

# The Evil of Pride

by Thomas Reade

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*The sermon emphasizes the evil of pride and its consequences, while highlighting the importance of humility and the need for divine illumination to understand ourselves and the Gospel.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 51:10, Romans 7:18, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Galatians 6:14, James 4:6

**Topics:** "Pride And Humility", "Holy Spirit"

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## Description

Thomas Reade preaches about the evil of pride, emphasizing how pride and sensuality govern the hearts of natural men, hindering them from accepting salvation by grace through faith in Christ. He highlights how pride leads to self-righteousness, distorting the Gospel and grieving the Holy Spirit. Reade urges believers to seek humility, acknowledging their need for God's grace to overcome pride and self-love, and to embrace the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. He emphasizes the importance of self-examination, prayer for divine illumination, and a deep understanding of the Gospel to mortify pride and fully surrender to Christ.

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## Transcript

### 25. The Evil of Pride

"God resists the proud." James 4:6

There are two principles which rule and govern the hearts of natural men- Pride and sensuality. These two evils are continually in operation, the one, against the soul-humbling, the other, against the soul-purifying, doctrines of the Gospel.

Salvation by grace, through faith in the blood of Christ, is most offensive to the pride of the natural man. The idea of being wholly indebted to another for admission into the kingdom of heaven, is extremely disgusting to self-love. Such an idea is rejected with disdain by every heart, unhumbled and untaught by the Spirit of God. Fallen man needs to have some share in the great work of salvation, to have something whereof to boast. But God has declared that this shall not be. No flesh shall boast in his presence. "He that boasts, let him boast in the Lord."

From this principle of self-righteous pride have arisen all those perversions of the Gospel which have abounded in every age, and which Paul so warmly reprobates in his Epistle to the Galatians. It is a principle deeply rooted in our fallen nature, and which nothing but the Holy Spirit can eradicate. It forms a

part of that remnant of corruption which believers feel and bewail, and against which they daily fight and pray. In proportion as it operates, it occasions obscurity in their views of divine truth, and deadness in their affections to spiritual things. It grieves the Holy Spirit, and tarnishes the glory of the Cross. Pride, assuming every form, either worldly or religious, can go with us into our closets, or attend us at the sanctuary. Like a subtle poison, it can insinuate itself into our prayers and praises. Unseen, and unsuspected, it mars our best duties, and creates that self-admiration, that desire for human applause, which corrupts the heart, and steals it away from God.

O blessed Jesus, what need have I to look unto You for grace and strength. Save me from pride and vain-glory. Often do I feel and lament their baneful influence. If I speak for you, O, how does the poison work unseen by every eye but Yours! As you alone can behold this hidden evil of the heart, so do you in mercy destroy its influence. To You, blessed Savior, do I look. You know what is in me. Your eyes are on all my ways. Oh! wash me in the cleansing fountain of your precious blood. Purge me from this foul stain of corrupted nature. Make me truly humble and abased before You. Purify my soul, then shall I become as a little child in simplicity, teachableness, and humility. The work is all your own. To You be all the praise.

The more exalted views I have of the Holiness and Purity of God, and of the extent and spirituality of the divine Law; the deeper sense I have of the evil of sin, and of the depravity of human nature; the more shall I value the precious doctrine of Justification by faith only, through the blood and righteousness of Christ; the more shall I feel the necessity of the regenerating influences of the Holy Spirit, and the more shall I acknowledge salvation to be all of grace, flowing freely from the love of God the Father, displayed in the voluntary sufferings of God the Son, and made savingly known to sinners, through the power of God the Holy Spirit.

But, if I reverse all this, if I have low views of the divine Holiness, making the Almighty such an one as myself; if I consider the Gospel merely as a mitigated law, lowering the standard of holiness, that all may be admitted into heaven- if I have high conceptions of the dignity of human nature, and inadequate views of the evil of sin; in that proportion the glory of the Gospel will appear dim in my eyes, the righteousness of Christ will be considered as a make-weight in the scale of human merit, and the operation of the Holy Spirit as nothing more than an auxiliary to the natural powers of man.

The former view exalts the glory of God, and humbles the sinner, while holiness is promoted; but the latter, springing from pride, eclipses the splendor of the Deity, obscures the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness, like a dark cloud intervening between us and the orb of day; while the wretched worm of the earth, inflated with pride, sinks into endless woe. Which of these two statements, I would ask, may we reasonably suppose to be a revelation from God? Let conscience speak. Let the word of truth speak. Let the convinced sinner speak. All will proclaim, "Let God be glorified."

Oh! what cursed pride dwells in the heart of man. But what will become of proud looks, and proud pretensions, when Christ shall sit on the throne of his glory, and render unto every man according to his works? Then will the contrite soul, who, while on earth was trodden down by the foot of pride, be exalted to the heights of glory; then will the proud sinner, once admired and applauded, be hurled into the depths of hell.

Lord, clothe me with humility. Empty me of all overweening thoughts of myself. Make Christ more precious to my heart. Draw me to Yourself. Then shall I form a part of your little flock; and be found among your people, in the day when you make up your jewels.

"Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall;" but, "before honor is humility." By nature, I am blind to my real state and character. Pride and self-love form an impenetrable veil, which hides me from myself. Others can see, and point out my defects. Hence arises the value of a faithful friend. Blessed Spirit of Holiness, remove the veil, open my understanding, and discover to me the true state of my soul.

It is a fact, in spiritual things, that we never know that we are blind, until we are taught by the Spirit. The Pharisees said to our Lord, "Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, If you were blind, you should have no sin; but now you say, We see; therefore your sin remains." These very men, who said, "We see," were addressed by our Lord as blind. "Woe unto you, you blind guides." "You blind Pharisee! cleanse first that which is within." It is only when the Spirit opens the eyes of our minds, that we see and feel our ignorance, and can mourn our spiritual darkness. Until then, we fancy ourselves to be very wise and good, notwithstanding we are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

O you lowly Savior! impart unto me lowliness of mind. When on earth, "your voice was not heard in the streets." You abstained from every display of your almighty power, except when called forth in acts of love and pity. All your miracles were wrought to bless our race, or to manifest forth your glory. Devils and diseases fled at your command; winds were hushed to silence; and the raging waters sank into a calm. At your all-powerful voice, the dead arose; and nature, through all her realm, confessed You to be the Lord. But man confessed You not! The world was made by you, and the world knew you not. You came unto your own, and your own received you not. Oh! give me grace to receive you in faith and love, that I may have the privilege of becoming a child of God, being born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. Hide pride from me. Give me a single eye, which aims at nothing but your glory. Keep me from the proud insinuations of Satan, from the swellings of a corrupt and carnal heart.

It is of great importance in the Christian life to obtain a right knowledge of ourselves. This can only be obtained by earnest prayer for divine illumination, by a diligent study of the Word of God, and by frequent and impartial, self-examination. While thoroughly searching our hearts, we shall find much within us to mortify our pride; but the more we are enabled to discover the hidden evils of our hearts, and to crucify the flesh, with the affections and lusts, the more we shall value and delight in the Gospel plan of Salvation. At the Cross of Christ we shall learn to know ourselves, and Him, of whom Moses in the Law, and the Prophets did write. We shall see, in letters of glory, those messages of grace, which proclaim a free pardon and everlasting life to all who believe in, and receive, Christ crucified.

Oh! that I could, at this moment, throw wide the doors of a willing mind to admit the Lord of Glory, that he may henceforth reign as King supreme over every affection of my heart. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!

Though the heart be renewed by divine grace, the infection of nature does remain in those who are regenerated, and too often rebels, notwithstanding the watchfulness and care of the believer. "In me," says Paul, "(that is, in my flesh) dwells no good thing." This indwelling sin may not, through grace, be allowed to break out into open acts of vice, but it struggles and fights within; "When I would do good, evil is present with me." "I find a law in my members, warring against the law of my mind." This inbred evil excites to pride, sloth, spiritual indifference, earthly-mindedness, fleshly lust, self-confidence, carnal ease, and a thousand other evils destructive to our peace, and grieving to the good Spirit of our God.

To whom, then, can I look for deliverance from these evils, but to Him who has said, "My grace is sufficient for you." "A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you." This is the great and gracious

promise of the New Covenant, for which I am encouraged to pray in the name, and through the merits, of the blessed Jesus. Lord, vouchsafe this blessing, the pledge of every other blessing which flows to our ruined world through the death and intercession of your dear Son.

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