

# The Sin of Self Advancement

by Shane Idleman

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*This sermon delves into the destructive nature of pride, highlighting how it is often the root cause of various issues like conflicts, arrogance, and rebellion. It emphasizes the need for humility, repentance, and seeking God's guidance to overcome pride. The speaker draws insights from biblical stories like Nimrod and the Tower of Babel to illustrate the consequences of pride and the importance of surrendering to God's will.*

**Scripture:** Isaiah 22:12, Deuteronomy 29:19, Philippians 2:3, 1 Peter 5:5

**Topics:** "Destructive Nature of Pride", "Importance of Humility"

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## Description

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## Transcript

And if any of you heard the message I gave in Texas, I said this there as well, of all the pain and problems I have seen, of all the addictions and lusts that have taken people down, of all the angry homes and broken families I have witnessed, there is always one culprit, one criminal. At the core of that, it's pride, pride, pride. At the root of those things often is pride, pride in the heart.

Most marriage conflicts, most conflicts with others, or problems we're having in life, or at our job. Anybody have problems at the workplace, in the workforce, problems at church, there's often pride is at the root of that. It is deadly, it is damning, it is fatal, it is disastrous.

And there's a lot of quotes that I want to share with you this morning that were very impactful on this topic. One of the quotes, I think it was by an unknown author, there never was a man so empty as the man full of himself. You might be able to tweet that one.

There was never a man so empty as the man full of himself. Anger is fueled by pride. Addiction is strengthened by pride.

And problems are magnified by pride. Now, most of us know what that means, but I'm going to walk through a little bit of what that means from Genesis. We find ourselves in Genesis chapter 10 and Genesis

chapter 11.

If you're new to the church, you can get caught up real quick. Go back and read Genesis 1 through 11 and you're caught up. I'm going through the entire Bible probably over the next few years to get through this wonderful book that God has given us.

Genesis 10, Cush begot Nimrod. Side note, I was going to title this sermon, Don't Be a Nimrod. Well, I don't know if that's appropriate.

Cush begot Nimrod, so his son, he began to be mighty on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord. That's why it was said of him, like Nimrod, the mighty hunter before the Lord.

And the beginning of his kingdom was at Babel. And then from that land, he went to Assyria and he built Nineveh. Most of us know Nineveh is not a good place.

It was the Assyrian capital. But that was, this is many, many hundreds of years, obviously before, I don't know exactly how many years. And this person, Nimrod, some people say it was possibly a individual, I mean, a group of people, but I believe it reads as if it were an individual.

Could have been a giant. Did you know there were giants in the land in those days? It's kind of hard to fathom, but the Bible is clear that Goliath's height and giants in the land, when they went to spy the land, it said they were full of giants. And, you know, we don't know exactly what that meant.

I mean, I've seen some archaeological discoveries. I don't know if it's been, they've been doctored or not though. And, you know, you kind of wonder, but the Bible is clear that there were giants in those days, men, probably like Sheck, the basketball player.

And so they believe that possibly giants came from this, from, he was a giant because they came from the line of Ham, Nimrod's grandfather. But the main thing that really stands out is Nimrod is often thought to be a rebel against the Lord. Pride and rebellion.

Pride and rebellion. And then the famous story, we go right into the Tower of Babel, chapter 11. Now the whole earth had one language and one speech.

The whole earth, remember, if we go back, God created Adam and Eve, the sin, the fall, the ark, the flood, and then Noah comes out. I talked about addiction. Those of you struggling with addiction, go back about a month and watch those two messages.

And then now we find ourselves in this spot of biblical history. And the whole earth was one language and one speech. I was reminded that this whole idea of racism is not biblical.

There was one race, the human race, in God's eyes. Now, of course, there's different ethnicities and different things, but there was only one language, one race, as God designed it. And it came to pass as they journeyed from the east that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and they dwelt there.

Then they said to one another, come, let us make bricks and bake them thoroughly. They had brick for stone and they had asphalt for mortar. So they would allow the water with the clay there in that area, that region, they would kind of form it into bricks.

And as it sits out in the sun, what happens? It gets harder. And I was reminded the first service of the famous quote from the Puritans. They say the same sun that melts the wax also hardens the clay.

And we see that a lot here, the same Word of God. I'm preaching to the same group of people. Some of it melts like wax.

Others, hard as stone. What happened? I didn't preach differently to this side, the stone side. Wait, Brian, Kathleen, you better switch it.

This is a clay side, the wax side, but I didn't preach differently. Same Word of God, same message. And people get hardened and their hearts become hard at it.

Others become pliable, usable, flexible, teachable, humble. Humility is an asset. And that's why it says they had brick for stones and they had asphalt for mortar.

And then Genesis 11, four, and they said, come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower whose top is in the heavens. Let us make a name for ourselves. Lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.

And so they wanted to make a name for themselves. And that's really what pride is. It's self-focused, self-assertive, self-promoted.

It's really about self, pleasing self, catering to self, promoting self, protecting self. And pride leads to foolish decisions. They were going to build to heaven? Are you kidding me? How many of us are in pickles because of pride or have been in situations because of, it leads to foolish decisions.

Oh yeah, well, I'm going to show them where we go spend money we shouldn't. We buy a house that's maybe too expensive or vehicle, or we do things in haste, or anybody ever quit their job because of pride? I did that just over the hill 20 years ago. I was a heavy equipment operator for a water district.

And it was a not a good group of guys. And I just came back to the Lord. I'm on fire for God.

And it's a mess. And I just got off the equipment. I cussed this guy out.

I'm just telling you. I know you can't relate. And so I'm done.

I'm done. I'm out of here. You guys can leave it at that.

And so I went home and about a half hour later, I had to humble myself, go back and apologize and finish the job. And we react instead of respond. We get upset.

And that pride causes us to lash out. Do you know a lot of marriage issues are because of pride? Men don't like to be challenged or questioned. Women get prideful too.

And when that, when those two hit, it's explosive. You ever heard doors slam? Come on, the 9am, the 7am was a little more honest. The real spiritual service will be the 11 o'clock.

They'll, they'll shoot me straight. But remember, God's greatest men and women, and they were often servants. They were shepherds.

They were carpenters. It was, it was that, it's that lowly position that keeps us humble. And not that God won't exalt and promote people because he will.

I'm going to talk about that in a minute, but it's the, the, the sin of self advancement puffed by pride. We want to advance self and push self. And you have to fight against that because I believe God does want us to advance the kingdom.

So there's nothing wrong with being excited about a ministry or an opportunity or going out and witnessing and advancing the kingdom of God. And God's using you in a powerful way. And you want, Paul said, I will boast in what Christ has done.

But then you've got something inside of you that's not really godly. And in the middle of that's trying to exalt you and about you. And that's where you get offended when you hear no.

That's how we test people here. I'm just, I'm giving you a heads up sometimes. Hey, we'll say, hey, not, not right now, but thank you.

What do they do? Well, I'm out of here. I'm going to find a church that recognizes my giftings or start arguing or getting upset. It's one little tiny word.

No, not now. Let's see how you handle no. I'm not perfect with handling no, whether it's the DMV or the government.

And something that just happened this week, we did our taxes or we're doing the taxes. And I saw, you know, it listed me as a pastor and it listed my wife. It said homemaker.

It just made my day. I mean, how that is the most important position on planet earth. But yes, clap for the moms and the homemakers.

Now, so I don't get myself in trouble. I'm not against women working. Proverbs 31, very efficient woman, but there's a time and a place for things.

And many times we, we want the bigger house and the more things, and let's just get childcare all week. And let me, let us both work. And, you know, and sometimes people are struggling though, and God has different arrangements going on.

So I don't, I don't judge. There's not a one size fits all approach, but I, but go tell Hollywood that you're a homemaker. You'll be scorned.

You'll be ridiculed. There's so much pride and arrogance, self-exaltation, self-promoting. And when I was flying in the airports and went to Texas, you know, you run into people and it's, you can tell it's always the men.

So what do you do? What do you do? It's hard to tell people what I do because it's not well received, but what does it have to do with anything? I understand a conversation starter and things, it's not, but, but it's that, it's that self-exaltation. People who are proud about what they do will tell you that, but those who aren't proud on employment, they're not going to ask that question. It's pride and God often, especially here's how he does different things in the area of men.

He will humble us in the area of employment. Or at work, many of the time, or in relationships. You thought you were all that in a bag of chips until your wife says, I'm leaving.

You're not. And so we, God takes these areas to get humbled. One way he humbles us, parents included or moms included, is with our children.

Anybody been humbled by their kids and say, God, this is not working. I turn, turn everything. So God will use situations to humble us.

I was telling Pastor Abram yesterday that when I worked for 24 Hour Fitness, I was doing really well. I was a district manager. And, but you had to keep beating yourself every year.

They call it same store growth in the corporate world. You have to have a 6%, 10% increase in same store growth. You've got to be progressing.

And so I, there was a year I didn't hit that number. I think I was, we were at Santa Clarita too, Via Princesa, that new gym down there. I don't know if I had that one yet or anything, but, and they demoted me.

Wait, I was a top salesman in Southern, Southern area of the United States. And, and what's going on here? And talk about humility, humbling you. I was humbled.

And then I got proud and I worked myself back up in four months because of pride. God's trying to humble me. And also a relationship or marriage that's falling apart.

He will humble you. Kids that they're not walking, Lord, how they should and life situations. And God uses these things to humble us because He knows that we need that humility.

Without, without these situations, we just become exalted and, and exalted in our own eyes. The sin of self-advancement from Matthew 6. Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people. Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them.

For then you will have no reward from your father who is in heaven. Your, your reward basically is this. Beware of practicing your righteousness before others.

There's a lot to that because in the church, what does it look like? Well, it could be look like, it could look like putting, you know, grabbing your tithe and saying, look at, watch, getting ready to put my tithe in the envelope or in the offering box. Hello all, put it in there or here, pastor, here's, here's my offering. A thousand dollars cash, do whatever you want with it.

And sometimes those aren't bad if the heart is good. See, God knows the heart. We don't, but be careful.

Are we practicing our, our righteousness before others to be seen by, by the way, I went on a missions trip and I did this and we're posting everything to be seen by men. Or are you posting things because you're excited about what God is doing? We have to really be careful not to wrongly judge others. It's an area God really had to work in my own heart because the Bible says to his own master, he will stand or fall.

Who are you, who are you to judge another servant? To his own master, he will stand or fall. I believe it's in Romans. And removing that judgmental spirit that comes from pride.

Anybody have to work on that? Just me, right? We look at what they drive. I'm like, oh, that's expensive vehicle. Look at where they, oh, I wonder what their motives are.

Wonder what Shane's motives are. Hmm. I get this like once a month, there's a church in town that was telling people this too.

It's, they say, you know, Shane's just promoting his books. Like, well, they're free on our website and they're free in the lobby. And it's all my sermon notes over 12, 20 years of wanting to get more information out there and help people.

How do you know my heart? Now can pride rise up? Of course. But we have to be careful not to wrongly judge others. We truly don't know their motives unless it's crystal clear, of course.

But beware, do not practice your righteousness before others and basically not showing them how spiritual you are. It's about why we do what we do. That's, that's really, it's not that somebody does something, it's the why behind it.

And that's why we do say no sometimes. Like, no, I don't think we're going to do that right now or start that right now. Let's wait on that.

Let's see how they handle. No, because that reveals out the abundance of the heart, the mouth is going to speak. And so when they're not given an opportunity or they're upset about a way a certain thing is going, it really reveals the heart.

The famous are rarely significant and the significant are rarely famous. Any of you play chess? Or have you? Did you know the pawn and the king when you're done, they go back in the same box? Self-exaltation. Fame is fleeting.

I really want to teach my kids this and young adults. Fame is fleeting. It is also meaningless when it's over.

Because what happens is you're exalted. Justin Bieber to Michael Jordan, you name it. Actresses, Brad Pitt to Will Smith to, you name it.

See, it's this, it's these claps and millions of views and, and I'm on the center stage and that's the high. And when there's a low, it's hard. Ask Michael Jordan if he's happy right now.

Why is Tom Brady having such a hard time retiring? The desire to be number one, self-exaltation. And it's fine if they want, if God has designed them, let's say basketball, football, whatever it is, or a gifted voice. And you recognize that that gift is from God.

And this is just temporary. This is just temporary. I mean, I realize I'm already preparing myself.

As I get older, there's not going to be tens of thousands of people listening on the radio and the church growing and speaking. I could be 75 years old and, and remembering those days and preparing my heart for what could happen later. And don't resting on, you, you, you take comfort and you're, you're excited and you're content and where God has you now.

And this is why there's so much suicide in Hollywood or, or in the, the gaming industry or YouTube videos. Now, now it's a, you know, these guys that make, you know, \$60,000 a month from their YouTube videos, flipping bottles. Let me see if I can get a bottle to stand up there.

Look, 60, 600,000 views in one day and they get paid and see, it's, it's, it's going to be fleeting. That fame is fleeting from ballet to boxing and from gaming to golf. The desire to be number one.

It's everywhere. It's like, I laugh sometimes this mountain biker wants to be number one. This golfer wants to be number one.

They want to, it's, it's like, it, it doesn't ever leave the desire. Sometimes it's funny. I'll go bike riding.

And as soon as I got an e-bike, everybody said I'm cheating. Like, hey, it's still a hard workout. And sometimes I need a little help.

The Holy Spirit's not cheating in our walk. Sometimes we need a little help. I need to turn on that battery and give me a little help up that hill.

That's not cheating. But any of you know, I don't think he's here. So this will be funny.

You know, he goes like bike riding for 75 miles a day. I'm like, so one time I went riding with him and we were going over Mons Ranch Road or Johnson Road. And I turned my battery on and I beat him at the top.

I got off. I'm just waiting for him. Come on, cyclist.

Come on. Where you been? And I had just, I desire to win. I beat Tim on that hill.

Now you take away the battery. Not good. But it's sometimes I'll run into these guys.

Not him. He's got a great heart, but other guys. And like, you know, riding on the after like, oh, you got an e-bike.

That's not fair. What do you mean? I'm not competing. I'm just trying to enjoy the day.

I could care less. And their bike is like \$10,000. And everything they're wearing, all these gadgets, they got \$20,000 to go on a bike ride.

And I'm there sometimes on a Walmart bike with shorts on. And I beat them and they don't like it because I have a battery. Anybody like the e-bikes? I'm never going back now.

I am never going back. I made the mistake of letting my kids ride it. They don't want normal bikes anymore.

And it's really not cheap. It's a hard workout. I can just go longer, faster, and, you know, more length, just as tired.

It's not as hard because you have a little battery to help, but it's a hard workout. It's not cheating. I really want to get that point across.

But don't you see that throughout Facebook? Who's really the GOAT? Was it Colby or Michael Jordan? Do you know what GOAT means? The greatest of all time. And now Tom Brady, the GOAT, the GOAT, the GOAT. We need to stop asking, where's the GOAT, and start asking, where's the Lamb? Where's the Lamb of God, the brokenness and humility? All this stuff is fleeting.

You will be left empty. Michael Jordan did an interview when he was 50 that says that he has left the addiction, but the addiction has not left the man. He is miserable, many times they say.

And all these singers, all the spotlight, and they've lost that spotlight. And so they do desperate things, and they get Botox, and they want to bring back their career of when they were 20, and it's sad because it's fleeting. Self-exaltation.

But think about when it's about God and His glory. You say, God, you raised me up, and I'm not there anymore, but that's you. You have me wherever I'm at to be content in all things.

And you don't come down from this false high because you weren't built up on a false high. You recognize that God puts you there for a certain amount of time, wherever you're at. And someone reminded me after the first service, you know what's really good for fighting pride? And I didn't say it the first service, this is so true.

Thankfulness. I thought, you know what, that is a great, when I'm thankful, it kills pride. But when we're bitter, and we're resentful, and how did that person get promoted, and why did this happen? And we see this at our church.

It's funny, every time we promote a new deacon, I watch some, you watch reactions of people sometimes. Why are they on the worship team and I'm not? It's happened. Because you realize you can be gifted, but not humble.

You can be, that's your ability, but you're not yet called. Because that pride prevents us from fully being used of God. Do you have a scripture for that, Shane? I don't know if I believe that.

God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Could it be that you're fighting against God? I have. So when we want to do in our own strength, and we want to elevate ourself, or whatever it is, God resists the proud.

Philippians 2, 3 through 4, let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit. Conviction alert. Let nothing, Paul, writing to the church in Philippi, could you, can I have a little wiggle room there? Let nothing be done.

So parenting, leading the church, or you working in your business, wherever it is, nothing should be done through selfish ambition or conceit. In other words, our motives, whether it's at work, wherever it's at. But in lowliness of mind, it's interesting, it has to do with up here, lowliness of mind, let each other's esteem them better than himself.

Let each of you look not only out for your own interests, but also the interests of others. Now I'm kind of glad it said this, because he says here, look out for your own interests. You should look out for your home, and you have enough money saved, and well-being for your children.

Of course, the Bible says if you don't care for your family, you're worse than an unbeliever. And so you do have to look out for your own interests, and manage your things well, but that's the key, but also the interests of others. So not yours is not elevated, you're looking out for others as well.

Have you ever worked for people, your boss say, and they're looking out for your interests? You can tell. It's a blessing. They ask about sick day, or vacation, or how are you feeling, how are you doing, do you

need space here, do you need, and they're looking out for their interests, and your interests.

It's a very healthy work environment, something we try to accomplish here. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition. And then verse 5 in chapter 11, but the Lord came down to see the city, and the tower which the sons of men had built.

So it's not like God didn't know what they were doing. It's like, well let me come down, let me wonder what they're doing down there on planet earth. I'm up here on Saturn, let me go down and check.

I'm curious, what have they, what's happened over the last hundred years? This language, especially in the Hebrew language, and we know obviously that God is not caught off guard, it's a more focused attention. Okay, now we're going to handle this. And the Lord said, indeed the people are one, and they have all one language, and this is what they have begun to do.

Now nothing, nothing will be able to stop them. And you need to realize something, God's not concerned and worried, he's concerned for them. Basically now nothing is going to be able to stop them.

And remember before the flood there was one language, one purpose, and their hearts became evil and wicked. And now possibly the same thing is rising up again. Now nothing is going to be able to stop them.

They are united, and God says, I have to stop this unity. Basically God put a governor on growth. You know what a governor is, car people? I did not like a governor on my Chevy Blazer at 17 years old that my dad put on.

Because no matter how far I put down that gas pedal, topped out at 70 or 65. Back then the speed limit was 55, like even to Vegas, or on the freeway. But of course over the years, you know.

And so a governor slows down. My dad knew better than I did, so he put a governor on my speed. Sometimes God will put a governor on the growth, or your growth, or he will.

Anybody being slowed down by God? That's what he did. Okay, this is growing too quickly, the people are multiplying, they're going to do all these things. And God slows that down, stops that by confusing their language.

He put a governor on their growth. He slowed it down because he knew what was best. And so if God is slowing you down in any area, be thankful, trust him that he knows what he is doing.

Because we often want to excel, put on the accelerator, and get things done, and move, and accomplish things. But God often says, wait, hold on, slow down, wait for my timing. Wait for my timing.

And 1 Peter 5, 5-7, God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. I did quote this earlier. Therefore, because of this, humble yourself under the mighty hand of God that he may exalt you in due time.

I like to read that, and God may exalt you right away. He's going to, I'm humbling myself today, Lord, you better change that situation tomorrow. In my time.

Because usually in the humbling process, it's a process. And I believe the reason it says this is we could say, okay, Lord, I humble myself. And if God changes the situation the next day, how do we know our heart was right? He says, in due time.

In other words, okay, show me, hotshot. You humbled yourself? Okay. Let's see you walk it out for a while.

Let's see you walk it out in your marriage, or at church, or in the work environment. Let's see you walk that out. In due time, when I see the time is right, God will then again begin to elevate you.

So could it be that this breaking process that you're running from, maybe you should be running to? And say, Lord, in your time, I'm not going to keep trying to make my agenda go through. I'm not going to try to make my plans go through. In due time, he will exalt you.

It's interesting. God is resisting the proud in this verse. In other words, the imagery of especially the Greek language is it's a pushing or a holding back.

So God says, I'm resisting the proud. But if you humble yourself under my hand in due time, then I will bring you up. So you go from God fighting you and resisting you where there's no other direction to now humbling yourself under his hand, and then he brings you up.

It's a wonderful picture. It's a biblical truth. I mean, it sounds great.

I'm pretty sure most of you are saying, yes, that is so true. Oh boy, oh boy, that is so true. But when I leave here, I'm not sure I'm going to do that.

So if that's you, all you have is knowledge, not wisdom. Because knowledge is knowing what to do, which is good, but it's really not. The power of scripture is in the application of it, in the wisdom.

And the Bible talks about in Proverbs, wisdom is a principal thing. Therefore, get wisdom and all you're getting, get understanding. She will exalt you.

She will promote you. So you can leave here full of knowledge and it will do you no good. If you don't apply it.

And I don't have to say I see that more than anything else in the church. People, because they'll say, I know what the scriptures say. But, well, no kid, we need to go back and apply what you know.

Did you know that's how you'll mature spiritually is to apply the scriptures. That's how you grow spiritually is by applying the scriptures. That's how you mature in your faith and know God at a deeper level by applying the scriptures.

Because we can talk about praying and fasting and worshiping. And we go, oh man, that sounds great. Oh Lord, I'm on fire that I've got a plan now.

And if you leave here and none of that, nothing changes. All you have is a plan with no fruit. And I see this so often, especially in men, for some reason, pride's a little harder to get out of us.

I don't, maybe it's because we're called to lead and then that with that can come some pride. But then he says here, and cast all your cares upon me. That word in the Greek, if you were to look at it, the, we don't, it's really the care isn't, I wouldn't use that word, but I'm not a translator because the word is a divided mind.

So cast your confusion, your, anybody have a divided mind from time to time? Oh no, you guys, this is incredible. Why am I even preaching to the 9am? What we should just, let's just remove the 9am service.

We have 7am and 11am.

Oh, it's hard, it's hard to look in the mirror. So cast your divided mind, your confusion, pride leads to confusion. Anybody confused at work, at home, in situations and circumstances? That divided mind, that confusion leads to a divided mind.

So the whole verse goes together. Resist the proud, gives grace to the humble, humble yourself under God's mighty hand. He may exalt you in due time, comma, casting all your confusion about this divided mind, this struggle with pride, give it to him because he cares for you.

It's beautiful. And I forget that sometimes because I have this image sometimes because you, you envision God often as you envision your father. And that can be, you know, my, my dad came from Oklahoma and the farms and, and boy, you don't cry, you know, that get her done, hard work.

So sometimes we have that view of God. You know, here comes a lightning bolt, ashamed us to do that. But the scripture is a loving God, a caring God.

Yes, a God of judgment, a God of holiness, but he cares for us. He actually disciplines those he loves. Have you ever been spanked by God? Oh, one honest person in the whole room.

But it's not a physical paddle. I remember I went to Bethel Baptist. They used to do that.

You had to go like this. And here's a teacher with a paddle with holes in it. So the air would flow through and it could go harder.

Boom, boom, boom. Back then the top three public school problems or the school problems were talking, chewing gum and making noise. How far we've drifted.

Now it's assault, burglary, rape, drug abuse, or drug use. But being spanked by God is not a physical spanking. Often.

It's a spiritual spanking in our heart. It's a humble. He, when we humble, humbles us, he spans us.

Do you ever get all proud and man, look at this, I got this job and I'm making this money and I got a promotion and man, you're so happy and both and then and then you get an email the next week. Oh, I'm so sorry. We made a mistake.

We're actually taking away some of your hours. Deflated tire. God knows how to humble us.

I'll tell you, I've been some places and I preach my heart out. It was incredible. I told my wife, oh, this is incredible.

I can't wait. I can't wait to get this message out there and share it with people. You know, that's good, of course.

But then I get an email from the people. Oh, you know what? Our sound system wasn't working that night. That's it.

Gone. Or humbling. God knows how to discipline us.

Usually it's in what you take pride in. What you tell our volunteers, you know, those we have like 100 volunteers now to get some ushering or sound and media or what I do up here. God will humble you in the area you're serving in.

So maybe maybe the media won't work that day. What about the worship team? I think there's gremlins and we can have a perfect worship on Friday practice and then come Sunday, nothing works. Gremlins get in there, do something.

But it humbles us. Or I come up and the words aren't just, man, this sounded, this looked much better on paper this week. I don't know what's happening.

God humbles us every now and then. Praise God doesn't happen too often, but I love to preach. So does Pastor Abraham.

We feel the presence of God. The word comes alive. I'm encouraged, but sometimes it feels like bricks are coming out of my mouth.

I can't wait to get home. Like, Lord, what was that? That was a terrible sermon. You might have heard this.

Sometimes I'll tell you, you know what? Go watch the first service online when you get home because this one stinks. I've done that a few times. What happens? God says, okay, hot shot.

I'm going to humble you. So it's usually in your area of service. It's in your work environment.

Those things that are closest to us, that's the area where he's going to humble us. Maybe you should try this. Husbands, go home sometimes, say, you know what? What would you rate our marriage? Like from one to ten, ten really good and one not at all.

And husbands are like, oh man, right now it's eight, nine. Yes, the wife, two or three. Morgan might talk about that.

We had a hard season. A couple, I mean, this is back to the kids. I think we had two kids and we were asked this question.

I'm like, eight or nine? Yeah. Maybe a three. And I was humble.

I mean, I was humble. That hurts. That hurts a little bit.

Doesn't it? How is he going to be humble? I'll share this story too. It's in my books. I've mentioned before, I think it was 2007, 2008.

I'm still working in construction, getting ready to switch to real estate because construction just plummeted. All of our savings gone. Humble.

God knows where to humble you. But anyway, I go and I look and her journal's open. It says, I married a man who doesn't let me pursue my dreams and controls the family.

I'm like, what? I'm like, man, like this is unbelievable. And so I take a three-hour drive because I'm upset. But once you talk it out, I find out, and I wasn't, I was, as men, you know, you're like, no, we're not going to go buy that stuff.

We're not going to spend that. You're not going to start some makeup business. You know, we got to, you know, here's what we've got them staying focused.

But to them, if you're leading, you have to be, you have to be understand their needs as well. And so God used that to really humble me and break me. I go, I can't make my wife and kids feel like this.

So now, okay, you want to ride motorcycles, or you want to do gymnastics. Okay, let's do it. Let me help them in their dreams.

But as a man, you're kind of narrow. No, we're not going to do that. We don't have time for that.

That's going to be too expensive. We can't do that. And you start to really stifle your family.

And you begin to control them, which can be, God has given us the spiritual leadership. But if you begin to control and dominate, you'll begin to stifle that and hurt your family. You should be their biggest cheerleader.

But at the same time, I've had to say no quite often. And we say, no, we're not going to do that. Right? My son wants a motorcycle.

And talk to Luke and Joe about, don't tell him, don't tell him about motorcycles. And Phil, you know, we got to say, and he's mad. Hope he's not listening.

And don't say anything that's a personal thing. So, too late now. Can we rewind this to about three minutes ago? Levy's going to edit it out.

But isn't it true? We want to, you know, he will humble us in these areas. So, long story short, I recognize, oh, I see how you can—let's say we get a tax refund back then. I'm like, no, here's exactly where it's going.

We're going to pay this bill, and this bill, and this bill. If we're always paying bills, can we ever have fun? She's like, you know, there's a balance there, because I'm the saver. If there's a tax refund, it's going to pay off this bill, and this, and this.

We're not having any fun. But you have to find a balance. Correct? And so, that was a humbling process.

Hopefully, it changed me some. But you have to be humbled by that. And others, my mom, I told this story in 2005, came to me and said, Shane, your family doesn't want to be around you anymore.

But I've been following the Lord for five years, and what happened? I began to be very knowledgeable in theology. I've read systematic theology, and understand hermeneutics, and homiletics, and I'm self-righteous. I own the MacArthur Study Bible.

They shouldn't be watching that movie. Why are they smoking dope? Did she get drunk again? Judgmental Jerry. See, when I preach these things, you're like, man, that's so relevant.

Because I'm the example, often. I've lived it, and that hurt. I was mad.

But was she right? Because do you know knowledge puffs up? And the more knowledge you have about God's Word, here's the thing. You guys know this. The more knowledge you have of God's Word, the more you see sin in the lives of people.

But here's the thing. You should see more sin in yourself as well. I remember when I first came back to the Lord, I wasn't married.

I was single. Man, I thought I was pretty humble, pretty on target until you get married, everything falls right. You realize how prideful you actually are.

And now I see how just utterly dependent we are on God. I mean, you can smell pride in people and in my own heart. It's just an area where God really wants to humble us.

So is God resisting you this morning? Are you ready to humble yourself today? Are you ready to cast all your fears and doubts and cares upon Him? Because the flower of humility, the flower of humility grows only on the grave of pride. In other words, to experience a beautiful blessing of humility, that flower grows on the grave of pride. Pride has to die in you or nothing of heaven can live in you, Andrew Murray would say.

So how does God use confusion? I don't know. I'm going to get through this one. Next week, I'm talking about hearing God's voice.

Anybody need to hear God's voice, the right voice? I'm going to talk about that next week when God said, Abram, go to a land I will show you. Can you imagine that? God's telling you, hey, go ahead and sell your house and move and I'll show you where, when it's time. That's what Abram did.

Abraham did. He was Abram at first, changed his name. And so, but let's talk about confusion for a minute.

So God said, come, let us, let us go down there. Here's how God is going to stop their plans. Let's confuse their language so they won't understand one another.

That will do it. Have you ever tried to talk to somebody? Like when I was in construction, trying to tell, we had a lot of, you know, Hispanic laborers and I was in labor too and trying to talk to them. It's like, and they're trying to talk to me and everybody's frustrated and you can't get anything done.

And so that's what was happening there. God confused their language. God scattered them from on the face of the earth and they stopped building the city.

Therefore, its name is called Babel. It's where we get our word Babel from, a lot of Babel. It's also where the Babylonian name came from, the city of Babylon.

And God confused their language. But let me just share some things that will help briefly. Confusion can change your direction.

So if you're confused, don't get bitter and upset and angry at God. Say, Lord, is there a direction I need to change? I'm confused here. I need to change direction because God knows what's best.

You have to trust him. I'm going to tell you, sometime when I was really confused, it's when we moved up here, the church, because I'm in Lancaster. I'm praying for Lancaster.

I live in Lancaster. I want a church a mile and a half from my house so I can walk and ride my bike and I want everything convenient and cozy. And God says, no, you're going to go to Leona Valley.

That does not make any sense, Lord. Doesn't make any sense. But trusting God.

And so that confusion gave way to peace when you realize, well, I don't know. God knows. If it's his will, it's his bill.

Where he guides, he provides. I got a lot of one-liners if you want to hear them. But so he put us up here, experienced tremendous growth.

People can't believe that people drive here to go to church. I believe we were protected from COVID, from L.A. County and rules and mandates. And I never heard one word from anybody.

My pastor, one pastor friend in Ventura has a \$100,000 fine he's going to court about. Other ones are shut down. They're mandated.

They're harassed. Nothing ever once. Now, my wife prayed for that every day.

And L.A. County could be watching now, but too little too late. But God, it's a shelter to protect. It's actually very secure too.

You know, security issues, all churches have them. But when you're up in an area, you know, that's kind of secluded and a lot of gun owners, you know, it's a secure area kind of. And so we can see how God did all of that.

But there was times of confusion because it breaks us out of our comfort zone. Confusion can motivate you to seek answers from God. How many people come to prayer meetings when they're confused? All the time.

When I see, sometimes if you see the altar full in the morning and nine times out of ten, they're confused or they have problems they're dealing with. Without that, everything's going, everything's going great at home. My bills are paid.

I make a lot of money. The heating is working. I'm cozy in my bed.

All is well. That prayer life isn't as powerful. That's why I believe especially pastors, he keeps us in a constant state of dependence upon him.

We're putting out fires every single week, every single week. Some type of emotional or volunteer or personality issues or church issues or whatever. It's always something going on and keeps us to that spot of desperation.

So if God is confusing you, if you're confused, seek him for answers. Develop that spirit of humility. Also, confusion can deepen and expand your prayer life.

Confusion can strengthen trust. Deuteronomy 29. Powerful verse.

Let me just kind of give you the idleman version. In Deuteronomy 28-29, God gave the curses. He said, if you don't obey my word, if you drift from me, if you don't take me seriously and give your life to me, these curses will come upon you.

And it says, the prideful person says, oh, I shall have peace. That doesn't apply to me, even though I will follow the dictates of my own heart. What could be more clear? God says, if you do this, this is going to

happen.

And they said, well, that's not going to happen to me, even though I'm doing whatever I want to do. I'm not obeying God. That's not going to happen to me.

I'm going to have peace. And God says, as though the drunkard could be included with the sober. Two complete opposites there.

And we see in the Old Testament, the pomp, the arrogance of Egypt, the arrogance of Assyria, the pride of the Babylonians, the arrogance of Amalek, the hardness of Israel. All of those things were their downfall. What about the pomp, the arrogance, the pride, the hardness of America? Andrew Murray said, pride must die in you or nothing, nothing of heaven can live in you.

And Spurgeon reminds us that the demon of pride was born with us and it will not die one hour before us. In other words, it will be a constant battle. That's why we have prayer meetings.

That's why we have 6 a.m. worship, early morning worship service, rend the heavens, worship nights. We give people opportunities, the altars open, things like that. We give people opportunities, what? To deal with pride.

Because pride, unchecked, when you don't deal with pride, does it remain neutral? Did you know that about sin? Sin is either growing or withering. There's no static position. Well, if I don't deal with pride, I'm sure it'll just stay where it's at.

No, it gets worse. It increases. It increases.

That's why God calls us to that life of brokenness and humility. So I just want to share three ways if you need to break pride this morning. Weeping, working, and worshiping.

Isaiah 22, the Lord said this to Isaiah. He said, call them to a day of weeping. Instead, their pride and their hardness of heart prevented them from seeking God.

See, there's always, you don't have to come up and cry and shed tears, but there's a sorrow. You know how you're treating your family? How you're treating your spouse? How you're treating others? How you're treating other believers? How you're judging? There should be a brokenness, a sorrow, in that, oh God, this hurts my heart. I am so sorry.

And my weeping is going to be returned. Instead of weeping, joy cometh in the morning. And God will honor that brokenness and repenting over it.

Woe be to the person who doesn't think they need to work on pride. Fortunately, it didn't happen today at the 11, but the nine o'clock I saw some of this. They're sitting down.

How many did happen? Okay. You guys are just more sneaky. But don't we want to blame others? And sometimes it's crystal clear that we see pride and we'll try to talk to somebody.

Hey, I see a lot. Oh no, that's not pride. I'm just passionate.

No, you're arrogant. I'm just contending for the truth. No, you're very mean spirited.

And see how we can hide behind excuses? And then also what I meant by working. We don't work for our salvation, but we work out our salvation. And that's the importance of spiritual disciplines lived out in the right heart.

So when we talk about praying and fasting and worshiping and reading God's word and obeying God's word, those are all positions of humility. They keep us humble. But when we fail to do those things and we just live off social media and we pop into church twice a month, you think that's going to help? That's fueling pride and fueling anger and arrogance.

Pride has to be pulverized. Arrogance has to be eradicated. Hottiness must be crushed.

Did you know it's very healthy for you to say, I am a prideful person working on humility. Would you please pray for me? How many times have I told you that? You think I'm going to say I'm not a prideful person? That just hurts. That just hurts.

Hey guys, you know, I'm going to help you guys today. I mean, I'm not a prideful person, but I know some of you are. How many would walk out? I don't know.

But see, admitting that, because you're admitting that sinful nature is still there. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the boastful pride of life until the day we die. It's knocking on the door.

Would you please let me back in? Would you please open that door? And it's a constant struggle. It's a constant fight. And when we're not staying engaged in these spiritual disciplines and reading God's Word and applying God's Word and apologizing and repenting and worshiping and praying, and actually that's why I mentioned fasting.

Fasting is abstinence with a purpose. Throughout all the Old Testament, the majority of times they talked about fasting, it was directly related to humility. Show me one verse where it doesn't tie in in the Old Testament.

Some type of fasting because of humility. Brokenness over their sin. Brokenness over what God was possibly going to do.

Judgment that was coming. It was a step of humility. And I like that quote from Ian Bounds.

Not everyone will understand it, but those who do, you can see where he's going. The pride of learning is against the dependent humility of prayer. See, when we take a lot of pride in our intellect and our learning and our abilities, and we take a lot of pride in our job and what we do and the income we make and how many people we oversee, and we take all that, we have that pride, it is directly opposed to the dependent humility of prayer.

There's a difference. Pride is self-exaltation. Humility is lowering of oneself.

Exaltation, lowering. And so that's here. And when you're humbly praying, you're dependent upon God.

When you're prideful and boastful, you're depending upon yourself. And there's the parallel there. And then finally, I want to just ask, because I don't know, do you truly know God? Do you know why people are not in heaven today? Is it because of humility? It's pride.

So when people say, why does God send anyone to hell? He doesn't. Their pride puts them there. The fool has said in his heart, there is no God.

The fool has said in his heart, there is no God. Boastful pride, arrogant pride that denies a Creator. How can these famous atheists with so much knowledge look at the universe and the stars and everything and say, there is no God? Pride.

Pride. God says, let us make man in our image. The prideful man says, let us make God in our image, in our likeness.

And I want to just encourage you, if you haven't been to the prayer room in a long time, or you never have, or you're working on pride, take that step and say, I need prayer. I'm confessing my pride. I need prayer.

Or this altar is open. There's nothing more beautiful than a man of God or a woman of God at this altar saying, God, I need to...

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