

The Deception of Pride

by Shane Idleman

The sermon emphasizes the dangers of pride and the importance of humility in our lives, highlighting the consequences of pride and the power of God's word to humble us and keep us grounded.

Duration: 54:59

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 26:16, Proverbs 13:10, Proverbs 16:18, Proverbs 29:23, Isaiah 57:15, Daniel 5:20, Obadiah 1:3, Matthew 23:12, James 4:6, 1 Peter 5:6

Topics: "Humility", "Pride"

Description

Shane Idleman emphasizes the dangers of pride in his sermon 'The Deception of Pride,' explaining how it can lead to a lack of love, critical attitudes, and a false sense of security. He warns that pride can deceive believers into thinking they are right while ignoring their own faults, ultimately leading to painful consequences in relationships and spiritual life. Shane encourages humility and brokenness as essential for spiritual growth and warns against the prideful mindset that can arise from success or popularity. He calls for self-examination and accountability within the church community to combat pride and maintain a humble spirit before God.

Transcript

Hope is yours to take. Peace is found in grace. I've got an important message this morning.

We've been talking about demons and demonology. Demonology is a study of demons in systematic theology. The study of how something attacks you is very important because to be forewarned is to be forearmed.

You can be armed, you can be prepared. And so check out the last few weeks, and I believe the major way the enemy works in the lives of believers is through pride. Without a shadow of a doubt, he works through pride.

So if we allow, if I allow pride to come into my heart and take root into my heart, I will not be loving and gracious to people. It'll be my way or the highway. I'll become critical.

I'll become cynical. I'll become the right way. I know what's right.

I've already made my mind made up. And so it can be dangerous in a church. It can be dangerous in ministry.

And that's why we strive for humility. We talk about humility. We push brokenness and a contrite heart.

We don't just say it. We truly, truly want that. There's a pastor in the news again recently for doing some things just kind of, you know, just prideful.

And I sent the article to our elders this week, and I said, if you see any of these things in me, please let me know. Please let me know. Because I need to nip those things in the bud.

No one is more well aware of their pride than me. And you should be aware of your own pride because there's not anyone, I actually threw it out there to the stadium. If there's anyone here tonight that does not struggle with pride, could you talk to me afterwards? And the reason it's in us is it's part of that, what they call the Adamic nature, the nature of Adam.

And how that pride, self-righteousness, it's really, I don't trust in God, and I'm right, and it's the way I want to do things, and it rises up inside of us, and that's why we have to push it down. That's actually one of the reasons we start and we have the 6 a.m. morning worship that's been going on three and a half years on Sundays is because it's kind of humbling to come here, and first you sit in the back and in the middle, and then you find your way to the altar. And it's that humbling, it's that brokenness.

You don't know how many times I've changed sermons on the altar or said, God, please help me with my heart, please help me with my attitude today. And one of the big struggles for me right now is, many of you know, because we have a national ministry, thousands and thousands of people follow this more than actually attend the church, tens of thousands on radio in different states and getting emails and requests and to travel and things like that. But this whole thing that we see what the government is trying to do, and we see the spikes in COVID and the variants and different things, and trying to navigate those waters while being gracious and loving, but at the end, understand, not caving in or capitulating to a government, godless government is trying to fear.

And so where do you find that balance? It's very difficult, because it's a real thing that's going on, a virus. We just prayed for someone who passed away from it. Doesn't go to the church, but we're going to do the memorial service for them.

And talking with the family last night just broke my heart, thinking about it a lot. So we don't want to ignore things, but we also, it's hard. And so you gravitate between proud and anger to loving and humble.

And I'm sure many of you are feeling that same thing. You don't know where exactly to draw that line. You want to share that post on Facebook, but you're like, not sure.

Not sure if that's going to send the right message. And you just get upset at some of our local city officials that every single post is about unvaccinated people, and they're causing all these problems, and people are causing the racial divide with skin color now. And apparently, if a certain skin color, you're a racist just because of your skin color.

Racism is a heart issue. It has nothing to do with a skin color. But you see that divide coming in.

You see the masks, and you see the vaccine issues. And again, I don't want to get on all these issues, but I think the pulpit should speak to these things. One of the things that was very frustrating, I haven't even gotten to the introduction yet.

So I'm just trying to be transparent about pride. But one of the things that was really difficult for me is I thought when this happened a year and a half ago, the churches are going to come out and be that voice of truth. And many pastors just kept going through their teaching in Leviticus.

Didn't talk about the nation is burning with rioting and different things, and all the forced racism and forced ulterior motives and agendas and false narratives. Nobody talks about those things because it's not really, you know, we shouldn't be going there. Stay in your wheelhouse, Shane.

That's the gospel. Well, the gospel affects every area of our lives. We don't live in a bubble, and then all these other things don't affect us.

They're actually affecting us at a very deep level. What they're trying to push in the school districts and teachers being fired for calling someone the wrong pronoun according to what they want to be called. It's just alarming.

But we have to take confidence in God. He's called you for such a time as this. And so the title of the message is The Deception of Pride.

And you can see the verse actually right there, The Deception of Pride. The pride of your heart has deceived you. And the Bible's pretty clear that there are a couple different ways you can be deceived.

One way is to know the word of God, but not do it. And I see that a lot in the church. People, boy, they can quote scripture, but they're not living it, and so they're living in deception.

And the power of God's word comes in the application, not in the head knowledge of it. And then another way we can be deceived is by hearing or following wrong voices, being tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men. And then another way is through this area of pride.

Pride deceives us. And in case you're not aware of the definition, I'm going to read it. But something interesting about pride is everyone knows you're infected with it, but you, the most prideful people I know, don't think they're prideful.

And those who are humble, that I would look at very as humble and gracious, they sing, Shane, help me pray for my pride this week. I'm like, what? Because see, they see it rising up, and they identify it, and they pull it, they abort the pride before it takes root. So the definition, which most of us know, it's an elevated view of oneself, your abilities or what you possess.

And it's presumptuous. The prideful person is presumptuous. What that means is I've already made up my mind.

I've already made up my mind. Don't confuse me with the facts. Arrogance.

And the biggest thing, without a shadow of a doubt, is they are indifferent to the needs of others. They are just indifferent to the needs of others because a humble person is gracious, and they're loving, they have compassion, they want to reach out and help because of that humility, but pride, that's where the word puffed up. You know, stiff-necked, God would say in the Old Testament.

Stiff-necked, nose is raised up, like walking around, who's that? Who's that peasant below me? And just, it's prideful, and don't you hate when you're around that kind of person that's really prideful? It's, and I remember when I was a district manager with 24 Hour Fitness in the corporate world, we would drive

down to Irvine. I might share this in my testimony, and these guys were making good money, you know, \$20,000, \$25,000, \$30,000 a month. And you would know it.

Back when Hummer was becoming popular and the Viper and all these, it's like, look at what I have, look at what I own, look at our, it's just the whole conversation. And when I came back to the Lord, I started to get sick in these conversations. That's why I couldn't stay there much longer, about a year, and I just had to leave because it's self-exaltation, it's putting down others, and it brags or boasts in what we have or what we do or what we've done.

And that's why I'm very careful, our leadership team is very careful here. Most people have no clue, and we want to share with no clue what God is doing through all of you serving through this church nationally, on a national level. It's amazing, the lives that are being changed.

The people that follow West Side Christian Fellowship, a family just moved to Texas, and they said, Shane, there's already people in this community watching the live stream and following the church and wanting to start something in Idaho and Tennessee and South Carolina and Florida, and people are just, it's amazing what God is doing. But when we boast, we boast in what He is doing, because we know without that, it is nothing. And the humbler you become, the more God will use you.

Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, and then in due time, He will exalt you. And I remember, I think I shared this, but some of you are new. When I came back to Lord, I'm on fire for God, I feel this call to preach, and I'm like, okay, you know, we're gonna fill stadiums.

And then my first speaking engagement was to nine people at Grace Resource Center in the homeless shelter, trying to help them with nutrition and things. And then I would go to churches, remote churches, all over Southern, just like Yucca Valley. I had no idea where that was, and North Edwards, and Tachepee, and faithful in these little things of 12, 15, 20 people, faithfulness.

And God began to use that to humble you. The more humbled you are, the more He will use you. And I remember too, many of you know, when I went to visit, I went to Texas and was able to meet Jack Graham, PowerPoint, and go to his church, and he pulled me up in front of the entire congregation, and I was just shocked, because I didn't expect this, I didn't know it, but God was just telling me, hey, this is, people will identify you, you don't need to identify you.

And he did that, and he said, you've gotta go listen to this church in California, and how God has moved, but it just, and then he uses the humility to keep us humble, and then I get home, and my wife says, take out the trash and change the diaper. You gotta watch these kids. You got a job to do here, and so God will keep you humble as well, and when pride starts to rise up, God wants you to stay humble.

Vance Havner said this, I think in the 1950s, popularity has slain more prophets of God than persecution ever did. Popularity has slain more prophets of God than persecution ever did. Staying humble.

The great strength of the Christian faith is found in her meekness. Meekness, not weakness. Weakness is the absence of strength.

Meekness is strength under control. You have tremendous strength, and it's under, but it's under control. So let's talk about the scripture for a minute.

Obadiah 1.3. Let me tell you about Obadiah. I like Obadiah. It's the shortest book in the Old Testament, and some people date it around 846, I think, B.C. I think it's closer to probably 500, because he talks about the fall of Jerusalem and different things, but the main point is, he is writing not to the children of Israel.

He's writing to the Edomites. They are descendants of Esau. You remember Esau sold his birthright, and God said, I'm gonna make you a nation, but you're going to be at odds with your brother.

And he's writing to the Edomites, and his name means worshiper of Yahweh. A worshiper, wouldn't that be a cool name? You look up your name, I'm a worshiper of Yahweh. A worshiper of God.

And so Obadiah is writing to the Edomites. The picture is they are kind of rebuking the children of Israel because they're being judged, and look at us, and nobody's got us. We're safe, we're secure, and be careful.

As soon as you start, that's what Jesus, I believe, when he meant, when he said, be careful the measure you use against someone else, that's going to be used against you when you judge them without the right heart. And so they're mocking the children of Israel, and God said, through the prophet Obadiah, the pride of your heart has deceived you. The pride of your heart has deceived you.

You who live in the clefts of the rock and you make your home in the heights, you say to yourself, who can bring me down to the ground? Who can bring me down to the ground? Now, to us, that might not make any sense. Who wants to live in the cleft of the rocks and up on top of a high hill? Well, in this time and day, you definitely did, because you could conquer an enemy coming up at you. If they're climbing the rocks, you just start throwing rocks down at them, or boiling water.

It was so easy to defend something from high up, and even in the army or military, they will tell you to defend certain hills. This is a hill on which to die. Fighting looking down is much easier than trying to go at your enemy going up.

So they are secure, they're in the clefts of the rock where the eagles fly, he would go on to say. Who can harm us? Who can defeat us? We are the Edomites, we are strong. Uh-oh, not a good spot to be.

God says, I will bring you down. So the pride of your heart has deceived you. So here's how it works.

The Edomites are protected, they're elevated, things are going well. Maybe in our time, financially good. Things have been going good, success has been going good.

And where we have to be careful, this is more not maybe for a lot of our practical application but do you see a lot of Christian leaders out there in social media that are not going in a good direction? Embracing theology and things like that. It's just not healthy, it's not good. The pride of their heart is deceiving them.

They'll have, let's say, a thousand comments, a thousand likes, supporting them. And they say, oh, I must be right then. I must be going in a good direction.

But the pride of their heart has deceived them. We don't gauge it off of that. And so we gauge finances are going good, things are going good, even pastors.

Let's say as a church is growing and exploding, they could say, I must be doing everything right. Pride deceives you as things take off and they become comfortable in what is going on around them. That's one of the things about money, we have to be careful, is that as God blesses people and it comes in, that pride

begins to come in to your heart.

And throughout ancient Israel's history, it was always blessings, abundance, turned into apathy, turned into starting to reject God and started to compromise. But God keeps them broken and humble and low to the ground and here comes some locusts devouring the crop, now they begin to pray. Here comes the Babylonians, now we begin to pray.

Here comes the Assyrians, now we begin to pray. And so God keeps them low often to keep them in a spot of desperation to Him. So the encouraging thing to us today is stay low so God doesn't bring you low.

Stay humble no matter what comes your way. And the only way to do that is to stay in God's word and God's word will humble you. Begin to pray, begin to fast, begin to seek Him, begin to treat others with meekness and gentleness.

Go on in outreaches, go to the homeless outreach that we have and you start to minister to those people. You stay broken, you stay pliable, you stay usable. And there is an oppression sometimes with pastors, like if I'll go to something like that or go to somewhere, like, oh, I didn't expect you to see you here.

What do you expect me, just be sitting in a study all day long? And that's all I do, I don't go out. And you have to stay humble and help people and broken. And that takes you to a deep level of compassion when you reach out to other people.

It's incredible how pride will come in and begin to deceive you. It actually gives you a false sense of protection. That's what these people had, the Edomites, a false sense of protection.

I'm reminded often of listening to the wrong voice by this story. In 2017, actually two bungee jumping staffers were found guilty of manslaughter. Why is that? Because a teenager jumped to her death because of their broken English.

They said, no jump. She thought they said, now jump. Now jump, now jump.

No, no jump. The wrong voice. Be careful what voice you're listening to.

You need a lot less media and a lot more the word of God. Young adults, if you're watching TikTok and hanging out on Instagram all day long, you will not hear the right voice. You've got to remove a lot of those distractions from your life and limit that time.

And then ironically, as I was looking for this story just to make sure I quoted it right, this just happened again this month. Things went wrong after the operators signaled to someone ahead of the jumper to take the plunge. But thinking that the cue was meant for her, the young lawyer leaped off the bridge without an attachment safety cord and fell 164 feet this month.

I think it was in a different country. The wrong voice. The wrong voice.

You have competing voices. The voice of the flesh, the voice of the world, the voice of the enemy planning fiery darts. Staying grounded in God's word is the only true voice.

It's the only sure foundation. That's why I'm actually getting very excited. I've never been this excited to do a study before as far as when I think of the long-term fruit that is going to happen from going through the word of God beginning September 12th.

Every Sunday, going through the word of God as an overview. What does Genesis teach? What are the practical applications? What is this thing that's going on in our nation with critical race theory? How does that come in? How does the LGBTQ agenda, what's going on with transgenderism and hitting all the issues according to God's word? Because that's the safety net. That's the grounding.

That's the foundation of truth. Jesus never backed away from the truth. He always spoke the truth in love.

And that's truly how you help people. And so we have this idea of pride gives you a false sense of protection. Pride will kill your marriage.

It will harm parenting. And it will fracture relationships. I've shared this before.

Me and my wife chuckle now. But we thought we were, I mean, marriage was going to be so easy. I mean, we've just been spending years with the Lord, single, humble, loving God, worshiping together.

Oh man, we are so humble. And then you move in together. Oh, I didn't realize how prideful I was.

Because what happens when you're single, you're also set in your ways. You know, this is how I do things. And so it takes, God takes two broken people.

But that's interesting how the two shall become one flesh. And I think now looking back, marriage is one of the most wonderful gifts God has given us for iron sharpening iron. You can't get here what you can get in a marriage where you're being fine-tuned for God's kingdom.

I see a lot of you laughing. So I guess that's a good point. Another point on that is to stick with it if you can.

We encourage people to fight for their marriage and contend for it. There's too much at stake. So let's talk about a few ways that pride can deceive.

The deception of pride. It results in painful circumstances and can result in physical injuries. Second Chronicles 26, 16.

And he's talking about the king here. But when he was strong in his heart. Have you ever been there? Maybe you're there this morning.

Strong in your heart. And your heart is lifted up. You're arrogant.

But it was to his destruction. What he did, he transgressed against the Lord, his God. And he entered the temple of the Lord.

And he burned incense on the altar of incense. Now this is a no, no, no, no, no. Big time in the Old Testament.

God gave prophets certain goals. Or goals, but certain callings. A priest was set apart.

The Levitical priesthood was set apart with the holy items. And then the king was set apart to do something else. So now the king in his pride, in his arrogance.

This conquering king does what only the priests are allowed to do. He takes the incense and he burns it in the temple. And God said because the pride of your heart has lifted you up.

You will become leprous. All the days of his life. And there are so many examples.

I could have just stayed on this point. Pride will lead to painful circumstances. How many of us can say amen? Amen.

It hurts. It hurts. And physical injuries.

Physical injuries. I just thought of this. My son's not here, right? He's up in the balcony.

Okay. He might be okay with this. But he was telling me how they're going to beat this football team.

Because they're playing the worst football team. We're going to beat them. We're going to crush them.

I said be careful. And a quote of pride. And guess what happened? Yep, you know.

The reverse happened. And so God will use humbling things in our lives. Painful things.

It leads to quarrels. How many fights are going on right now in your home because of pride? It leads to quarrels. Me and Pastor Abram just joked this morning, but it's true.

That's why we take separate cars from our spouses. We get here a little early. They come late.

And here come the kids walking in, crying, throwing a fit. And it's like, you know, oh, it's easy to take a separate car early in the morning. But often pride leads to quarrels in our marriage, with our children.

And so if God has gifted you with kids or grandkids, steer them in the right direction. Shepherd the heart of your child. Teach them how important humility is.

It's okay to be proud in what God has done. Proud in the gifts that God has given you for his glory. But pride will lead to fighting.

Proverbs 13.10. By pride comes nothing but strife. By pride comes nothing but arguments. And I looked back on the life of this church, 10 years now, or going on 11 years in September.

I mean, it's like 95% of the strife over the last 10 years has been because of pride. 95%. You know, feelings get hurt.

Anybody get hurt feelings? What at the core of hurt feelings is pride. Yep. And so my feelings have been hurt probably more than all of you put together from this church.

So I can relate. I mean, every day something's going on. In a living church, a vibrant church, where God is moving, the enemy is also moving.

And people say, oh, it must be so easy to lead a church like that that's growing and spirit-filled. I'm like, well, it's spirit-filled. It's also demon-filled.

And so it's a best thing we've ever done in our life. Pastor Abram will attest to that. My wife, his wife, I'm sure.

But it's also one of the most difficult, because where God is genuinely moving and healing a marriage, the devil's tearing this one down. Where ministries are growing, here comes pride. Here comes pride.

Where a ministry's growing, and they don't want to be maybe a part of the church necessarily. They want to do their own thing. Well, I want to be on the worship team, and I want to do my own thing.

And now here comes pride, and pride will fill my heart. Right? Because I'll get defensive. Oh, no, no, sir.

And then here comes pride. Here comes strife. Here comes quarrel.

So one of our goals is to always encourage people in each other and build us up and remind all of us, listen, stick with it. This is a work in progress. This is how we grow.

This is how we become better, not bitter. This is how we become stronger and united by humbling ourselves and going to people and saying, hey, listen, let me encourage you, too, at this service. I don't know if I'll remember this at the next service.

But if there's any issues with people at the church, go to them and just say, hey, I love you. I don't want the enemy to have this root of bitterness. Because that's what it is, pride, right? I'm not going to them.

I'm not going to work that out. I don't have to do that. It's all pride.

You look at how deceptive pride is, and it's very dangerous. It leads to fighting. It leads to quarrels.

It leads to strife. I mean, I can stay there a while if you guys want. Next point, huh? It leads to humiliating situations and financial loss.

Daniel 5.20, but when his heart was lifted up, who's he talking about again? The king there. And his spirit was hardened in pride. And that's what happens.

Do you ever hear the word hard heart? Well, it's hardened by pride. And it's interesting. When you preach the word of God, it's interesting for me to see this.

Some hearts are broken and contrite, and they begin to weep, and they turn back to God. Other hearts get harder. And the Puritans used to say the same sun that melts the wax hardens the clay.

And that's where we have to really remove pride from our heart. So Daniel says he was removed from his kingly throne, and God took away his glory because of his pride. Lift it up.

Trust me, I am well aware, well aware that the enemy can use pride to really hurt this church. I am fully aware that if I start to become prideful and lift it up, that God will begin to remove his anointing, remove his covering, his shelter, and what he is doing from this church. The higher you elevate yourself, the more God will bring you down lower.

And it's that humility that is so important. And kids have a way of reminding you how humble you need to be, right? Mine will tell me, Dad, that's pretty prideful. Well, no, let me explain it.

Let me explain it. Don't go there just yet. But it's that growing.

And we do have a pretty good, and you should do this maybe in your own family, but at our church with the office staff, with the core team, I will let them know. Now, sometimes people might be a little nervous, but I will say, listen, if you see something, if I'm doing something, you have permission to let me know how that's coming across. I'm learning, too.

I'm growing, too. And then see, through that, God will begin to move powerfully because you stay. We shouldn't think so highly of ourselves than we should.

Just because, for example, in preaching, God gives a person the gifting. It's God's gifting. It's God's anointing.

And that person is just an empty vessel who God uses to promote the cross and the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ. There should actually be nothing we boast in other than what God has done in our lives. And it hurts others and brings shame.

Fathers and mothers, one of the worst things you can do, especially when your kids are little, is remain prideful because it will hurt them. It brings shame to the family. Proverbs 29-23, a man's pride will bring him low, but the humble in spirit will retain honor.

He's contrasting there. Being humble, there's honor, but being prideful, it will cost you. We see it how often in the news.

All these people just falling left and right. Secular media, I mean, just all these high-profile figures. Jeffrey Epstein thought he had it well.

How many other people? High-profile mayors and governors and so many people. Pride will eventually bring them low. The sin will find you out.

Proverbs 11-2, when pride comes, then comes shame. But with the humble, there is wisdom. Now, this one is interesting.

Pride prevents a mighty downpour of God's spirit. Did you know that? If you want God to do more in your heart, more in your life, more in your family, you want to be closer to God, pride will prevent that from happening. Because to receive a mighty downpour of God's spirit, to be filled with God's spirit, it costs you.

And it can't be on your terms. It's on God's terms. God says, give me everything and I will fill you.

God says, begin to praise and worship me. Come with a broken spirit and I will honor that. So Isaiah 57, for thus says the one who is high and lifted up, who habits eternity, whose name is holy.

I dwell in the high and holy place and also with, what does it say up there? Kim, who has a prideful and arrogant spirit. I mean, this scripture is so profound that God says, my name is holy. I live in a high and holy place.

I am above eternity. I sit above the circle of the earth. I am the God of the universe.

I am that I am. I am holy and no one can dwell with me except those who have a contrite and lowly spirit. And what will I do? I will revive the spirit of the lowly and I will revive the heart of the contrite one.

God says, give me brokenness, give me humility, give me full surrender. And that's a person I can use. I can speak boldly to that person.

I can use that person because they are humble. They are pliable. They are teachable.

The humble I will not turn away, God says. He says, and the humble he teaches. I teach the humble.

And you can also see, I thought of that this week, the stirring of the spirit. That's what's going on here. In case you're wondering what's going on at West Side Christian Fellowship, God is stirring the people.

Unlike anything I've seen before, it's a very unique atmosphere. Most people realize that. They either love it or they hate it.

They're either coming back or they're never coming back. It all depends a lot on the work of the spirit. So the stirring of God's spirit among the humble is not well received by the prideful.

Isn't it interesting? The more you press in to God, the more you'll see who's truly on fire for him. With prayer meetings and worship nights and worship mornings and extended worship. Uh-oh, we might have emotional worship.

Oh, dear goodness. Don't get too emotional because I'm comfortable in my box. I don't want to get too into God.

And prideful people are opposed to personal and corporate spiritual awakenings. I would have to say that this is, and a lot of times I don't say things I don't want to, but it's so applicable and it does help people, but sometimes it offends people as well. But this point right here, over the years, people who have left the church, a lot of times it's because of this point.

God is moving too deeply and too profound. Things are too emotional, too many worship mornings, too many prayer meetings, too much of God almost. They won't say that.

But when God is stirring and God is moving and people are being broken and humbled, pride, pride, what is pride saying? They have what I don't have. They have passion for God that I don't have. Instead of admitting it and giving it to God, they get prideful and they put down the church or they put down the ministry or they put down worship.

It is one of the big obstacles in our nation right now, the worship wars. I'm sure you've heard them. I don't know if you have.

The worship wars, and usually it's often over emotional, contemporary or hymns. It's emotional worship. If you go past five minutes singing a song, you're brainwashing the people.

If you repeat a certain thing, holy, holy, holy is our God, beautiful is your name, God, you are worthy of it all. Don't go past a minute and a half because now you're, don't tell people to come to the altar. Now you're pushing against their will.

No, the problem is, sir, you've got a prideful and arrogant heart and you need to be broken of that. Listen, I've seen it long enough. I've seen it long.

I've seen how these people live their lives. I've seen the pride and the arrogance. And Larry Stock still had an article out a while back on a judgmental spirit.

Here is a couple indications of a judgmental spirit. When we treat suspicious, things that are suspicious or rumors as facts. When something is suspicious or rumored and we treat that as a fact because it lines up with my false narrative.

That's what you're seeing in the media out there today. Fake news is being called real news. And things that are real and true are now being called fake news.

And Facebook is actually deciding what is fake and real. And the Biden administration recently said that they are going to let Facebook know what they deem to be inaccurate information. Oh, isn't that good to know? So when something is a rumor or suspicious, if it challenges us or doesn't fit our narrative, we will begin to put it down or we'll begin to embrace it.

We don't look for the facts when we're judgmental as long as it lines up with my prideful heart. Number two, when we presume to know the motives of people's actions. This is huge.

We begin to judge people because we presume we know what their actions are. We hear a tail bearer. Somebody tells me some nuggets of, you know, oh, wow.

Now I must assume that's true. No, not necessarily. Wait till you hear the other side.

You know how many times I've been embarrassed after I heard the other side? Because people tell you what they want to tell you to have you to maybe sway you in a certain direction. And hearing both sides is vitally important. And we are quick.

Number three, we are quick to detect minor faults in others while being blind to our own sins. That is a prideful person to a T. Because prideful people are judgmental. They're judging certain things.

They're judging certain things. Maybe in their spouse and their kids and others in the church. They're judgmental.

But they fail to look at the pride in their own hearts. When we judge about things that are clearly spelled out in, I'm sorry, number four. When we judge about things that are not clearly spelled out in scripture.

And I love when people come to me. You can tell the prideful heart. Why are we doing that? Why do you do that? That's not in scripture.

If it's according to God's word, it's according to his character, there's fruit. God gives some leeway there. But they'll be very dogmatic on certain things that maybe they themselves don't quite understand.

And we judge things that are not clearly spelled out in scripture. Maybe doing baptisms a certain way. Doing communion a certain way.

Doing things, people judge me because I don't wear a suit and tie. I don't know that's a big deal. Do you know that's a big deal in some circles? Pastor's not in a suit and tie.

Oh, really? And so we have these preconceived notions about certain things. And that's not clearly spelled out in scripture. Granted, I think you should look presentable and you want to represent Jesus Christ in a good way.

I understand that. Probably not a good idea to come up in shorts and a Bermuda shirt and flip flops. I'd like to sometimes, but it's not a bad idea.

See, there's scripture. There's things there. And even maybe with worship, some people don't like how we worship or the style.

Okay, but it's not clearly spelled out in scripture. There's preference comes into role. And prideful people will make their preference your preference.

Their preference will become your preference. And that's why I try to be careful on all the information out there. What's going on with the COVID and different things.

Because I don't want to make my standard your standard. I don't want to push on you how I feel or what I think is right. Even though we have opinions and different things.

So pride can say I'm right, but I've been wrong before. Many times. And so have you.

No one has. And people don't understand why I say this. A couple people.

Prideful hearts don't understand why I say this, but you will. No one has 100% perfect theology. Correct.

I mean on the non-essentials. Some people believe in the rapture. Some don't.

All millennial. Post-millennial. Pre-millennial.

Post-wrath. Mid-tribulation. Post-tribulation.

The second coming. Are they both two events? Or what's going to happen here? Or the antichrist? Is that for us the mark of the beast? The 666? It's the mark of man? Is it going to be literally on our forehead? And how should we baptize? And we don't have perfect theology. You've got great men of God debating certain aspects.

And they're not quite on the same page. On the non-essentials. The non-essentials.

The essentials we have to be right on the money. But those with prideful hearts make their belief on a non-essential. The belief and the standard that you all must follow.

Churches have divided over these issues. For example, those who don't believe in the gifts of the power of the Holy Spirit. Often because they've never experienced them.

If you've experienced a mighty move of God. It's going to be hard to convince you that that doesn't happen anymore today. Because your experience lines up with scripture.

But because they've never experienced it. And they take scripture out of context to show that it no longer happens. That prideful position becomes their standard by which they gauge others.

And that's why you'll hear ministries putting down other ministries. And this program putting down this other program on the non-essentials. To me it's embarrassing.

You can have strong opinions and you can feel a certain way. But to make your belief the standard by which you judge others. Really shows the hardness of a heart.

Number five. We ignore everything favorable about a person. And we fixate only on the unfavorable.

That's a prideful, judgmental heart. Because we can all find faults. Can't we? Let me just hang out with you for a day and I can find some.

And you can find some. We can always find faults. Number six.

When we spread our wrong conclusions to others. That's a judgmental, prideful heart. That's what the definition of a tell-bearer is.

There's a difference between gossip. Gossip is something that's true. And you're telling someone that doesn't need to know.

But a tell-bearer is a definition of spreading something that is false. And making it true. And you're spreading that false information.

That's what social media is right now I believe. Big tell-bearer in many areas. They are spreading wrong conclusions to others.

And that is a tell-bearer. And then I added this one. This isn't from the article from Larry Stockdale.

But I added this one. A judgmental heart, a judgmental spirit. If you have this, you will hold on to offenses.

So if you're offended, if you're upset. Prideful people hold on to that. Humble people release it.

Because they don't want to be held by that offense. And do you know how many people even in the church walk around month after month holding in offenses? They've been offended. That's why Jesus said don't even come and worship if you have something against your brother.

First go and fix that. And then come and worship. Also Matthew 28 says go and if your brother is offended, you go to them.

Don't hold in that offense. But prideful people, prideful people hold that in. And I know there's so many people over the years I've seen that a lot of times, a lot of reasons they don't come to church is they're holding in an offense.

Or they don't want to serve in a ministry. It's because they're holding in an offense. Now I'm not preaching at you.

I could be sitting in the pew right now because I can hold in offenses too. Again, we are offended weekly in leadership. You just don't have to, you're offended.

Did you hear what such and such said? Did you? Did you? And it's like just weekly offenses. But we also know that we go to people and clarify and talk to them. And nine times out of ten that really fixes it.

Because it's humbling to go and do that. So many of you maybe now are in a position of saying okay this is something I need to work on. If that's you that's good.

That means I accomplished my goal today. But here's how you fix it. Here's how you break free of deception.

The deception of pride. Number one, this is going to be the hardest. Are you ready? Are you sure? Acknowledge that pride has filled your heart.

It's saying I'm prideful in this area. I need to work on this. Pride is coming into my heart.

I'm filled with pride. You acknowledge it. And then as a result number two you make restitution and you apologize if warranted.

See it's one thing. Here's what a prideful person will do. They'll acknowledge it in their heart but they don't do anything about it.

Yeah I can see I'm prideful but I'm going to leave it there. One more step. Just one more little step.

Humble yourself and go to the person and apologize or make restitution. And spouses you can say you know what I do need to work on that. I need to humble myself.

I need to work on that. And then number three you stay in a position of humility. You stay in that position of humility.

You stay in that position of brokenness. Tell your kids hey if you ever see anything in this in me let me know. If you see let me know.

And really mean it. Stay in that position of humility. Stay in God's word.

Come to morning worship or worship nights or come to church more often and get involved and stay humble in that position of humility because pride also flourishes and grows when we are alone and disconnected from the body. We don't allow iron to sharpen iron. And I know growing up in the church when me and my wife got married we would go to church once a month because I didn't like my iron sharpened by other people.

And I remember this one guy I'm not going to say his name because he's still out there and he was prideful and so he'd say Shane we haven't seen you in three weeks. Well thank you for telling me that. I'm not coming again for four more weeks because I don't want to hear you tell me.

I don't want to hear you tell me why I'm not here. And this is hard for me too. I'll reach out to people all the time.

Pastor Abraham will tell you this. I'm always reaching out to people weekly all the time. And I'm often asking hey where have you been? I haven't seen you in a while.

And nine out of ten times people love it. But there's that one person that church is controlling. They're asking where I was.

I don't like that. So it's hard. I don't know who that person is.

So I just throw it out there. But the nine out of ten usually like that. Thank you so much for thinking of us.

We're coming back. Thank you. And I've seen people come back just from that reaching out and communicating.

But it's that prideful heart and staying in that position of humility and taking it to the next step. And something I didn't talk a lot about last week when I talked about prayer and fasting was this aspect of fasting. Did you know that fasting in the Bible is actually more about humility than anything else? There's a book out there.

It's very short. All the fasts in the Bible. I mean dozens and dozens by J. Thomas.

It just came out this year. He said the Israelites fasted at Bethel for victory. Hannah fasted to conceive a child.

The Israelites fasted at Mizpah for repentance. David fasted for the life of his child. Elijah fasted to commune with God at Mount Horeb.

Ahab fasted for repentance. Ezra proclaimed a fast at Ahab for repentance. Nehemiah fasted in repentance for his people.

Daniel fasted in repentance for his people. They humbled themselves and fasted. And Joel consecrated a fast.

Call the sacred assembly. Call out to God and pray and pray and pray. See some things like I taught last week.

Some things come out by prayer and fasting only. Sometimes you got to get desperate for God. And I've given this example before and I'm going to do it again.

Some of you know. You ready? This works sometimes. This works sometimes.

This is just prayer by itself without fasting. This works sometimes. They can put up little nails outside.

They can do some things around the house. This works sometimes. But sometimes.

Sometimes. Sometimes you got to bring out. See this.

This isn't going to do anything when I have to break some concrete out back. You might as well throw this in the trash. But sometimes you got to go to war.

Sometimes you got to go to battle for your family. This kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting. Sometimes you got to humble yourself.

This might get the pride out of some people. But some people I know need to be hit on the head with a sledgehammer. And get serious about the work of God.

You can do it with a little 4-ounce hammer. But sometimes you need a 25-pound hammer to do the damage. And knock pride out of you.

And remove it from your heart. Remove it from your marriage. Get on your face and fast before God.

And crush it out of your heart. And if you don't know who you are who need this. Just come and ask me because I know who you are.

I see some of you here this morning. That need to be hit by the hammer of God. Hear the call of God.

Saying get this out of your heart. Get this out of your life. Pride is deceiving you.

You might even be led astray because of the pride of your heart. Your marriage is being hurt because of the pride of your heart. If you're always blaming your spouse.

You might need to bring it out sometime. And say I need to get serious with God. I need to break this out of my heart.

The pride of my heart is deceiving me. The truth is most sin comes from the flesh. Right? The works of the flesh.

And that's why people will say or even the Bible talks about. Have you heard this phrase before? Oh, they're just in the flesh. They're just in the flesh.

And that often is tied with pride. And fasting weakens the flesh. So the very thing that is designed to destroy you.

Is weakened by fasting and prayer. Your flesh. What does your flesh say? Or at least mine.

Let me tell you what my flesh says. Feed me. So I can destroy you.

More. More. More.

More. Feed me. So I can destroy you.

And this is a hard topic for me. Because you know struggling most of my life with gluttony. And that's why I have to remain very disciplined.

And wanting to help people in this area. But also not wanting to offend. In our nation the healthcare crisis.

Is because of gluttony. Health related diseases are skyrocketing. Because of non-discipline in this area.

We have to learn to discipline our flesh. The flesh doesn't discipline us. And that's what's happening.

And if we could get back to that. And I know just giving up is extremely hard. The reason is because we're addicted to so many things.

I mean just try in one day to get off coffee, sugar, nicotine, sodium. And you'll be a monster. It's called withdraws.

But you can change your diet. You can eat like Daniel. You can start just removing the cravings of the flesh.

And begin to. It's a fasting lifestyle. People think well I'm going to fast for a week.

And then I'm just going to live like hell and do whatever I want. No you missed the whole point. Jesus taught it's a fasted lifestyle.

When I am gone my disciples will fast. When you pray. When you give.

It's a lifestyle of denying the flesh. Paul says when I discipline my body I bring it into subjection. Unless when I preach to others I myself should become disqualified.

We have to get that back into Christianity. It is a life of discipline. You're not going to hear this turning on the radio or the TV or the big name preachers.

They're not going to tell you that. Churches are going to serve you coffee and donuts and all this kind of stuff all the time. And sometimes there's a place for that.

But overall we need to be a disciplined lifestyle. See all the things that were so important to the early church. Something called holiness.

Oh don't talk about that anymore. It's too expensive. You're judgmental.

Yep. You talk about holiness you're judgmental. Don't tell people how to live.

One of the, it's in the news and I actually talked to a very well known Christian. I'm not going to say I didn't get permission. He called me.

We talked for about 45 minutes. And he's actually friends of the president. Friends of past presidents.

Knows so many Christians. But he talked about the event down in LA with Justin Bieber. And just the lack of morality that was there.

And the pastor that was on stage, Judah Smith. Never wanting to talk about repentance. Never wanted to talk about difficult things.

Jesus we love you but not morality. See those things are not good. But the church in wanting to be popular and wanting to be liked.

We've dumbed down the gospel. The Bible never says make it taste good. Ever wonder why broccoli doesn't taste good? Because it's good for you.

Anything that tastes good is good for the flesh. So when pastors or leaders tell us what we want to hear. And not what we need to hear.

That's not a sign of a good pastor. That's a sign of a motivational speaker. And Paul said be careful.

And this is my concern with the last days. That in the last days. They will be drawn away.

They will be drawn away to people. To leaders who will tell them what they want to hear. And not what they need to hear.

It's such an important topic. Because the greatest deception of all time that's happening right now. Is people saying I don't need God.

I don't need God. Isn't that the biggest deception? I mean most of you in this room I know. And watching probably don't need to hear this.

But there are some people out there that do. And some maybe here that need to hear this. The greatest deception is that you don't need God.

That basically says I am God. I don't want there to be a God. And the pride of your heart is deceiving you.

Because you can't take your next breath without the hand of God. That some vapors that are out there will kill you within seconds. A tear in your artery right now.

And you won't make it to the parking lot. Everything just is the brevity of life. And we should cry out and say God we need you.

You are our only hope. We are desperate for you. And don't let the pride of your heart deceive you.

Proverbs 16.18 says pride goes before destruction. Pride goes before destruction. And a haughty spirit before a fall.

Crush your pride this morning. Call out to God no matter what situation you're in. And let him, you would be amazed at what God does with humility.

Christian you here this morning. Cry out to God and say I've been prideful. I've been arrogant.

I've been so theologically sound that I've become puffed up. Knowledge has puffed me up. And I think too highly of myself than I should.

Humble yourself this morning. And if you don't know God truly is God. The reason many people deny him is because they don't want there to be a God.

They want to do what they want, when they want, to who they want, whenever they want. They don't want a God that requires accountability and responsibility and morality. If the pride of your heart has been deceiving you.

And you don't truly know. You truly don't know the real true and living God. You've never confessed your sin.

You've never repented and believed in Jesus Christ to save you and to set you free. Do you know how many people I see as the months go by and say that person has never been to the prayer room. I don't think I'll ever.

And it's always often that pride. I don't need anyone to pray for me. I don't need God.

Is pride deceiving you? Because it needs to end this morning. God doesn't give us wake up calls every day for the rest of our life. That voice of the Holy Spirit sometimes gets quieter.

It gets quieter. It gets quieter.

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