

Why Pride Before Prayer? (Where God Begins in Reviving His People)

by Lou Sutera

God says deal with your pride before he asks you to pray because pride is a universal area of defeat that prevents us from having a forgiving spirit and a humble heart.

Duration: 56:01

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 7:12, Jeremiah 49:16, Obadiah 1:3, Matthew 6:33, Galatians 6:3

Topics: "Prayer"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares anecdotes and testimonies to highlight the destructive nature of pride. He tells a story of a father who boasts about his hunting skills, but fails to shoot down birds when he takes his son hunting. Instead of being embarrassed, the father sees it as a miracle and teaches his son a lesson about humility. The speaker also shares a testimony of a man who admits to having excessive pride, but points out that everyone in the audience still has pride to some extent. The sermon emphasizes the negative impact of pride on individuals, families, relationships, and the church.

Transcript

We were dealing with the problem of bitterness and unforgiving spirit. And near the end of the message, I was wondering what God wanted me to speak on tonight, but near the end of the message, I made a statement, and I don't know if you grabbed it, I made many statements, but the one statement was that before you will forgive, forgiveness demands a price to your ego and pride. Your ego and your pride, yourself, that I, has to be buried or else you will not forgive.

And I thought to myself, what should I follow that with? And I sense tonight, you know what I want to follow with? Where God begins in reviving His people. Where does God really begin in reviving His people? It's at the heart of that statement. Turn to 2 Chronicles 7, verse 12.

2 Chronicles 7, verse 12. 2 Chronicles 7, verse 12. Chapter 7, verse 12.

And here it is, tremendous words. 2 Chronicles 7, verse 12. Solemn, and the Lord peered unto Solomon by night.

And the Lord said unto Solomon, I have heard thy prayer. Ah, God hearing the prayer. 2 Chronicles 7, verse 12.

I have heard thy prayer, and I have chosen this place to myself for a house of prayer, of sacrifice. Now God says, this is God talking. This is an interesting verse.

Verse 13. If I shut up the heavens, that there be no rain, or if I... Oh, they're passing out the Bibles. You better tell them what page is on.

On these Bibles, what page? 568, folks. In my Bible. 3 what? 323 in that Bible.

And not your Bible, huh? No. 323. Okay, we'll start again.

Everyone got a Bible that can read? Here it is. God speaking to Solomon. 2 Chronicles 7, verse 12.

And the Lord peered unto Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer. And I have chosen this place to myself for a house of sacrifice. Now he says, if I shut up the heavens, that there be no rain.

Or if I command the locusts to devour the land. Or if I send a pestilence among my people. That's an interesting verse.

God sending a pestilence to his own people? I thought he liked them. Didn't God like his people? He's sending them a pestilence? Now if I'd ask you how many believe God loves his people, we'd all say, yes. Alright.

So what's this business of sending a pestilence and doing all these problems to his people? You know what, I have an idea. That sometimes God has to use some harsh means to catch our attention. And in his love, he has to send some of these harsher means to catch us and wake us up.

So he can speak to us. Because he loves us, we all believe that. So God says, if I have to go this far, that I even have to send a pestilence among my people.

Then he comes to verse 14. Then, if I've got to do that. Then, if my people, which are called by my name, shall what? Humble themselves.

There it is. And pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways. Then will I hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and heal their land.

Now my eyes are going to be opened, God says. And my ears are going to be a tent to the prayer that is made in this place. For I have now chosen and sanctified this house that my name may be there forever.

And my eyes and my heart shall be there perpetually. You know what I'm saying? God's going to come back to his church. He's going to feel at home with his people.

He wants his people to feel at home in his presence. Now, here it is. Where does God start in the reviving of his people? If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves.

Humble themselves. You see, last night we ended the context. Before we can have a forgiving spirit, we've got to deal with our ego and our pride.

And here's where God starts. Even before he asks us to pray in this verse. He proceeds praying with humble yourself.

You know what he's saying? You're a proud bunch. And you've got to get off of that proud horse. And come down and humble yourself.

Even before you can pray. Even before you can really forgive. It's that pride that has to come down, which is so hurt.

So in the context of that. Today in my study, I ran across a statement that said these words. Of all the sins known to man.

And we know a lot of sins, right? Quite a long list. We know them. The one condemned the most by God.

Emphatically in the Bible is pride. The beauty of humility and the offensiveness of pride. Are consistent themes in all of God's word.

They come together. The beauty of humility and the problem of pride. The offensiveness of pride.

All through scripture come together. So having said that. You know what I want to tell you? I tell you that there is no theme in the Bible.

That I believe that God talks more about than the sin of pride. That goes along with what I just said. No sin.

Now I want to give you an hour sermon in about two minutes. I gave you one last night. Here's another one.

By the way, when I talked about that last night. I could put a scripture verse with every one of those points that I gave you. But I was really saying I'm not preaching that sermon.

But there it is. And tonight again. I could give you many verses for everything I want to tell you.

Listen what God says about this thing called pride. Which this brother says emphatically. It is the most condemned sin of the Bible.

This is what it says. The Bible, don't write it down. Because I'll go too fast.

But I just want you to hear it. Here it is. God says it is an abomination to him.

God says he will not suffer the proud. The proud shall be abased. The proud are in bondage.

There is no grace for the proud. The proud are under the wrath of God. Listen to this one.

God sets himself. God sets himself in battle against the proud. Wow.

Never think about that. Many of us would be shocked to ponder that God himself, men and women, actually opposes our efforts that are done through pride. Pride brings shame.

The Bible says pride leads to destruction and brings swift judgment of God upon its victims. Pride is like witchcraft. Men and women, do you know what the Bible says about witchcraft? Witchcraft in the Bible was punished by death.

And the Bible teaches that pride is like witchcraft. It causes loss of respect. It defiles a man.

It compasses man about like a chain. Pride. It leads to contention and strife.

It brings shame. It leads to destruction and brings the swift judgment of God upon its victims. It leads to a persecuting spirit.

It is manifest in boastful words. Pride leads to self-deception. Pride leads to self-deception.

Pride. The proud shall be brought low, the Bible says. God knows my pride.

He cannot dwell in a proud heart. God will reward the proud doer. Pride.

The proud will be burned like stubble. God will destroy the house of the proud. God will break the proud.

And the verse that I think puts all of what I've just said in a capsule. In a nutshell. Psalm 119, 21.

Don't turn. Listen. The proud are cursed.

And they err from the commandments of God. You know what you've listened to? You have listened to 25 things of God's attitude toward pride. Maybe that's why God says humble yourself even before he asks you to pray.

Because if that's the kind of attitude he has about pride. No wonder he says, hey, there's where we must stop. So I'm saying God has a zero tolerance for pride.

I'm saying the Bible teaches God inhabits the praise of his people. The devil inhabits the pride of God's people. Maybe that's why God says humble yourself even before you pray.

Secondly, why does God say deal with your pride before he asks you to pray? That's really the question I'm asking tonight. Why does he say deal with your pride, humble yourself before he asks you to pray? Because, you know why? I think because pride seems to be so natural for all of us to have it as the universal area of defeat. So natural.

So natural. Wasn't it in the form of pride that sin came in the world with Adam and Eve? The devil came to Eve and said, you can be as God. You can be as God.

Huh. Form of pride. And so there is pride first broken on the human race, even in the early beginnings of mankind.

So somebody said like this, pride was the first thing that overcame man. And it seems to be the last thing to leave the heart of man. Ah, it seems to be the first thing to return.

This thing called pride. Isn't it amazing? After God dealt with Adam and Eve in the garden, had to kick them out of the garden because of pride. In Genesis chapter 3, do you know what? It didn't take long, man was caught in the same trap.

It was Genesis chapter 11 where what they were trying to do in Genesis 11, they were trying to build a tower that would reach the sky. Why? The Bible says they wanted to make a name for themselves, remember? Pride. So what did God do? God had to come down and change all their languages and mess this up.

And you and I, men and women, what a high price we're paying for this to this day. You've got to study Spanish, and you've got to study French, and you've got to study German, right? We have all of these languages mixed up. What a price to this day we pay for what happened through the sin of pride.

So, a lady said at one of our meetings when we said, Can anybody have a testimony of what God is saying to us? A lady got up and she said words like this. The spirit of pride, she said, has been such a way of life in my life, such a way of life in me, that I don't know now how I'm going to do without it. When she asked God to forgive her.

I don't know how I'm going to do without it. She said, I inherited it from my mom and dad. And it is so ingrained in me, such a part of my culture.

My mother and my father were such proud people for so long. One man in our meetings, he was 6 feet 4 inches tall. You know what, I'm jealous of those guys, those 6'4".

You know why? Because they have that one, I'm over 5'8", 5'8 and a half, and all the way down here with the rest of most of us, you know. And the air that we breathe is all so polluted, but those guys have fresh air up there, right? There's not very many breathing it up that level, right? So they get in on the blessing of fresh air. Okay, this guy was 6 feet 4 inches tall, and he got up in our meetings when God dealt with him about this thing of pride.

And you know what he said? He said, I stand 6 feet 4 inches tall, but my pride stood 10 feet tall. How do you like that? His pride was 3 and a half feet tall and he was. You know what? That's God really getting through to the guy.

Another person got up in one of our meetings and said, I have, how do you like this for a testimony? Wouldn't this wake up any sleeper? He said, I have both good and bad news for you folks here tonight. Testimony. Which do you want to hear first? The good or the bad? He went on and said, the good news is, let's start there.

The good news is, you folks don't have as much pride as I have. That's good news. But the bad news is, you still have plenty for yourself.

Universal area of defeat. The spirit of pride. And another man in one of our meetings, it was when we were closing the whole crusade down the last night and Ralph was just about to pronounce the benediction, and a man way in the back waved his hand, Brother Ralph, he said, can I say something? Yeah.

What do you want to say? And he stood up and he said, listen to this one folks. No one else has any pride in this church. How many folks would like to go to a church like that? What's the matter? You folks have arthritis? I thought Abraham would go up there.

Nobody has any pride in this church? And then he went on to say, and he said, I have it all. How do you like that for God getting through to him? I have it all, he went on to say. So there's none left for you.

I have enough pride for everybody else in this church. Phew, what a testimony. You know what? I've thought about that so many times.

And I have learned. Here's a man who's telling us he had it all. He has it all.

Did you hear him? Now, I found out and what I noticed, that even though he has it all, he has it all. Are you hearing me? Even though he has it all. Somehow, someway, even though he has it all, someway, somehow, there seems to be enough still to go around for the rest of us.

Amen? Even though he has it all. The universal error of faith. Maybe that's why God says, deal with your pride, humble yourself, even before I ask you to pray, because it is the universal problem.

Now, the third thing I learned, why I believe God says deal with your pride, even before I ask you to pray, in this verse, you know why? Because God fears that some of us might think we don't have any pride because of its deceptive nature. Now, that is an interesting one. I know how many of you folks said when you saw what I was going to preach about tonight, oh, you said, this is a night I can go to sleep on this sermon.

Oh, you said, I know some people ought to be here, but they need this one. And you look around, they're not here tonight. You wish they were, huh? You know who needs it, but not me.

I'm not proud. And you get ready to sleep on me. And I come to this point.

God fears that we might even think we don't have any pride. Is that you? Because of its deceptive nature. Do you know what I said? Here's what it says in Jeremiah 49, 16.

Thy terribleness, listen to this verse, Thy terribleness hath deceived thee, and the pride of thine heart. Now, God said, you didn't listen to Jeremiah. I'm going to have to say it again.

So, He says it again. He comes along in Obadiah. Chapter 1, verse 3. He says, the pride of thine heart hath deceived thee.

Hmm. Interesting. Well, you say, well, that's all in the Old Testament.

Do you have that in the New Testament? Sure. Galatians 6, 3 says, listen. But if a man think himself to be something, it's just what he thinks.

You hear? What he thinks. If a man think himself to be something, it's what he thinks. But now, when he is, I'm going to tell you what he is, not just what he thinks.

God says what he is. When he is, nothing. I like that for a North and South Pole.

Between what he thinks he is, and what God says he is. You know what the Bible says? He is deceiving himself. He deceives himself.

You see? The terribleness of thine heart and the pride of thine heart hath deceived thee. And in the New Testament it says, he's deceiving himself. When he thinks he's somebody, when God says he really is, nothing.

Huh. You folks are way out here in Western Canada. And Ralph and I, as Bert says, they've had the privilege of being in all the provinces of Canada.

And I finally got to the last one. I finally got there. Finally got to the last province of Newfoundland in the early part of this year.

Now I've been there. Newfoundland. Any of you folks heard of the Newfies? Do you call them Newfies out here? You mean that term came all the way out here to Saskatchewan? Yeah? Well, the Newfies out there.

And I heard about the Newfies out there. And I heard about a man from Ontario, from Toronto, an Ontarian, who went to St. John's Newfoundland and he was sitting at the restaurant in St. John's Newfoundland and he was having something to eat with a Newfie. Got it? And you know what? That Newfie was sitting with him, looked at the next table and he saw another Newfie sitting at the next table.

And he said these words. He said to the man from Ontario, he said, You see that Newfie over there? Yeah? He said these words. If I could buy him for what he is worth and then if I could turn around and sell him for what he thinks he's worth, I'd be a millionaire.

I like that. One Newfie telling on another one. But you know, I think we're all in the category we relate to, you see.

We think. We don't have any pride. We're loaded.

All right. Dr. Hagar, we have our Dutch folks here. From the Netherlands, Dr. Hagar, did you all go over to the Netherlands on that trip when Walter Bolt went over to the Netherlands? You were on that trip.

Dr. Hagar, over in the Netherlands, he heard about the revival of Western Canada in Vancouver and he came over. He and his staff, they had a 30 minute, I think a 30 minute program on the national television and so they heard about the revival and they heard some Dutchmen were getting right with God. They came and joined us in Vancouver and they filmed the revival and they went back there and put it on national television.

But before they left, they were with us for a week in Vancouver in the early days of the revival. Before he left, we gave Dr. Hagar, who led the team from over there to film the revival, gave him a chance to say goodbye to the Canadians and thanked them for the hospital and so forth. And Dr. Hagar said these words, after he thanked them, he said, I don't know if any of you folks have the problem that I have.

I wrote a, recently I wrote an article in my periodical. I have 20,000 subscribers to my periodical and recently I wrote an article about the subject of pride and at the end of it I said, do any of you, my listeners, have problems with pride like I do? If you do, you contact me and let me know. 20,000 subscribers.

He turned to the Canadian folks and said, maybe it's different here in Canada, but out of 20,000 subscribers, only 10 people wrote back and said they have any trouble with pride. Hmm. I find the Canadian folks have about the same problem.

You know what? One Canadian man got upset, I really didn't think I had any pride. Everybody else had it. And another man got up and said, it slowly dawned on me, it slowly dawned on me.

That's our problem folks. It's a slow dawning. It slowly dawned on me, he said, I have incredible pride.

Hmm. When we see it tonight, we'll realize how much we have. It's a slow dawning for us to understand it.

Amazing. I heard about the man who loved to hunt and he'd tell his son, he'd tell his son how he could hunt. And the son, how he hangs on to every word the father says.

And he said to his son, he said, son, I can kill the four-legged ones on this earth, I can shoot them, and I can get them. But more than that, when I go hunting and those birds come flying up overhead, duck fly overhead, I can put up my gun and I can pull them out of the sky. Wow.

That son thought about his father. What a guy he is, hunting like that. Right? So, Saturday, no school, hunting season, he takes his son out hunting with him.

The son thought, what a privilege to go hunting with my dad. And guess what? Here come the duck, fly overhead, up, up goes the gun this way, and he shoots. There they go.

They fly right on. And the son, when he saw what happened, the son looked up into his father's face. He expected his father to be so ashamed of himself and embarrassed because the way he bragged, he could pull them out of the sky.

But instead, the father, instead of having embarrassed, embarrassed look on his face, he looks down at his son with an astonished look on his face. And he said, son, son, in his astonishment, son, son, he said, you and I have just now witnessed the most marvelous miracle. There flies a dead duck.

There flies a dead duck. You see? Here I have a little piece of paper of a lady who wrote Ralph and me a note in one of our meetings here in Western Canada. And on this piece of paper it says, Dear Lou and Ralph, this is, listen now, I wonder if you can relate to this.

This is to let you know that I am indeed full of pride. It is so strong in me, and underlines the word so, strong in me, that I am not yet ready to yield it to Jesus, although I am wanting to so very much. Please keep preaching about it.

She said, I need to be weakened so that the Holy Spirit can gain control in my life. You see? It's a universal air of defeat. And finally God breaks in on us and we start to see it for what it really is.

One man said these words. He said, Pride is so woven into the warp and woof of the heart of man, only the Holy Spirit of God can reveal and expose it to us. It is the most difficult to diagnose and deal with.

It is the gravest enemy of revival. Pride. Maybe that's why God said deal with pride before asking to pray.

Then I have a fourth reason why I believe God says deal with pride before asking to pray. Because God is afraid or fears, He's not afraid. He fears that we might not recognize it for what it truly is.

For what pride truly is. Why? Because of its deceptive nature. If it has a deceiving nature, we might not recognize what it truly is.

What is it? You know what? I wonder if I ask you, could you define pride to me? How would you define pride to me? I wonder how many of you folks would end up saying something like this. It's a personality trait. It's just the way I am.

I'm a chip off the old block. They say my dad was this way so what do you expect of me? You know it's our personality. It's the Soterios personality.

It's the Ralph Soterios personality. Right folks? That guy over there. You know what I mean? And we say it's my personality.

It's just the way I am. And so you figure I gotta live with it because that's the way I am. It's part of my personality.

Can you tell me the Bible where it says that? Anywhere? That pride is a personality? You know what men and women? It's so deceptive. I find in the Bible, I find in the Bible only seven things in the whole Bible. Only seven things in the whole Bible.

Now listen to this. I hope you have put your thinking cap on for this one. Listen.

I find in the Bible only seven things in the whole Bible that God actually calls and names sin. I like that one. Now that woke you up.

In this whole Bible from cover to cover only seven things that God actually names as sin. Now, let me explain. There are lots of things in the Bible that the Bible talks about that are, follow me, sinful things.

Got it? But I find only seven in the Bible that God actually says this is sin. I like that. How come? Have you ever wondered about that? You know what? I have an idea.

I think God had to say this is sin, this is sin seven times. You know why? Because He wants to make sure we don't give it a lesser name. He's afraid we might miss it.

And so He has to make it as simple and as plain as the nose on your face. Right? This is sin. What do you think they are? Well, yes.

The thought of foolishness is sin. To him that knoweth to do it good and doeth it not to him, it is sin. Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

All unrighteousness is sin. What have I done? I've given you four of them. There's three left.

Three left. And you know what? These three are all found in the same verse. All in one verse.

Three of them. Proverbs 21, 4. Listen. A high look and a proud heart and the plowing of the wicked is sin.

Three in one verse. There's seven. But you know what? There's only six.

Because God took one of them and said it twice. A high look and a proud heart. Aren't they about the same thing? Right? So, now we're down to six.

Now, isn't it amazing? How come there's one of them, here we've got six of them, and God has to name one a second time? Which one? The one about a proud heart. The high look and the proud heart. You see? Oh, wow.

What an issue. You know what it says in Isaiah 46, 12? Harken unto me, ye stout-hearted that are far from righteousness. What's a stout heart? I have an idea.

It's a proud heart. You're far from righteousness. Oh, what a truth.

A young man in our meetings, one time when we had... Anybody have a testimony? A young man got up and he said these words. Listen now. He got up and gave a testimony.

About 17 years old. He said, I'm a proudful person. So, he went on to say, So, I guess I'm a sinful person.

You see, folks? We're not so sure that we're sinful persons when we're proudful persons. So, I guess. Huh.

When are you and I going to come to the term and say a proudful spirit is not part of my personality. It's sin. And God had to name it twice.

Of the things of all seven. So, it comes down to six. But he names the proud spirit.

He had to name it twice. Isn't it interesting? And one of our meetings, we ask people to write on a card what you want God to do for you in the revival. You see that card there? It's what we call an expectation card.

What do you expect God to do for you? Listen to this one man. I'm going to read what he handed me. They don't sign their name, but they just put on their card what they want God to do.

Listen to this one. I want desperately to be used of God, to love God's Word, but something is blocking it. Something is blocking me.

I have some pride, he said, that I'm working on, but that is not what the main problem is. I don't know what the main problem is. I'm praying for God to break me and point me what the main problem is.

I've got some pride. I'm working on my main problem, but I'm asking God to break me and show me what the main problem is. You see, we don't know it.

That's the problem. We don't recognize it for what it is. And you know when I say that, what I'm really saying to you and me tonight, when I spell the word pride, you know what? I don't know if you knew it or not, but you know what, men and women tonight? You can't spell the word pride without the I being in the middle of it.

Did you know that? Now you started counting, right? Spelling. You know what? You can't spell the word sin without the I being in the middle of it. Did you know that? And you know what? You can't spell the word popular without you being in the middle of it.

And I'm glad I can tell you about one more. And you can't spell the word revival without God dealing with the I right in the middle of it. You see why God says, humble yourself before He even asks you to pray? That's where God starts in revival.

I right in the middle of it. So maybe that's why God says, deal with your pride before He asks you to pray. Here I give point number five.

Why does God say, deal with your spirit of pride before He asks you to pray? Because pride is not only a sin. We've just learned it's a sin. It's one of those seven making six.

Not only sin, but I tell you tonight, it is the very nature and heart of sin. That's why God says, deal with your pride even before you pray. Because it's the very heart of sin.

Well you say, is that in the Bible? Well, listen. In Psalm 9, listen to what it says. Psalm 9, verse 17.

The wicked shall be turned into hell and all the nations that forget God. What are nations forgetting God? What does that mean? The wicked turn into hell. We know the wicked need to be turned into hell.

Yes. But what about nations that forget God? How come God puts those two in the same verse? What is this business of nations that forget God compared to the wicked being turned into hell? How come in the same verse? Can we find out? Sure. Verse 20 of that same psalm says, Put them in fear, O Lord.

We're going to talk about the nations. Put them in fear, O Lord. What's the problem with the nations? They don't have fear of God.

Put them in fear, O Lord, that the nations, here's the problem with the nations, may know themselves to be but men. What is that saying? The nations think that they're bigger than life-size. They think they're God-size.

Put them in fear. Let them have the fear of God. Pull them down.

Grab them, O God. Grab the nations and let them put their feet back down on the earth and let them know they're nothing more but men. That's the spirit of pride, see? They think they're somebody.

Ah. So that's the nations' problem. Nations forgetting God, they think they're life-size.

They think they're God-size. And then, that's pride. Look at the wicked.

Here it is in Psalm 10. The wicked, verse 2, in his pride, he persecutes the poor, he turns, he's taken in the devices that they've imagined. Verse 3, the wicked boasts of his heart's desire, the wicked blesses the covetous whom the Lord abhors.

But here's the problem with the wicked, verse 4, the wicked, what's his problem? Through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God. God is not in all his thoughts. That's forgetting God, isn't it? What was the problem of the nations? They're forgetting God.

What's the problem of the wicked? He's forgetting God. Why is he forgetting God? Through the pride of his countenance, God is not in his thoughts. Men and women, that's the essence of wickedness.

All these other problems of the wicked, that's the fruit from the root. Here's the heart of what wickedness is all about. Perhaps that's why God says, deal with your pride before I ask you to pray, because it is the heart of sin.

But then, in the light of all that, if it is the heart of sin, then, I suggest to you, God says deal with your pride before He asks you to pray. The next thing He says is then pray, and He asks you to pray. Do you know why? Because of pride's relationship to prayer.

We've just decided it's not only a sin, but it's the heart of sin. And if it is all that, then it is the biggest obstacle to prayer. Are you getting it? If it's so abominable to God, that it is not only a sin, but the essence of sin, it stands to reason, it automatically is the biggest obstacle to prayer.

So, that's why God says, deal with your pride before I ask you to pray. And then, if that's the case, on to another point, because it then is, I want to tell you, why does God say, deal with your pride before I ask you to pray? Because it is not only an obstacle, because it is sin, but it is an obstacle to believing prayer. Do you know that pride, we read last night about have to have faith to where you can believe, to move the mountains.

The other night we preached about to save the mountains to be cast in the sea, if you believe. And I'm telling you that pride is the obstacle to believing prayer. You say, is that in the Bible? Sure it is in the Bible.

Here it is, Habakkuk 2 verse 4, it says, Behold his soul which is lifted up in him. That's a proud spirit. His soul which is lifted up in him is not upright in him.

It's not upright, it means it's down wrong. It's not upright, it's down wrong. Amen? What is it? His soul which is lifted up in him.

That's a proud spirit. But the just shall live by faith. In that verse, men and women, you've got a comparison, which half of the verse are you in? Either the second half, the just shall live by faith.

Who are the just? It's the opposite of the first half of the verse where it says, The man whose soul is lifted up in him is not upright. So in that verse, the context of the just is the humble heart compared to the proud heart which is not right with God. So I am suggesting that pride, the spirit of pride is opposed to faith and humility keeps great company with faith.

So if you're going to pray to believe and God answer your prayer, you've got to have the spirit of humility. And that's why God said to deal with your pride even before he asks you to pray. Having said this, men and women, I suggest to you in believing, praying, you know what? I'm wondering if I'm talking about why our prayer meetings, our prayer meetings in our churches, most churches, you call for a prayer meeting and hardly anybody comes.

You know they call it the weekly prayer meeting? The weekly prayer meeting? And I found in the Bible there's a couple of ways you spell weekly, huh? Now I got you thinking again. Weekly. They're weak all right, huh? Now you got it.

The weekly prayer meeting. They're weak. In the context of that, men and women.

In the context of that. Ralph and I were preaching in the hills of West Virginia a few years ago. And so two little Methodist churches way out in the country.

One pastor pastored both the two little churches. And they didn't even have a prayer meeting. They didn't even have a prayer meeting.

And God came on the scene of those two little churches and they got right with God. They deal with the spirit of pride and God broke them. And now they said we've got to pray.

Now we're going to pray. After they dealt with the spirit of pride. And you know what they did? They started a prayer meeting on Thursday night and asked anybody who wants to come and meet at one of the two churches just about 5 or 6 miles apart.

One of the churches we're going to have a prayer meeting on Thursday night. Come to pray. And the people started to come.

And they started to come and God started answering prayer. And the word started getting all over the countryside. If you have a prayer request send it to those people on Thursday night.

They'll pray and God will answer your prayer. And what a prayer meeting they had. Sometimes they would start at 7 and they'd be there till 10 and sometimes till 11.

Mighty prayer meetings. Tremendous. And you know what, men and women? Ralph and I went back a year later.

Went back a year later to that place and had another crusade. You know what those people did to us? I wonder if you're hanging under your seat now. They handed us a list, men and women, of the answers to prayer they received in one year.

They handed us a list. And you know how many answers? I mean, they had the names of the people they prayed for. And the situations that they prayed for.

And they handed us a list of 151 specific answers to prayer on the list. In one year. They didn't even have prayer meetings before.

They broke before God and they dealt with the spirit of pride in their heart. And they said 151 answers to prayer. Man, what a marvelous, marvelous thing.

When you think about that, 151 situations were changed by God because the people could pray in such a marvelous way. What a thing. So that's why I believe God says deal with your pride before I ask you to pray.

Here's another reason why. Because of the utter devastation that comes through pride. Is there anything more devastating than the spirit of pride? You know what? God says in Psalm 31, 20, Thou shalt hide them from the pride of man.

Pride is so bad that God says I gotta hide you away from it. He says in Proverbs 28, 25, He that is of a proud heart stirreth of strife. Wow.

Again, in Philippians 2 it says Let nothing be done through strife and vain glory. See? Vain glory. That's pride.

But with lowliness of mind that everybody esteems the next guy better than you. You know what the problem is with pride? Here it is. Every person's pride is in competition with the next person's pride.

And we've got the war going on between your pride and my pride. It's the idea compared to the rest I'm the best. You know? That's the spirit of pride.

And you know what's happened men and women? Pride has ruined families. It has ruined personalities. Which we have just described.

People say pride is part of my personality. No, it isn't. We can't see the personality.

We can't see the real you because all comes out is the pride. We'd like to get to see you. It's robbing us of your personality.

It's robbing the church of what all that God has made you of can be given to the church and be a blessing to the church and the people all around you. It ruins personalities. It ruins families.

It ruins relationships. You know what? When we were in Tucson, Arizona a number of years ago and we were preaching on the first week of the revival. One week.

You know what men and women? One week. We said, anybody have a testimony of what God's done to you? And a lady stood up and she said, I wish this revival had come two weeks earlier. Isn't that for a testimony? I didn't know what was going to come next.

I wish this revival had come two weeks earlier. And I thought, what's coming next? She said, if this revival would have come two weeks earlier, I would not be a divorcee today. Hmm.

She started to see what her life was all about. And she said, if I had seen this before, we wouldn't have been in divorce courts. I'm happy to tell you that God broke her heart.

She saw the pride for what it is. And I'm happy to tell you within one year, that marriage was restored. But you see, the pride, how it ruins personalities.

It ruins family relationships. You know what I'm... I'm not telling you anything out of school. You know what I'm talking about.

If I'd let you folks talk, you could tell me. I know family's been broken up because of the spirit of pride. On and on and on it goes.

Maybe some part of my life has been broken up because of pride. Pride. My rights.

Oh, what a situation. The Bible says, only by pride cometh contention. Only by pride.

You know any contention? Is there contention in your church? Only by pride comes contention. God puts it in a very exclusive society. Only.

O-N-L-Y. You know what it means? Only by pride comes contention. Contention in your life? Only by pride comes contention.

Contention in your home? Only by pride. In your marriage? Only by pride comes contention. That's the Word of God.

That God would show us, even tonight, what it's all about. And then I suggest to you, men and women, and in churches as well, then I suggest to you, why does God say, deal with your pride before He asks you to pray? Because of pride's relationship to the wicked ways in that verse of 2 Chronicles 7-14. Now listen.

Here's what it says. If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways. What does God want us to do? He wants you and me to turn from our wicked ways.

He wants you and me to turn from our wicked ways. If He wants us to turn from our wicked ways, what is He talking about? You know what? The first thing we've talked about, we're saying pride is the heart of it. You know what God did? Let me say it like this.

I believe what God did. God reached into this bag, if I can say, here's a bag called wicked ways. And God reached into the bag and pulled one of them out.

Pride. And He put it up at the front of the verse, men and women. At the front of the verse.

And He said, deal with that pride. And we just discussed that it's not only a wicked way, it's the heart of wickedness. It's the worst.

It's the heart of it. And then He says, deal with that one. Deal with that one.

Deal with that one. And then He says, when you deal with that, now you can pray. And now you can seek my face.

And then He says, now I can speak to you about your wicked ways. Now, what is He saying? He's saying, if you would deal with the pride, the spirit of pride, and you'll break before me. You know what? That's what dealing with the spirit of pride is all about.

Let me say it like this. Dealing with the spirit of pride is you're saying, God, put your hand on me. Just like that.

You're allowing God in. You're allowing God room to talk to you when you break in your pride and you deal for what it is. You're allowing God to get to you.

And now when He gets to you, what you're saying, yes, Lord. Speak to me. Yes, Lord.

When you deal with your spirit of pride. You see, the spirit of pride doesn't want God, allow God in. The spirit of pride, you don't want God to tell you what He needs to tell you.

You don't want to hear. Pride says, no, God, stay out. When you deal with the spirit of pride, you're saying, yes, Lord.

What's the question? Now God says, I've got my hand on you. Now God says, I can pick up my fingers and tell you about this wicked way. And I can pick up this finger and tell you about this wicked way.

And this wicked way and this wicked way. I couldn't tell you before until you allowed me in. But now, turn from that wicked way.

They said, yes. I said, Lord, yes, Lord. I've already given the answer.

Now when God tells you what the wicked way is and He shows you, you've already given the answer. You know, most of us, we want God to talk to us and we want to go off in a corner and decide whether we want to obey God. But when you deal with the spirit of pride, you say, yes, Lord.

Now what's the question, God? Now it's no more a question. Now it's a marching order because you've already told God. Yes.

Now I said, okay, Lord. He says, turn from that wicked way. And turn from that one.

And fine. Okay, what else? Turn from that wicked way. No problem now.

No problem now. Once you deal with the root issue and the heart issue, then God has opportunity to deal with it because pride leads to every other vice. Those are wicked ways.

They are the result of the spirit of pride. Pride leads to it. It's the influence.

It's the mother of all sins. That's what we've been saying. One man said in Armies, God is dealing with my sin of pride and a host of related sins.

That's the bag full of wicked ways that are related to the pride. A man said, God has dealt with me about my bitterness, about my anger, about my unforgiveness, about my lust, about my immorality, about my jealousy, about my pride. And he wrote pride with big capital letters and he underlines it.

In other words, there's the heart of it. Now God can show me this one and that one and the other one and the other one. There it is, men and women.

God now has access to us and he can speak to us. Well, let me just give you an interesting illustration. When we were in the state of Michigan preaching, we were scheduled to go to his church in southern Michigan to have a series of meetings like this.

And you know what? The pastor, the pastor who called us there to come to preach to his people, you know what he said to his wife one day before we got there, two weeks before we got there? He said to his wife, Honey, I'm going to go out alone in the woods for a whole day and I'm going to take my Bible and I'm going to go out there and I'm going to ask God to show me anything that's wrong in my life as the pastor of this church before the twins get here. And I want to make sure I get it dealt with in my heart and life before the twins come. I'm going to spend a whole day getting right with God myself.

Got it? Got it? So, he spends the whole day. He comes home in the evening and when he comes home in the evening, what has happened? His wife says, Honey, what kind of a day did you have? Oh, he says, Honey, I had a wonderful day. Wonderful.

Tell me about it, she said. Tell me. You know what? I spent the whole day and I said, Lord, speak to me, speak to me and show me anything in my life that needs to be made right with you, Lord.

I want to get it all right before the twins come. And guess what, honey? He didn't show me one single thing. Isn't that wonderful? Isn't that wonderful? Oh, wonderful.

Now the twins can come and preach to my people. Isn't that wonderful? And you know what? When the twins got there, they started preaching about the spirit of pride. And you know what? The Holy Spirit of God started to speak to that pastor.

I can still remember. We started on Sunday morning. By about Wednesday night, God started to say to that pastor, Listen, why was it you went out two weeks before the twins came out there in the woods to get right with me before the twins got here? Wasn't it because you were afraid I might have to speak to you when the twins got here and you might have to humble yourself in front of your people? Oh, no, no.

Yeah? And God started to deal with him and showed him the motive. Now, can't somebody get right with God two weeks before the twins come? Sure. But God got him on his motive why he did it.

And God dealt with him and started to deal with him. And once he said, Yes, Lord, to that. You know what happened? That was about Wednesday night when God started to put his claws in that guy's heart.

By Saturday night, he came to me and he told me the story now. You see? He told me exactly what I'm telling you now. And he said to me, You know what, Lou? Since Wednesday night when I said, Yes, Lord, I see that spirit of pride in that action of mine and that's why you couldn't show me one thing.

And he said, Now, Lord, since Wednesday night, he said, Brother Lou, since Wednesday night, God has been showing me so much about my heart that I finally said tonight, Oh, God, I didn't know it was so bad.

Oh, God, when are you going to stop? Two weeks before, there was nothing there, folks. But he was such a bad boy in two weeks.

Amen? No. God had access to him. That's what I'm saying tonight.

I'm telling you men and women, no wonder the devil doesn't want you and me to deal with our pride because he wants us to continue to be in the bondage of some areas in our life, in spiritual bondages, and we don't even know what bondages they are and God can't even show them to us until we say, Yes, Lord, that spirit of pride that has been controlling and ruling and running my life, my decision making about everything about my life is wrapped up right there. And I thought I was pride free. But tonight I see you how my life is so controlled by that spirit of pride that really, God, you don't have and haven't had access to my heart to really show me what I am.

What I am. Oh, there's going to be some bystanders to this revival here. There's going to be some of you folks who come to these meetings and you'll enjoy them and you'll say, Isn't it wonderful what God's doing and what God's saying? And you miss out yourself.

Why? I'll tell you. Because your desire to be so totally right with God will not exceed your pride. And therefore, you miss out what God wants to do in your heart life.

Now, I want to just quickly close in just a few moments by telling you two reactions I got from this message. One man, one lady, one lady said, Today, I'm asking you, what's God saying to you about this? What's your reaction to this kind of a message? This lady said, Here's her reaction. Today, I readjusted my halo.

It's not strangling me anymore. She's got a halo up here and she moved it. Boom.

One adjustment. Just a little adjustment on it. One strangulation point off.

Isn't that a nice one? Isn't that what you're going to do tonight? Just readjust the halo a little bit? Or the other fellow, Don Pattenauer, he said, I have learned tonight that God is not out to hurt my pride. He's out to kill it. What do you want God to do in your heart and life? Well, you know what? If you don't want to listen to me tonight, maybe you'd listen to the Toronto Star.

Ever hear that paper? Is it Toronto Star? I think it is. You never heard Toronto Star, the Toronto paper? Toronto newspaper? Oh, here it is. Look at the Toronto Star, folks.

Look at this. Can you read it up there? Pride. Queen of all sins.

Queen, isn't that what I said tonight? Oh no, we said king, not queen. King or queen of all sins is doing what? Making a comeback. That's the only mistake.

Look at the whole article. That whole page, men and women. This is the Toronto newspaper.

The world talks about it. The only mistake they make with this one? She's not making a comeback. She's been here all the time.

Amen? Amen. Wow. You recognize it in your heart and life tonight? Well, you know, I say, this is a negative message.

I want to tell you how positive it is. I want to give you two positive statements to end this message. Do you know what I have learned all the time I've been preaching about the subject of pride? I have learned this.

That nobody has ever swallowed his pride. Nobody has ever choked to death by swallowing his pride. Good one? Nobody has ever choked to death by swallowing his pride.

But here's the best one. But once he swallows his pride, then his appetite improves. Ah.

You know what? This meeting here tonight is filled with people whose appetite needs to improve. I mean, you're spiritual. I have to eat spiritual food to where the Word of God becomes the bread of life to you.

And Jesus becomes the bread of life to you. And that the Bible is not just something you hear about. And Christianity is just not a religion in the world.

You say, I believe the religion because I believe the Christian religion because I've chosen that one over this one or that one. No. Where it is spiritual life and food and dynamic.

And it's the kind of thing that the more you eat, the hungrier you get. Isn't that nice? And you keep getting more. And you keep getting more.

That's what God wants you to do. We have to start where God starts. Humble yourself.

Even before He asks us to pray. I hope we learned it. Amen.

And then the Holy Spirit has access to do us. And God will have access to you. He'll show you things about your heart like you didn't even know were there.

And you'll gladly and willingly say, Search me, O God, and know me. A proud heart won't pray that prayer. But a humble spirit, when we say God, Search me, God.

Come through to me and know me and see if there be any wicked way in me. And then, Lord, lead me in the path everlasting. What a place to be led once you deal with the spirit of pride.

Where are you tonight? Let's pray. Thank you, Father, for my brothers and sisters.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/24/SID24589.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/lou-sutera/why-pride-before-prayer-where-god-begins-in-reviving-his-people/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net