

# 7 Ways Pride Deceives

by Shane Idleman

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*The sermon explores the deceptive nature of pride and the importance of cultivating humility in our lives.*

**Duration:** 50:45

**Scripture:** Psalm 51:17, Proverbs 13:10, Amos 5:24, Obadiah 1:3, Matthew 15:8, Galatians 6:4-5, James 4:10

**Topics:** "Pride And Humility", "Spiritual Growth"

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## Description

This sermon delves into the dangers of pride, highlighting how it leads to deception, rebellion, spiritual blindness, quarrels, confusion, anxiety, depression, and false worship. The speaker emphasizes the importance of humbling oneself before God, seeking to break the prideful barriers that hinder spiritual growth and true worship. The message underscores the need for a broken and contrite heart, genuine compassion for others, and the power of a made-up mind to humble oneself before God.

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## Transcript

The message is, you know, I don't even know if I should say this title, the deception of pride, the deception of pride. And I often say that I am a prideful man working on humility. Often, I think it's healthy to admit that because pride can rise up in the best of us.

And we can start to think a little bit more highly of ourselves than we should. And God will begin to humble us when that happens, because he loves his children. And pride is deadly.

What I'm going to talk about is pretty serious, because pride leads to deception, pride leads to rebellion, pride leads to spiritual blindness, pride leads to quarrels, pride leads to confusion, pride leads to anxiety and depression, and pride leads to false worship. That's not a good list. Because it's dangerous, and it can really sidetrack us.

So if you have your Bibles, it's James four, chapter four, verse 13. And James is saying something interesting here. At first, it might seem like something that doesn't make a lot of sense.

But I'm hoping to unpack that. And I did a little bit last Wednesday. James says this, come now, you who say today or tomorrow, we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there buy and sell and make a profit.

Whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow for your for what is your life, it's even a vapor that appears for a little time, and then it vanishes away. Instead, you ought to say if the Lord wills, we shall live

and do this or that. But now you boast in your arrogance.

So it wasn't just somebody saying, you know, I'd like to do this or do this. They were boasting in their arrogance, they were boasting in their self confidence. All such boasting is evil.

Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it to him, it is sin. In other words, he's saying, you know, now the boasting is evil. And because you know it, if you continue in that pattern, it's going to be sinning, that you will be caught in a sinful lifestyle.

And boasting, the word means to talk with excessive pride and self satisfaction about one's achievements, possessions or abilities. It's, it's excessive pride. And don't have you ever been around those people where it's just like, I can't be around you much longer.

It's just it's just terrible. Go down and take a trip to Hollywood and listen to those guys or sports often athletes or, or people who have been successful in a different thing. It's it's, they just want to tell you I'm so successful in this area.

And, and I'm and look at my achievements, look at what I've accomplished. And it's just, it's this arrogance because even our breath is from God. I think we forget that even that that breath, we're taking that wonderful gift of life is from God, everything, our money, our accomplishments, if somebody accomplishes something, it's because he's given you the gifting and the ability to accomplish it.

That's why he gets all the glory and all the credit and, and thank you. That's why I love that song. Hallelujah, that word, hallelujah is a praise to God for what he's done.

And so when we boast and we say, well, here's what I'm going to do. And there's nothing wrong with planning. This isn't about somebody saying, you know what, next year, I'd like to do this.

I'd like to move here. My plan is to be here at work and retire at this age. And by next year, I want to hopefully have a raise and we want to have our car paid off.

And that's not boasting. That's that's planning and God when you say God, here's what I'm planning. What is your plan? I want to come alongside of your plan versus saying, God, here's what I'm doing now bless it.

And we do that don't we we just we steamroll ahead. I'm not really concerned what God's saying I'm just going to do this. And and that's that's boasting and that's arrogance thinking we're going to accomplish something without the Lord's help.

So that's really what he's talking about here. What happens is pride knocks us off track. A prideful person cannot be led of the Lord.

It knocks us off track, we make bad decisions, we have the wrong focus, it wastes time, it wastes money, it wastes energy, and we actually drift away from God. Now, this is probably I'm sure a group of believers, we love the Lord. But the sad fact also is that pride ultimately ultimately leads to damnation.

A fool has said in his heart, there is no God. And when somebody rejects God, they die in that state of rejection. It's because pride played the biggest role.

I've got people in my own life, which I'm sure you do too, I'm trying to get to friends in high school, other people that I'm trying to get to, but you know, what's preventing it not humility. They're not humble and

teachable. They're prideful, and they're arrogant.

And they don't they don't, you know, that's good for you, Shane, that's good for you. I'm glad you found religion, like I'm some little kid who needs to be appeased. But this isn't for me.

Why is it for me? Because it's pride. And pride will lead to damnation. Satan said, I will be like the Most High God.

And he was cast down, it was pride. It's pride. The Bible, if you're ever wondering where the enemy's coming at you, it's just three areas.

That's all. That's all you have to worry about three, that's all. Just three, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the boastful pride of life.

That's where he comes. And it's interesting, you watch, he you start to do good at work and money's coming in. Do you get more humble? No.

We get what sometimes prideful, things are going our way. Things are going good. We do we get humble or to get prideful.

Now walking around, it seems like everywhere we go, people are like, I've heard of that church. It's out there. It's growing so much.

Puff up the chest. Yes, prideful or no, humility. And that's why God keeps it in check.

It's his work. I mean, for anybody to think that anybody is orchestrating all this, and look at what we've done is ridiculous. It's God bringing people from all over.

But see, the pride of life can rise up in success. And then we often have failure to humble us. And we get prideful in success, and then we get humbled.

So that's what's happening here. Pride is a very destructive thing. And it has to be dealt with often on a daily basis, or at least a weekly basis or taking it to the Lord saying, Okay, Lord, this week, I'm getting prideful in this area, these areas.

And you might be thinking, what does prideful mean? Well, boasting is accomplishing. Look what I've accomplished. Look at what I've done.

It manifests itself in a lot of different ways. One way is you're not teachable. You're always right.

You've got to get the last word in. Can I say amen on that one? No man's on that one. You're gonna leave me hanging, right? I have to do this too.

Sometimes. You're just not going to get prideful, you know, and we don't want to be challenged. We don't want to be you know, it's just this pride rises up in us because it's thinking of ourselves more highly than we should.

And Paul says, you should not think of yourself more highly than you should. So let's get into this for a minute. The key is don't plan for it.

It says not to boast. Well, I should reiterate that the key is plan for things but don't boast in them. Plan what I talked about earlier.

Lord, is this part of your plan? What do you want me to do? God bless my plans is what we often say rather than God, what is your plan? So the right way that we should handle this planning for tomorrow is, Lord, here's what we would like to do, what we feel you're calling us to do, but would you direct us? I mean, I've got plans that I'd love to pay off bills at some point. I'd love, I have plans for this church. You know, we'd love to see two services here.

We'd love to see two services full. We'd love to see the Kids Connection building full. We want to make a kids area there.

We want to do, but Lord, would you show us what is best? Would you guide us? And it's good to make plans, but you better be very flexible. Because often we make our plans a certain way, but things happen. Life happens.

People get sick. They get hurt. They get, we've got to take care of certain family members we didn't plan on.

Things are shifted. This isn't what I thought. This is what I didn't plan on.

As I talked about Sunday, you've got to learn to trust in God's sovereignty. He can deliver you, but even if he doesn't, he's still sovereign. Like those three Hebrew boys that were caught in that fire.

And they said, right before they went to the fire, they told the king, and I'm reiterating, I know some of you heard this, but I think it's an important point, is they told the king that we are not going to bow down to your image. Our God is able to deliver us. But even if he doesn't, we're still not going to bow to you.

And I've noticed that sometimes we can get on the other side of, you know, God's going to heal this person or me. God's going to do this, and God's going to get me through this. I'm going to, I'm actually have to, he's going to take me over it, and I'm not going to have to deal with it.

I didn't know I was going to have to go through it. And we have these plans, and when God doesn't fulfill the plan, like we thought, if we're not careful, it can lead to bitterness. And people get, there's a lot of people angry at God.

There's a lot of people, that's a lot of times what I deal with when I'm talking with atheists. I'm going back and forth with a few online, and I've had lunch with them. I've shared that before, and other people at the hospital homes sometimes, is they're angry at God.

They're mad. Why did God allow this? How could a loving God, and we forget that He is sovereign in the good times and the bad times. We trust Him regardless of what things look like, and that will make life much easier, because you're not fighting against God.

Yes, it's challenging. I'm not trying to minimize challenges. Please don't misunderstand.

We don't like the curveballs that life throws to us, but I'd rather live trusting God, and saying, Lord, you're sovereign, you'll get me through this, and humbling myself, instead of getting prideful, and how could you? Okay, I'll play this game, but on my terms, and that never works. So this is an interesting area. That's the right way to do it.

Lord, here's what I would like to do, but what do you want to do? The wrong way, arrogantly assume that this is what you're going to do. Arrogance is self-willed. Being self-willed is not God-centered.

Being self-willed is, here's what my will wants, here's what I'm going to do. Dobson wrote a book many years ago, *The Strong-Willed Child*. Oh, man, do you have any strong-willed children, or is it just me? I think I got all four.

All four. Just, just, just mine. No, even the little three-year-old today, she's like, stupid, mean, because she's strong.

I want that. I want it now, and that's how we're raised. I want it now.

I want my crackers now. I want to eat now. I don't want to go to bed now, and that's an interesting part, too, because I tell my kids, I would, if I wish Morgan would come home and tell me it's nap time, I would love to take a nap, or let's go to bed.

I'd love to just go to bed. I'm tired. What's wrong with you guys? You just want to stay up even when you're exhausted, and they're so self-willed.

That's pride. So what parenting does is you actually, over the course of parenting, is you break that pride out of them by helping them humble themselves and talking and saying, that's not right. We don't allow that.

You're not going to act like that, and I really, about six months ago, I had a quite an experience with my son. He was not acting good in school, and I know that because I went through that. When you don't like something, you don't want to read something, you don't want to learn it, and it realized, I took him in his room, and I was, you know, this is, you're not going to talk to mom like that.

You're not going to throw fits like this. It's not acceptable. It's not going to happen, and I finally realized.

He looked at me, said, Dad, I'm trying. I don't want to, but I don't know how. I don't know, and I realized, oh, he's like me.

He's struggling. He wants to be a good son, but Dad, I don't know how, and he's crying. I want to, but I don't know, so I saw the struggle.

Ah, I know. I know that struggle. You know, here we think we can raise them like little drill sergeants.

Yes, sir. No, sir, and then just perfect little kids, but he's struggling. I want to treat mom good, but it's hard.

I want to treat you good, but it's hard, and I have, and so I've walked, so I went and got a prayer journal with him at the store, and we're walking through prayer, and we're praying, and that seemed to calm everything down, and spiritual warfare. Okay, devil, you want to play this game? Yes, let's play this game. We're going to get into prayer.

We're going to get into seeking. We're going to train them, but understanding his struggle, too, I didn't get as upset. I became a lot more compassionate, but kids are strong-willed.

They are very strong-willed, and what we as parents are supposed to do is help them break that will. What's the old saying? Break their will, but not their spirit. You show them, and that's part of training.

Teach a child. I believe when the Bible says teach a child in the way that he should go when he was older, he will not depart from it. That teaching is a molding, shaping, humbling process, because I want to take my kids to the hospital homes.

I want to show them what it looks like to feed a homeless person. You know, I want to be humble. Did I do that, Dennis? There we go.

Might need a new microphone again. Okay, so back to the self-willed. Now, this whole topic of pride, the deception of pride, I know it doesn't apply to anybody in this room, right? Just get a CD on your way out.

Get a CD, and there's people we know who we can give the CD to, but just sit and listen, then, if this doesn't apply to you. If it doesn't apply to you, that means it does apply to you, right? Leads to deception. Let's look at the first point.

Leads to deception. The pride of your heart has deceived you. Obadiah 1.3. It's interesting, these prophets Obadiah, and Micah, and Nahum, and Habakkuk, and Zephaniah, and Zechariah, and these minor prophets, it's interesting, God would call them at certain points in Israel's history because his people had become prideful, and they would often say, you stiffed, Nick, people.

You don't listen to God, or this, the pride of your heart has deceived you. Here's the danger with pride. When we don't stay humble, we don't stay teachable, and when we're not teachable, we think we're doing God's will, and we think we're spiritual, and we think we're on God's side, when reality, deception has crept in, and I see it, and I'm not talking about anybody in this room, so don't think I am, but I see it a lot.

I used to in marriage counseling. I don't do it as much. My mom's helped out a lot in that area because she's a marriage and family therapist who's helped with the church really started to grow, but I would see really angry men, and looking, I mean, you know when you look at something from the outside, you can see clearly, but they can't see clearly, and I'm like, if you talk to me that way at home too, I would be, you know, but they were so prideful.

They were like, well, the Bible says this. They need to submit to me, and I'm the man of this house, and I make all the money, and God, you know, I get my kids there, and they're just so prideful, but that pride has deceived him. Like, why is my wife upset at me? Why are we having marriage problems? Why can't I see it? Because pride deceives.

That's the deception element of it, is we think we're holy and spiritual and in tune with the things of the Spirit, when really it's deception, because pride, you can't see clearly. You can't see clearly spiritually, and pride begins to puff up, and we begin to think even we're righter. Is that a word? I don't know, but we're right, and others are wrong, and so what will happen, it leads into deception.

Those who are humble are led by the Lord. Shane, do you have a scripture for that? Yeah. The humble, he teaches his way, so as we humble ourselves, and what that looks like, Lord, I was prideful today.

I was prideful today. I was arrogant. I didn't treat somebody the right way, and you humble yourself, and you begin to see clearly again, but if you don't, and that pride begins to build and build and build, and you live in this bubble of deception, even as a Christian.

That's why a Christian can continue in some horrendous sins, and not really see anything wrong with it, justify it because of pride, because of pride. It leads to deception. It also leads to rebellion, for rebellion is

as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry, so when a person is stubborn, they are rebellious to God, and when we're stubborn about certain things, and we know who we are.

We know when those things happen, and the stubbornness leads to rebellion against God, and rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft. You might say, well, Shane, how is that rebellion? Very easy. God says, humble yourself, and I will lift you up.

The humble, he teaches his way. The humble shall inherit the earth. The humble will know my will, and so as we're not humbling ourselves, and we are doing things our way, we are in rebellion against God.

We rebel against His clear-cut commandments for us, and as a result, deception, rebellion, it leads to spiritual blindness. Isaiah 610, make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and return, and be healed. Now, some people say, well, why is God making their heart? Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy.

Often, you'll see in this case, in other cases, with Pharaoh was a good example. When a person begins to continually, and continually rebel against God, and God, and hardens their heart, and hardens their heart, God basically says, you want it, you got it, and then he would make their heart dull, and their ears heavy, and they could not hear. So that's what pride will do.

It will lead to spiritual blindness. You can't see clearly when you're prideful. You can't read the Bible very well, and you sure can't pray.

How can a prideful person pray? Well, we have an example in the New Testament, don't we? Jesus gave example. Can you believe that person, that person came up, I think it was one like a religious leaders, or somebody wealthy in the city, and said, God, I thank you. I'm not like that tax collector.

I'm not a sinner. He's telling God he gives. I give 10%.

I do all these things. And this other sinner beats his chest, and said, Lord, have mercy on me, a tax collector. Have mercy on me, a sinner, actually.

See the humility, and the pride. So the pride led to spiritual blindness. This guy actually thinks he's going to come before God, and say, I'm glad I'm not like him, and I give to you.

Aren't I spiritual? And he was blinded spiritually. And wouldn't Jesus rebuke the religious leaders more often than not for their blindness? You blind guides. You're leading blind.

You're leading people astray. You are blind guides. You're a whitewashed tombs.

You don't know the things of God. You're stiff-necked people. You draw nigh unto me with your lips, but your hearts are far from me.

So that's what sat, I believe, for the religious leaders, in my opinion. They were deceived because of pride, and they had spiritual blindness because of pride, and they actually thought they were God's representative. They did not know that they were going to spend eternity in hell because of pride.

Isn't that deadly? Isn't that dangerous? And here's an interesting thing with pride. You need to abort it quickly. That's a good kind of abortion.

You see it coming up. You have to get rid of it because pride grows. It starts little.

It begins to grow and begins to grow and begins to grow and overtakes us. The deception is that you think God is on your side because you're going through the motions. That's what these religious leaders did.

That's what people do. They go through the motions. I'm talking about spiritual people now.

They'll go to church. They'll even read their Bible. They'll even do things spiritually, and they think because of that they're on God's side without looking at the condition of their heart.

Now, it also leads to quarrels. Don't we know that? Oh, goodness, how many house fights could we stop if we would humble ourselves? Oh, no amens on that one. That's right.

Oh, that's right. We don't need this message. We're going to give out the CDs.

We're going to give out the CDs to people that we know. Leads to quarrels. I don't like what you said.

You challenged me. Where there is strife, there is pride, but wisdom is found in those who take advice. Isn't that interesting? Proverbs 13.10. I always look to this when I'm struggling in this area.

Where there is strife, there is pride. Now, it doesn't mean that there's always, anytime there's strife, there's always pride because now let me qualify that. Not necessarily on your part.

You could be loving and nurturing and trying to keep your family together. Here comes Christmas. There's strife.

What's going on? It's pride in the other people often. The pride will always lead to strife because, remember, self-willed. And as soon as I don't get my way, what happens? Strife.

And then he goes on to say, but wisdom, wisdom and humility are always often interchangeable or linked together. Knowledge, wisdom, humility. It's all this.

The wise are humble. The humble use wisdom. It's used together.

So, but wisdom is found in those who take advice. This is interesting. This is one word.

This is one reason I try to be, note the word try, teachable. Teachable. You want to learn.

It's another reason why, personally, I read a lot of books. I don't want to, I don't have that approach where, you know, I just, I'm just not going to read a lot of books. I read a lot of different authors, a lot of different theologians, and I've learned so much.

I wouldn't trade that for the world. I'm able to get different views, different perspectives on different things in theology and church history. And you look at things and you want to be teachable from looking at the experiences of others and especially those who have come before us and those who have succeeded.

So one aspect of pride to avoid quarrels in your house, at your job, with your family, is to humble yourself. You don't always have to get the last word in. You challenged me.

I'm upset. Do you ever feel that way? Somebody's challenging you. And I'm like, well, yeah.

And you get, you go back and forth and here comes the strife. Where did that come from? Humility? No, it came from pride. Pride.

And that's why we're trying to do in this church, and that's why I brought the team on Sunday, is I so appreciate all these people because I could truly say that we're trying to work on humility. We're trying to, you know, say, Lord, what teach us? Help us work together and humble ourselves and not get prideful and, well, I want to do it this way or I want to do it this way. And it's a process and it hurts sometimes.

It hurts to humble ourselves. It hurts the flesh. The spirit loves it, but the flesh does not like when we humble ourselves.

So it leads to deception, leads to rebellion, leads to spiritual blindness, leads to quarrels, and it leads to confusion. Proverbs 22 forward, the reward for humility and fear of the Lord is riches and honor and life. In this word life there, he's talking about like when Jesus said you shall have life.

It's abundant life. It's life overflowing. It's life where it's not confusion.

A lot of times pride brings in confusion because you know there's something missing there. You're walking that fence. I know I need to be pleasing God and humble, but I'm so confused in life and that confusion sometimes makes us even more prideful.

So one thing we have to watch out for with pride is if life is very confusing, there are seasons, but if it's always confusing and there's all this drama, pride might be in there somewhere. If there's tons of drama, tons of confusion, what's going on? This is chaotic and there could be pride at work there because that's a part of quarrels. Leads to anxiety and depression.

Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone without comparing themselves to someone else. Galatians 6, 640.

Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone without comparing themselves to someone else. Humble yourself before God and he will lift you up.

James 4.10. So here's anxiety and depression oftentimes are the result of pride and trying to get our way, being anxious, being depressed about things. All these emotions sometimes are centered around not getting our way and things not going the way we want and pride. We start to become prideful and angry and we also compare ourselves with one another, don't we? We compare.

Why don't I have that? Why aren't they going through what I'm going through? And as a result, we become prideful and lifted up and arrogant. That's why I like James 4.10. Humble yourself before the Lord and he will lift you up. Here's how you have to humble yourself.

Well, maybe I'll wait till I get to the end. I won't give you too much right now. Then next, it leads to false worship.

This is scary. This is very scary. Matthew 15.

Jesus said, you've made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition. Hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy about you saying, these people draw near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. In other words, they were saying the right thing.

Sound familiar? What does this mean? Quoting scripture, appearing godly, saying the right thing. But Jesus said, your heart, your heart is far from me. And that's my concern for a lot of people is they can say the right thing, but their heart is so far from God and in vain they worship me.

So a prideful person, when they come to church, you know, it doesn't happen here again, but other churches, they'll come in and they'll be judging already. They'll be judging from the lobby. They'll be judging what people are wearing.

They'll be judging certain things and they come in with this sense of pride and God has given them this gift of discernment. Really, it's not a gift of discernment. It's a prideful, arrogant feeling and they come in and, oh brother, and I'm spiritual and I've, gosh, I spent 14 hours in this this weekend and I'm just, you know, and just boasting and gloating and then they'll come to church and they'll sing a few songs and they'll sing and they'll participate, but they are worshiping God in vain.

Vain means it's pointless. Why are you doing that? I don't desire sacrifice and mercy. I desire a broken and contrite heart, sayeth the Lord.

So these people were, they had their hearts were far from him. They were worshiping God in vain. They're teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.

Another sign of pride is you start to put a lot of rules on things. Now there's nothing wrong with rules. Thank God that God has given us a lot of rules.

Do this. Obey this. Stop that.

Do this. Take on this. Put on that.

You know, all these things, but we start to make all these rules as a form of spirituality and pride. See, I can, I can, it's funny, a prideful person, they'll make these rules, you know, that, that I don't even know, tons of rules and that you have to meet these rules in order to be spiritual, but then they break all these other rules. You know, they'll say, well, you can't watch TV, but they're addicted to pornography.

They'll say, you can't go to the movies, but then they treat their family like garbage and they, they, they make all these, well, you shouldn't do that and this and this, and they put all these rules on people. They're carrying, that's why the Bible talks about freedom in Christ. I believe the closer we get to Christ, the more we look like Him, and you're not bound by all these rules and things because you want to do it out of love.

It's like saying, it's like your spouse telling you every week, you better not cheat on me. Gosh, I guess not. Better not this way.

You better not cheat. Like, all right, fine. It doesn't, what kind of marriage is that? The, the true love is, is saying, I don't want to do that because I love you.

That would hurt you. That's not right, and we do it, that's why with grace, grace is an interesting thing. Because of God's grace, we actually live under a higher standard.

People think because of God's grace, I can sin more. Actually, no. Because of the grace, you want to live at a higher standard.

You want to obey Him. You want to love Him. You want to follow His laws and His rules and, and His things because of that relationship.

So because of that, it flows out of a loving relationship. Joy comes when you follow. It's not, it's, if it's ever difficult and rigid, you've got all these rules and things, you might want to reassess what's going on in your heart.

The deception of pride. We think that we are right when we are wrong. That's the deception.

Like the Old Testament prophet Elisha, who spoke on God's half behalf, the same plea goes out today. How long will we waver between two opinions if God is God? Follow Him. Here's the thing, you either humble yourself or God will.

As a Christian, I've noticed, God loves us enough that if we don't humble ourselves, He'll convict us, He'll show us, and if we don't humble ourselves, He will. I've seen it so many times. Okay, tough guy, I'm going to take that job from you.

What? I'm going to take that vehicle from you. I'm going to make you just at work this, or foolishness, or I'm going to humble you in your marriage. I'm going to, and God will humble us if we don't humble ourselves, because He loves us, because we know it's pride.

Here's why it's deceptive too. A person who's prideful, they get away with it for a week, then they get away with it for a month, then they get away with it for six months, and then they think, well, I must be on God's side. He's blessing me.

Did you know the devil can bless you? Take an hour drive that way. The devil can bless you. That's Hollywood, LA, Los Angeles, right? I mean, you can, there's rich, and they're miserable.

They are absolutely miserable. So just because God is, and people say that, well, look, Shin, God's blessing me. Well, the devil could be.

He might be just opening tons of doors and keeping you in that pride, because we often tie blessings into God's favor, right? God's opened this tremendous door at work. I'm making more money. This is happening.

God must be happy with me. Not necessarily, not necessarily, because then it doesn't follow that if somebody's going through sickness or hardship or tough time that God doesn't love them, and He's frowning upon them. He actually uses the valleys as well as the mountaintop experiences.

It's the valleys where we appreciate the mountaintop experiences. It's the valleys where we learn to trust in God. When you don't have that job, when you're relying on Him, and I've shared this before.

I don't know if I have here, but I did at Lancaster a few different times, but He took me through so many things. When I recommitted my life, I would say I just had a come to Jesus moment in 1999, 2000, right in there. I was at 24 Hour Fitness making a lot of money, well over six figures in my 20s, built a custom house in Quartz Hill, big Dodge truck all lifted up with the big motor, and you know this, you know, prideful boy.

Looking back, I'm like, oh goodness gracious, Lord, you were so graceful. Man, you're just so prideful, and just, and then He began to take those things away, and I was like the number one salesman in all the area

of California, different things, tons of awards, and different things, and then what happens though with corporations, you have to beat last year's numbers. I have to increase same store growth by six percent, and all these budgets, and I'm beating myself every year, like I can't keep this up, and I got demoted to run just one gym in Santa Clarita, the 24 Hour Fitness, Salvia Princesa.

It was a demotion, so I go from all these gyms, money, and now down to this, and that's when God really started to humble me, and it was a humbling process, and then after I left there, I moved back home with my mom, barely got by. I had to go work with my brother digging ditches, basically, he paid me a hundred dollars a day, just dug ditches, and was very happy, but God, it was this refining process, so people look and say, oh Shane, you're living back home with your mom, and you're not, you can barely, you can barely even pay your bills at a hundred dollars a day, and oh man, God, you must have really missed it. Not at all, that was a refining fire, that's what God used, and it was, it was a wonderful experience, but very humiliating, very humiliating.

I would be in houses in these areas, digging up certain lines for him. He was a, he did underground work, and I would just, you know, go from six figures a year to this, and it was, but God was humbling, and humbling, and humbling, and then working my way back into construction, I eventually started my own construction company, and owned some heavy equipment, and was making really good money, and used that season to save, and save, and save, and save, and then guess what happened in 2008? Bye-bye market, yep, oh goodness gracious, and then we're living off that savings for like a year and a half, and we're down to our last, I think it was like five thousand dollars, that's it, that's all we had, and work, there was, there's no work, like oh, what just happened? Everything went bye-bye, and but people would look and say, well he must not be following God. Now I was following God, God wholeheartedly, we were giving, we're helping the church, but it was just a difficult season, and I said, well I've got, I've got, and that's when I got into real estate real quick, and God just blessed that tremendously, and then right when I get into real estate, I had a need to, felt a need to plan a church.

I'm like, how, how is this going to work? But he used that income, then the church just grew, and we were fine financially from the get-go, and how he used those seasons of abundance, and then lack, and then abundance, and then lack, and then abundance, and then lack, and you're trusting God, you're trusting in God, and what he does, and, and whether the valley, or the, the mountaintop, so just be careful. We can't rate it on blessings alone. You, you have to look at, is my life conforming to the image of Christ? Am I obedient? Am I trying to be humble, and gracious, and loving? Am I filled with the fruit of the Spirit? Am I spending time in his word, and worship, and prayer, and then what comes, what comes? You don't gauge it off, you know, abundance, and no, God brings blessings.

Thank God for it. He'll bring, he'll just, you just, you go with the flow, right? It was, it was interesting. I, um, I don't know if you remember this.

I think I shared it. Sorry if I repeat things sometimes, but I think it's relevant, but when I was helping with Grace Fest two years ago, that big concert, the big Christian festival, I was able to have a booth, and brought like 1,500 books, like all of, just about every one I had out of storage, and I got there the night before, and then the sprinklers came on. So I get there in the morning, and they're like, Shane, um, we got to talk to you.

We are so sorry. Everything's ruined. I'm like, okay.

I just had a good attitude, like, Lord, you're, you're gonna do something. You know, this is, well, okay. Um, had I not went through all that, I wouldn't have been prepared for this, but then the, the city walked around.

They said, oh, just fill out this form. We have insurance for this. We'll just, we'll just cover them all.

Like, really? I wouldn't even, how did that happen within an hour? You know, it went from this terrible, like, my goodness, to, oh, that's pretty nice. That's a good blessing, but you can look at that, because God used that to test me, too, I believe, and to just, you know, the disappointments in life, and I wish to say I always pass the test well, but I don't. There's, you know, you get upset, you get, you grumble, you complain, and God works through that.

So I said all that to say you cannot rate where you're at with God based on blessings, and you cannot rate it on where God is maybe withdrawing things. Why am I going through this, these health issues or these financial issues? Why? You can't base it on that alone. However, God will use challenging times sometimes to spank us spiritually.

We can't discount that. People, the Bible is clear that if, if God will discipline His children, He will begin to take away things and take away things. I've seen pastors who were caught in sin and would never admit it.

Their church dwindled from large to smaller, to smaller, to smaller, and smaller, and they lost it. Or people in business, you know, that God's, you know, why am I going through this, and they don't humble themselves and seek God. So sometimes He will use sickness.

Sometimes He will use a lack of. Sometimes He will use losing a job. He will, He disciplines them.

How does He discipline us? There's not a big wooden paddle up in, up in, up in the sky that comes down and disciplines us. That happened in grade school. I just told somebody this week, and when I went to Bethel Baptist, I was one of the first students there, you know, at Church on Avenue K, in that school, many years ago, and they would paddle you.

It was a, and I got paddled three times for chewing gum. You just lean on it on the desk, and they get this big paddle with holes in it. What are the holes for? So the wind can blow through it, and it goes quicker.

It's just, why discipline? Do you ever think I chewed gum again? Never again. It took years. And I would chew gum.

I would chew gum a couple times. I think they caught me four times, and it resulted in paddling. And now I think in the public school system, went from chewing gums to rape and robbery and assault.

The top three public school problems when I was a kid was chewing gum, making too much noise, and fooling around. Boy, have we drifted. But that's how God will often discipline us too.

So I don't want to discount that, and sometimes people get mad when I talk about this, but God will discipline His children. He will take things slowly. I'm taking that income.

I'm taking that thing. I'm taking that, and maybe, and sickness sometimes can be a result. We had time.

We look at, as we get into James and different passages, where sickness, some of you are sick and dying because you're taking communion and mocking the cross, and because you're continuing in the sin. So it's very, and people say, well, how do I know? It's easy. You take it to the Lord.

If you take it to the Lord, you confess, you repent, you're working on things, and you're filled with the Spirit of God, and you know that you've removed besetting sins, and you're seeking God, and things are happening, then you push through. But if you know, oh, this could be possibly the result of my sinful choices and my sinful habits, then I need to repent. I need to get back on track, and God can rebuild, and rebuild.

But He will often use those things, because how else will we change? I don't know if I would have changed a 24-hour fitness had I not went through all that. I don't think I would have. I mean, I hope I would have, but it's those hard times that make me think, uh-oh, God, I need you.

That's why ministering in the hospital homes is what I call very easy compared to an atheist, or compared to somebody who doesn't want to hear about God, because they're now ready to hear about God. They're ready. Okay, here's why I ended up here.

I don't know if I'm getting out. God, I need you. And that's really a loving Father will get a person to a point of finally surrendering.

I'd rather He get somebody to a point of brokenness and possibly dying in six months, so they can spend eternity in heaven, than allow them to continue in a very destructive lifestyle and say nothing. And I often wonder, I don't joke about, I mean, I joke about Hollywood a lot, but my heart breaks for, like, Britney Spears and Katy Perry and even Madonna now. I guess she can't sleep because Trump was elected, you know.

And it's like, what's going to happen, Madonna? I mean, golly. You know, it's like, but I have a, because they, that depression, anxiety that Robin Williams taking his own, it's because they need God. And those riches will keep them away from God.

Shane, how do you know that? Because Jesus said it. It's hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Why is it hard? Because riches contend for that.

When we have it all, you don't see a need for God. And, and that's why mission field, in the mission field, they're so receptive. The humble will inherit the earth, the meek will inherit the earth, humble, broken in spirit, those who are no God.

So don't get too excited about riches, because those, I've seen that, that drive many people away from the Lord, from serving Him. On fire for God in their 20s, working, you know, for the Lord, and then God just, whatever happened, invest. I know guys right now, they're, they're probably have at least, and they're my age, at least a million and a half each in stocks and gold and silver.

And they're, I mean, they can retire now, but they're chasing those things they used to teach the Bible. They used to love God, they used to be involved in church, and those things have, because it becomes an addiction, a passion that they have to chase this almighty dollar. Riches will keep people from the kingdom, and it's pride, it's pride that's doing it.

One of the best ways to get rid of, if that's your area, is to give it away. You know, you save, you get, but you, you start to, Lord, thank you for this, and let me give some away. Thank you for this, let me give some away.

Thank you for this, let me give, and you get rid of that. You get rid of that, that bondage when you're bound. And ironically, these two people are, the church that they go to now and then, they, they, they, they have been known to be just as tight as, as somebody on a tight, tight budget.

Like they don't do, they're just so tight. They're misers, right? You've seen them. Isn't it funny, the richest people are often the ones that are the, they'll, they'll argue with a waiter, a waiter on 50 cents.

I'm not giving you a tip over a dollar, you didn't do anything, and they're a millionaire. What does it happen? Pride, pride. So you might get now asking the question, okay, but how do I humble myself? How do I humble myself? Well, you go through the seven points again and apply the truth, everything we just talked about.

See, now if we go, ah, that makes sense, that's what I have to do, that doesn't do it. I talk to people all the time, oh, that makes sense, that's what I have to do, doesn't matter if you don't do it. So in this area of deception, is the pride of your heart has deceived you? Humble yourself.

Are you in rebellion against God? Humble yourself. If people have a problem with authority and rebellion, or they're just, they just don't like authority, they're in rebellion against God, humble yourself and admit it. If you're being led spiritually and you're blind to the things of God, you're spiritually blind, humble yourself.

If you're fostering quarrels and arguments, if you're an argumentative person, do you know who those people are? They want to debate everything. They just want to, hey, they bring it up just to debate, they argument, they want to argue, they want to argue, I'm tired of arguing. Repent, humble yourself.

Anxiety and depression, because we're out of God's will, humble yourself and get back in the center of God's will, leads to false worship. Have you been drawing nigh into God? Have you been drawing near into God with your words and acting spiritual like these people? Yes, I go to church. Yes, I'll come to the Wednesday study.

I mean, the Wednesday studies, obviously, you're more spiritual than the Sunday people. Right? I won't answer that one. Right.

Normally, though, the midweek study, you get people who are serious, and you really want to know who's serious, come to the prayer meeting before the service. And that will show you a lot of where people are at spiritually. But let me get back to this.

That's what we have to do, this false worship. If you're drawing nigh to God with your lips, you say the right things, but your heart's not broken and humble before him. Here's a good test.

A prideful person usually doesn't cry, or weep, or something for family members or friends or a nation. They don't care. They could care less.

They don't care about visiting people at the hospital. They don't care about people in need. They're prideful and they're arrogant.

A humble heart is a broken heart. A humble heart is a broken heart. Your heart breaks for the things that God's heart breaks for.

You're humble, and you want to go and help. You want to make a difference. The heart needs to break.

That's what I talk about all the time. A prideful heart doesn't. And I can tell, I watch some famous pastors that I look up to sometimes, and I wonder if they ever even cried over a sermon.

If they've even shed a tear over the lost people that are on their way to hell in their own church. I mean, boy, do they got their theology down, but their heart's not right. I mean, they can pull apart the Greek and the Hebrew, but their heart's not right.

They're not weeping over their message. Their heart's not broken and therefore being poured out to others. That's a sure sign of pride if you have no compassion.

If there's no compassion, you have no humility. It goes together. I mean, there's a huge list we could go down, but if there's not a brokenness for others, when you hear about something, like somebody in the church, man, they just lost this.

Oh, that's too bad. Oh, well. We need people in the hospital homes.

Oh, well, who cares? They'll get over it. But they're going to church. They're prideful.

Humility always has a broken heart. And I just want to close with this. The power of the made-up mind.

I've read a book on fasting before. I forget the author's name, but he talked, he had a chapter about the power of the made-up mind. When your mind is made up that you're going to humble yourself, you can do it.

When you ask God, God, help me. God, I need you. Don't, please don't humble me.

Let me humble, let me humble myself. You don't need to take everything away from me until I cry mercy. Let me, Lord, help me humble myself.

I humble myself before you. I've been wrong in this area. I've been wrong in my marriage.

I've been wrong in my walk with you. I've been playing church. God, I'm humbling myself before you.

And he will answer that prayer. I'm going to have Brant come back up. We've got about, we've got a little bit of time.

We're going to end a little bit early. But what I'd like to do, we're going to do two songs and I'll be available for prayer. I always say I'll be up front or back wherever.

If you need prayer, come and see me. But even afterwards, we want to encourage fellowship. It's okay.

Some churches make you get in circles and pray. And most of the time people are like, oh, don't do that. I don't want to do that.

I don't know these people. So I'm not going to do that. But I would encourage you afterwards to talk to somebody you don't know.

And if it feels right, say, how can I pray for you? Or how can I pray for you? And I think there's power in that. That's people coming together. We're not just going to go home and eat.

How can I pray for you in this area? And it builds camaraderie. It builds fellowship. Where two or three are gathered, there I am, Jesus said.

So instead of just chatting about the Broncos, are they playing still? No. Or, you know, let's try to say, can I pray for you about something? And if it doesn't feel comfortable, that's okay. But it needs to start getting in that direction where it feels comfortable to pray with people.

So Brad's going to do two songs. And then as we leave, we'll just have fellowship. And I'll be up here.

I'll pray with you for whatever you'd like. I've seen God answer tremendous prayers. I've seen the court system going to take kids out of the home, actually stop and not put the kids in the home.

I've seen people almost be fined or go to jail. And God intervenes. I've seen marriages falling apart.

And God intervenes and breaks one of the spouses. They meet somebody, they read a book, or they hear a sermon, they come back home. I've seen God answer so many things when His people pray.

This is the most important part. You know, just sitting in the pew going, mm-hmm, God made some good points today. That really accomplishes nothing.

Actually, it doesn't accomplish anything if I don't change and you don't change. If we don't apply what God's Word says, we are actually living in deception because we're rightful.

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