so every year.

Praise the Lord. We want to be interdenominational. We want to be interracial.

It was a black brother, my closest friend almost at Moody Bible Institute, that pioneered with me the beginning of OM in the UK. He was the first man to ever pack a book in STL OM's history in the UK. We've had some other beautiful examples in OM of working together interracially, but it is not an easy road.

It is certainly not a road that's generally helped by total answers or generalizations or exaggerations. Let us examine our own hearts. I think if we do, we will see that we have subtle, subtle racial superiority.

I had it, and I repented over it. I wept in the motel room where Dr. Martin Luther King was assassinated of my hidden American middle-class suburban racism that I didn't even recognize. In fact, because I was so naive when I went to college and I wrestled with a black man and had black friends and loved the black people seemingly, and I think I did as a naive young Christian, I didn't realize these things are subconscious.

They come more when you think about your daughter marrying somebody of another race, which I wrestled through many years ago. We do. Most of us have hidden, subconscious, sometimes very conscious racism.

Again, like so many other areas of the Christian life, I don't believe this is going to be resolved by a deliverance experience. I don't believe it's going to be, you know, resolved even for a crisis as I had in that motel room. It's an ongoing struggle.

It's an ongoing battle. Many people have difficulty loving people of other races. But how do you, who feel you have victory over that, how do you handle the racist? Where in the Bible does it say we should not love the racist? And people in certain parts of certain countries that I have visited, even dedicated to

mid-Christians, obviously, as clear as you could see, had difficulties in the area of race and were not mature in that area.

What do I do? Do I reject them? I don't reject the man that's still dealing with pride. I don't reject the man that's still dealing with loss. I realize I'm going to have not much fellowship.

I don't reject the person who's still struggling with his tongue or bad mouth or impatience. Therefore, I should not reject the racist. The person who is having struggle, as Eugenia Price inferred, has never had understanding or light.

What do we know? What do we know of the person who all he knows is one particular part of one particular country and one particular culture all of his life? What do we know about him? And when he is born again, he in sincerity repents of sin and comes to Christ, we suddenly think he's going to take 40 years of culture and background and brainwashing or whatever effect of his culture and just one blow, it's out the window. Life isn't like that. This is why often there's so much war and heartache among Christians.

This is why the thing that shocks us the most when we come into O.M., the sins of other people, especially the sins of our leaders or the areas where their lives are not yet that finely tuned by the grace and the mercy of God. It is possible to love the racist and declare war against racism. It is possible to hate some of the things that a particular person of a particular race may specialize in.

I'm not sure if that's actually happening that much. It's possible to hate what they are doing. Suppose it's a little revolutionary band of terrorists of one race who are blowing people up and you're seeing it on the television.

It's possible to hate sin, to hate what they are doing and to reach out and love to those people. I have a hatred for football hooliganism. To me it's just so terrible.

It so destroys something that is so good. It has brought so much grief and pain and death, but God has given great grace. I don't think it's anything special to just love these people, not sometimes without a battle, especially if you watch it on TV.

You know, if you don't wrestle with any hostility or hatred or emotions in that particular line, then good, again, write me a page on how you're doing it. And sometimes hostility comes out and we feel like, you know, punching someone. Again, Brits and all those have never felt like punching anyone.

But what a joy it was to meet that football hooligan who came to my meeting some time ago, who had come to know the Lord Jesus Christ and had repented of his sin. Isn't it amazing how many people are coming to Christ in prison, and yet when they come out of prison, how much love and acceptance do they get? There's some brilliant films showing how ex-prisoners generally are second-class citizens all their life. I tell you, that's a tough one.

There's no simple answer to some of these great difficulties, because we know that today people are getting out of prison quite easily, and some of them, you know, commit murder within the first year that they get out. No wonder society is a little bit nervous. There are many other forms of pride that we haven't got time to go into.

I put here full-time Christian workers' pride. I put here professional pride. I think that one has caused some degree of grief in the work of God.

I think it's got potential even to blow O.M. into, too, in some places. I've heard statements said, made both anti-professional and pro-professional, that just boggle my mind. And I think we all, if we are professional, we have high qualifications, high education, we have been specifically trained to do a job professionally, then we should walk in lowliness of mind about that, still esteeming the other brother, the so-called amateur.

I've heard very derogatory statements made both about professionals and about amateurs. So there's no simple word. The word amateur in itself is derogatory, where in most sections of society the word professional is not derogatory.

It's a word that carries a good tone to it. In O.M., we certainly want to do things in a more professional way, but we must not beat other people on the head with the term, because that doesn't help them understand what a Christian professional behaves like. And we certainly don't want things to be amateurish.

An amateur can do a professional job, and a professional can do an amateurish job. And if we don't know that, we haven't studied much history. In fact, the more professional you are, the more responsibilities you're given, the greater the blunder, and the cost of that blunder.

And we could give a lot of illustrations. However, as we think of pride, we need to just move on in closing and just think of some ways on how to handle it. The cure for pride is found at the foot of the cross.

As Christians, we are completely unique in so many ways when it comes to pride. Again, I'm not speaking against dignity. I'm not speaking against self-esteem, and I'm not giving a simplistic answer between the problem of being humble and yet being tough.

Some weeks ago, I shared about the need for Christians to be tough, to be strong, to be firm, especially in leadership. And in your work, there are times when you have to be firm. I hope our mechanics will be firm with us when it comes to exhorting us or teaching us about the vehicles.

I hope at times that Keith will be firm when it comes to safety, when it comes to doing the job right. There are many areas where we have to be firm, we have to be tough. There's no church that can function without discipline.

We have to at times say, look, this is it. We forgive you, we love you, but you cannot continue in this job. It's just not on.

And we have to, of course, at that time, give our reasons. I don't think there's an easy answer to this. I don't think I can throw you out a formula.

I think perhaps one of the most important factors is how we do what we do, how we say what we say. I know a person permanently hurt and now away from God. And one of the reasons is that he hardly ever comes here.

But when he came, this is years ago, so nobody here. When he came here as a visitor, he parked his car in the wrong place and someone chewed him out. Here was a guy struggling for his faith, actually a child of an OM leader, and somebody just blew him away because he parked in the wrong place.

A beautiful illustration. We have to have an ongoing program to teach people to park in the right place. I'm involved in that program.

But when someone is parked wrong, how do you go about it? Do you think first before you open your lovely big mouth? Or do you react and try to justify it in the name of righteousness? Or for the sake of our testimony in Bromley, which would be more the line I would take. It's all how we say something. And if it's something that isn't that major to life, it might be good in some situations to get a conversation going first.

Talk about something else. You might be good to say hello. Yeah.

And then maybe say, you know, one of our hassles here is that, you know, we've had trouble with the police, and we've had trouble with the meter maids, and we've had trouble with the devil. And then try to explain in a humble way by admitting the times that you are parked in the wrong place, and maybe communicate lovingly that perhaps next time he comes or then he should park somewhere else. We think these things are small.

I wouldn't want to tell you the aggro over 15 or 20 years in Bromley on the parking. I was in a beautiful church in Tennessee. The pastor of the 3,000 member church purposely parks his car two blocks away to avoid the tension that has come within the church about parking and to be the example.

Now, I'm not saying you have to do this. It's difficult to communicate without getting in trouble. But I use that as an example that these little areas are ways that we can esteem others.

At the same time, if we have a particular job, and if the leadership for efficiency to get on with the work assigns us a parking place, let's agree to that. Let's stick to that as much as lies within us. And there's dozens of things like this all through life that we have to learn to handle.

And again, I don't come with a simplistic answer. But I believe the answer is brought out in this book, and in God's word, is that if we do offend someone, if we do overreact, get them on a phone, write them a letter. If that particular case, that person who was offensive, maybe later made an extra effort to win that person as a friend, and say, look, I really felt bad about what I said to you the other day.

A great friendship might have been born out of a disaster. That's a story of my life. Many of my friendships have been born out of disaster.

And it's beautiful to see how God can turn situations around as we repent, as we seek the cross, as we learn to apologize, as we learn to bend and break, and humble ourselves. That leads me to the next step to deal with pride, and that is repentance and confession. Isaiah 6, 5 indicates that if we really see our own sins, that is going to help us to be less obnoxious and pride about other people's sins.

The great prophet Isaiah said, Woe is me! Woe is me! I am a man of unclean lips. And I know, I know that works. And I know at times when I've attempted to be harsh or critical, I'm still struggling it.

When God quickly shows me my own sin, it brings me back into balance. Another way we will learn to deal with pride is by learning how to handle correction. We cannot carry on a ministry the size of a whim without correction.

Praise God for those people who have courage to correct. I thank God for people that corrected me, even at times maybe they didn't say it in the most loving, kind way, because I needed correction. And it's often when we're rebuked or we're corrected, especially if we feel the correction is unjust, that we will see, we will see at that moment how much we know of true humility, how much we know of the crucified life.

Paul said, I am crucified with Christ. Have you read that section in None of These Diseases? That's one of the books I want to resurrect in the new edition with a chapter on AIDS. It used to be one of Owen's best-selling books, None of These Diseases by Dr. McMillan.

I've still only seen the old edition around the UK, but I'm sure some of you know about the new one. But it has a chapter in there showing that learning how to die to self is one of the keys to psychological well-being and mental health. I'll never forget reading that.

It was in Bombay. I think I could almost tell you the year. I was sitting in an office waiting to see someone and got through many, many chapters that morning.

Dying to self can be very, very practical. If I'm in a corpse here and I spoke harshly to the corpse, put a pin in, told him he was not good-looking, told him he didn't know how to keep his room, told him he was a lousy driver, told him whatever I wanted to tell him, what would the response be? What do you think? Nothing. I'm glad you're all listening so well.

Again, we would never want to carry that to its extreme. Like a lot of Christian illustrations, it's partial. But I believe if we, in the morning as we meet with God, experience something of the crucifying of self, then when hard things hit us during the day, the reaction will be more loving, more kind, more filled with graciousness and humility.

You say, is this possible? One of the most encouraging things for me in this work is to be able to know in depth and work in depth with people who do demonstrate under pressure humility and graciousness. I have watched Erotan for 30 years and he is one of those persons. There are many, many others.

It may be easier for some temperaments than others. I'm still researching that and don't want to use it to defend my own particular temperament. We're all different.

Graciousness is possible. Humility is possible. Love is possible, even in the pressure.

And we should stop excusing ourselves for the sins of the tongue, for our wrong attitudes, for our arrogance and our pride, and rather seek the cross. When something goes wrong and someone wrongs you within the work, outside of the work, one of the first things that would help if you pray, Lord, what are you trying to do to me? What are you trying to say to me through this experience? I think it's one of the most positive things about OM that the end of the year there are not many bitter people. Most people by the end of the year, rather than going away bitter, even though they've had hard experiences, they probably have been hurt by the system, I don't think you can organize people or do anything without structure and system.

And when there is structure and system, there has to be rules and regulations, it's impossible for someone not to be hurt. So the key in dealing with this kind of pride is, Lord, what are you saying to me through this? Not to be walked on because you haven't asked your 18. If a brother has offended you and sinned against you, you go to him alone and you confront him.

I urged someone just two days ago to go to someone who has been hurting him. I said, if this person has hurt your person, he has sinned against you, you should go to him and talk about that. Not in the midst of the flurry of the problem, but afterward to go in and say, look, in this particular issue, I know you were right, and I'm happy for that, but what you said hurt me as a person.

It belittled me. It made me feel. And often you can share what you feel.

You can say, look, I know you didn't mean it. This is a way to esteem the person. I know you didn't mean it, but this belittled me as a person.

And often you will see pride crucified and Jesus magnified when you walk that road. It's not easy to be honest about our mistakes. We do things in different ways, the American way and the English way, the French way and the German way, the Malaysian way, the Korean way, the Chinese way and the African way.

Of course, we are just a boiling cauldron of potential misunderstandings, but also we are a reservoir of blessing as we repent and as Christ is magnified in our lives. Let's make an extra effort to understand other people of other races. Let's not be afraid also to take practical steps.

God gives us practical things that can help us. And let's face it, one of the areas where we need greatest maturity is when we make a spiritual effort to do the right thing and the whole situation gets worse. That is part of life.

It's a part of life I don't like. You go the extra mile to show love, to go out of the way and your motives are judged and the whole thing gets worse. Amazing, isn't it? Well, I tell you, at least life is not boring.

Let's pray in the light of the time. Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you for so much practical advice in your word about how to deal with ourselves, our temperaments, our mouths.

And we do pray that pride would be crucified without the elimination of dignity, without the elimination of firmness and spiritual toughness, without the elimination of our spiritual and emotional fighting spirit to stand for what we believe, to defend the faith, to move forward in justice and righteousness. Lord, all of our life we'll be battling for balance, but we want to know what it is to live at the foot of the cross in true brokenness and honesty and holiness. Grant us this as we attempt the impossible together of world evangelism, of reaching this generation with the word of God that we may in our practical lives apply the biblical principles of your holy word.

Lest these very books that we distribute shout out against us on the judgment day. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

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