

THE CHRISTIAN AND PRIDE

Romans 12:3

By Andy Manning

I. INTRODUCTION

1. How many of you have a problem with pride – raise your hand?
Today I'm going to be talking to you, but more importantly to those of you who didn't raise your hand.
2. One of the greatest Christian authors and thinkers of all-time is **C.S. Lewis**. His most famous book is *Mere Christianity*, and in that book there is a chapter called "The Great Sin," where he writes about the worst sin of all – the sin of pride. He wrote, "It is pride which has been the chief cause of misery in every nation and every family since the world began." He said that pride is the worst sin of all, and the sin that leads to every other sin.
3. The great preacher **Adrian Rogers** said, "There is a very dangerous sin that, in my estimation, is doing more to hold back revival, destroy homes, ruin this nation, cause Christians to live in failure and defeat, and fill hell than any other sin. Very frankly, it is the sin of pride."
4. One of the worst things about the sin of pride is that it is hard to detect in yourself. The drunkard knows he is a drunkard. The thief knows he is a thief. The immoral man knows he is immoral. But the prideful person doesn't know he struggles with pride. In fact, sometimes he brags about his humility.
5. Today we are going to see what the Bible says about overcoming pride.

II. TEXT

1. **Romans 12:3** "For by the grace given to me, I tell everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he should think. Instead, think sensibly, as God has distributed a measure of faith to each one."
2. This verse gives us three steps to overcome pride.

III. HOW TO OVERCOME PRIDE

1. **Comprehend the nature of pride.**

- i. The first step to overcome pride is to comprehend the nature of pride. To understand what it is. And Romans 12:3 gives us the best definition.
- ii. **Romans 12:3** “For by the grace given to me, I tell everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he should think. Instead, think sensibly, as God has distributed a measure of faith to each one.”
- iii. This verse gives us the definition of pride. Pride is thinking too highly of yourself. It is an exaggerated view of yourself.
- iv. **Pride manifests itself in the following ways.**
 1. **Boasting about yourself.**
 - a. The prideful person boasts and brags about himself, his intelligence, accomplishments, morality, good deeds, income, possessions, etc. “Look what I’ve done! Look at how awesome I am. Look at me.” The prideful person praises and glorifies himself.
 - b. Once there was a frog who lived in the cold mud of Minnesota, and he saw some Canadian geese who had stopped to rest. He asked them, “Where are you going?” They said, “We’re flying south for the winter.” The frog said, “I want to go with you.” They said, “You can’t; you don’t have wings.” The frog said, “No, but I have an idea. Take a stick, and one of you hold one end with your beak, and another of you hold the other end with your beak, and I’ll hold on to the stick with me mouth.” So they tried it, and it worked, and before long, the frog was flying south with the geese. As they passed by Indiana, a farmer looked up and saw the frog flying with the geese, just hanging on with his mouth and he was amazed. He said, “Wow! That’s most amazing thing I’ve ever seen. I wonder who idea that was.” The frog shouted, “Minnnnned,” as he dropped to his death.

- c. The prideful person is always bragging; always boasting. He always wants the credit, the spotlight, the pat on the back, the compliment.
- d. And he doesn't like to share the spotlight. He doesn't like to give the glory to God, or to praise and compliment other people. He doesn't like it when other people get praised.
- e. But what does the Bible say?
- f. **Proverbs 27:2** "Let another praise you, and not your own mouth – a stranger, and not your own lips."
- g. The Bible tells us not to boast and to brag about ourselves.
- h. **1 Corinthians 10:31** "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God."
- i. In other words, we're not to live for our praise and our glory, but for the glory of God.
- j. The prideful person is a one-upper. When someone tells of their accomplishment, you tell of your greater accomplishment. But the Bible tells us to only boast in the Lord.
- k. **Jeremiah 9:23-24** "This is what the Lord says: The wise person should not boast in his wisdom; the strong should not boast in his strength; the wealthy should not boast in his wealth. But the one who boasts should boast in this: that he understands and know me."
- l. **Galatians 6:14** "But as for me, I will never boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

2. Ungratefulness to God.

- a. When God blesses the prideful person, they think they earned it, they deserve it, it belongs to them, and they have the right to do whatever they want with it.
- b. Therefore, they are not big on thanking God. They are not big on worship. They are not big on praising God. They are not big on stewardship – using what they have for God. And they are not very big on showing gratitude to other people. They pulled themselves up by their own bootstraps.
- c. What does the Bible say? The Bible says to be thankful.
- d. **1 Thessalonians 5:18** “give thanks in everything; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”
- e. Why should we give thanks in everything?
Because every good and perfect gift comes from God (James 1:17). You are a sinner, so if God were to actually give you what you deserved, what you earned, it would be hell. Everything good in your life is by grace – an unearned gift from God.
- f. You might think that you pulled yourself up from your own bootstraps, and hard work is important, but who gave you your intelligence? Who gave you your muscles? Who gave you your health? Who gave you your hands and feet, your eyes, your ears? Who keeps your heart beating, and your lungs functioning? It all comes from God.
- g. **1 Corinthians 4:7 (NLT)** “What do you have that that God hasn’t given you?”

3. Self-sufficiency.

- a. Pride says, “I don’t need God. I don’t need church. I don’t need the Bible. I don’t need prayer. I can do life on my own.”

- b. Christians who struggle to pray and read their bible don't have a prayer problem, they don't have a self-discipline problem, they have a pride problem. Deep down they aren't convinced that they need a daily quiet time. They are strong enough to make it without God and the Bible.
- c. Most Christians who don't make church a priority don't have a church problem, they aren't too busy, they have a pride problem. Deep down they don't believe they need church. They don't need other Christians. They can do the Christian life on their own.
- d. But what does the Bible say?
- e. **John 15:5** "I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without me."
- f. Apart from Christ you can do nothing. Without an intimate, healthy relationship with God, we cannot be and do what we were created to do.

4. Independence from God.

- a. Pride is a spirit of independence from God.
- b. Pride says, "I am the captain of my own ship. I am the boss of my life. Nobody has the right to tell me what to do, not even God."
- c. The prideful refuses to surrender to God's authority. He refuses to submit to God's word. He refuses to obey God's voice. He is His own authority.

5. Looking down on others.

- a. Pride is thinking you are better, smarter, more athletic, more talented, more spiritual, more moral, more loving, more deserving than other people.

- b. It is thinking that because of your accomplishments, your income, your beauty, your intelligence, you are better than others; you are more important than them.
- c. As a result, prideful people are often hyper-critical. Wherever they go, they criticize. They criticize their spouse, their children, their pastor, their church, their neighbors, their coworkers, their boss, their company. Nobody is good enough. They are better than everyone.
- d. The prideful person doesn't hang around certain people, doesn't talk to certain people, doesn't even help certain people, because they are too important. They are on a different level. They are too high. Too good. Too important. Too popular. Too special.
- e. The apostle Paul wasn't like that. He was a missionary, a preacher, the author of much of our Bible. Yet he called himself "the chief of sinners." He thought he was worse than everyone else.
- f. Jesus wasn't like that. He was a friend of sinners. He touched the lepers. He talked to the Samaritans. He embraced the little children. He spent His time with the forgotten, the outcasts, the unclean.
- v. It's no wonder that God hates pride.
- vi. **Proverbs 6:16-19**
 16 The LORD hates six things; in fact, seven are detestable to him: 17 arrogant eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, 18 a heart that plots wicked schemes, feet eager to run to evil, 19 a lying witness who gives false testimony, and one who stirs up trouble among brothers.
- vii. Did you notice what's at the top of that list? Arrogant eyes. Of the seven things that God hates, pride tops the list.

- viii. Pride is what made the devil the devil. He was a beautiful angel, but he said, "I will make myself like the Most High." He thought too highly of himself. Is 14:13-16
- ix. Pride is what plunged the human race into sin. Adam and Eve's sin wasn't eating a piece of fruit, it was the desire to be like God (Gen 3:5). They thought too highly of themselves.
- x. Consider the many problems that are caused by pride:
 - 1. Prideful people have relationship problems because they refuse to admit their mistakes, and apologize, and ask for forgiveness.
 - 2. Prideful people have trouble at work because they aren't good at submitting to authority. They think they are smarter than the boss, and they should be in charge.
 - 3. Pride is the reason that some kids rebel against their parents; they think they are smarter than their parents.
 - 4. Pride is the reason some people are irresponsible and never overcome their problems; their problems are always somebody else's fault. They always have an excuse, an alibi, a justification. They never look in the mirror to see that their biggest problem in life is staring back at them.
 - 5. Prideful people miss out on opportunities to serve the Lord. They think they are too important for dirty jobs, for mundane jobs, for those jobs that are behind-the-scenes.
 - 6. Prideful people make bad decisions because they refuse ask for advice. Either they think they know it all, or they don't want to admit that they don't know it all.
 - 7. Prideful people struggle to try new things because they don't want anyone to see them fail.
 - 8. Pride is what keeps many people from getting saved. They think they are good enough to deserve heaven. They don't think they deserve to go to hell. They think they can earn heaven with their good works.
- xi. It's no wonder that God detests pride.

- xii. **Proverbs 16:5** “Everyone with a proud heart is detestable to the Lord; be assured, he will not go unpunished.”
- xiii. The first step in overcoming pride is to understand what it is. It is thinking too highly of yourself.
- xiv. For those of you who are younger, Muhammad Ali is known as the greatest heavyweight boxer of all time. And he was known for his extreme arrogance; he was so arrogant and prideful that it was humorous. One time he got on an airplane and he was sitting down drinking his Coke and eating his peanuts when the stewardess said, “Sir, buckle your seatbelt.” He said, “I’m superman, and superman don’t need no seatbelt.” The stewardess said, “Yes, and superman don’t need no airplane either. Now buckle up.” Ali thought too highly of himself. That’s pride.

2. Choose to think sensibly about yourself.

- i. The second step in overcoming pride is to think sensibly.
- ii. **Romans 12:3** “For by the grace given to me, I tell everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he should think. Instead, think sensibly, as God has distributed a measure of faith to each one.”
- iii. Notice that Paul says, “Instead of thinking too highly of yourself, think sensibly.”
- iv. Another word for sensible is wise. Think wisely.
- v. How do we think wisely about ourselves? We need to see ourselves the way that God sees us.
- vi. Pride is thinking too highly of yourself, and the opposite of pride is humility. Humility is not the opposite extreme, which is thinking too low of yourself; it is not the lack of confidence; humility is not a low self-esteem. Humility is seeing yourself the way God sees you, because God sees us the way we really are.
- vii. How does God see you?
 1. You are priceless, but without God you are hopeless.
 2. You are important, but no more important than anyone else.

3. You are very talented, but your talents are a gift from God and must be used in His service.
 4. You have many strengths, but you are very weak without Christ's power working within you, and without the support of a church family.
 5. You have an amazing mind, but you are foolish without the wisdom of God's word.
 6. You may be the boss at home or at work, but God wants you to submit to His authority and be obedient to Him.
 7. You may be a leader, but God put you in charge to serve those you lead.
 8. You can accomplish much, but apart from Christ you can do nothing of any real worth.
 9. You may be very beautiful, or very strong, but true beauty and strength are measured by your character.
 10. You may be very rich, but your riches are a gift from God, and they belong to Him, He can take them away at any moment, and He wants you to be rich in good deeds.
 11. You may be do a lot of good deeds, but you are still a sinner who deserves to go hell, and your only hope is to repent of sin and put your faith in Christ.
- viii. One time I was at a party and Lydia corrected me in front of everyone, and one of my friends said, "Andy, marriage will keep humble." Marriage does help you to grow in humility, but if humility is seeing yourself the way God sees you, then the best way to grow in humility is to read the Bible. Read it every day. The Bible is not only a window through which we can see God, but it also a mirror that shows our true selves. It helps us to see who we really are. It helps us to see ourselves the way God sees us. The Bible helps us to see that...
1. God is big, and you are small.
 2. God is all-powerful, and you are very weak.
 3. God is holy, and you are sinful.
 4. God is wise, and you are foolish.

- 5. God is love, and you are selfish.
- 6. Everything belongs to God, including you.
- 7. It's all about God; it's not about you.
- ix. The ironic thing about pride is that the prideful person wants praise, and honor, and glory, and compliments, and people to like them, but because of their pride they get the opposite. Pride is repulsive, repugnant, annoying.
- x. **Proverbs 11:2** "When arrogance comes, disgrace follows...."
- xi. But humility leads to honor. The moment that you let go of pride, and start just living for Christ and for other people and not for your own ego and your own selfish desires, that's when people start to honor and praise and like you.
- xii. **Proverbs 18:12** "Before his downfall a person's heart is proud, but humility comes before honor."

3. Compare yourself to Christ.

- i. The third step to overcome pride is to compare yourself to Christ.
- ii. **Romans 12:3** "For by the grace given to me, I tell everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he should think. Instead, think sensibly, as God has distributed a measure of faith to each one."
- iii. Notice the last phrase, "as God has distributed a measure of faith to each one." The word "measure" can also be translated "standard," so that it is saying that God has given each of us a standard of faith by which we can measure and grade ourselves.
- iv. What is the standard of faith by which we need to compare ourselves? Jesus Christ. To overcome pride, we need to compare ourselves to Jesus.
- v. One of the causes of pride is when we compare ourselves to others. But we don't compare ourselves to people who are better than us. We like to compare ourselves to people that are worse than us. You may not go to church every week, but compared to those people who never go to church, you're a saint. You may slip up and curse every once in a while, but

compared to your coworkers you're a saint. You may look at pornography on occasion, but compared to people who look at child pornography you're a saint. You may have bad temper, but compared to Hitler you're a saint. Compared to some people we all look like saints. If you compare yourself to other people you won't get an accurate view of yourself. You won't think sensibly about yourself. You won't see yourself the way God sees you. That's why you need to compare yourself to the true standard, and that's Jesus Christ.

- vi. Jesus never sins. He never curses. He never loses His temper. He never cheats, lies, steals, or hurts people. He never gossips. He never has impure thoughts. He is never jealous or greedy or prideful. He never lusts or commits sexual sin. He is perfectly holy. That's the standard. That's who we are supposed to be like. That's who we need to compare ourselves to.
- vii. And when you compare yourself to Jesus, you can't be prideful. When you compare yourself to Jesus you realize that you are a sinner, just as bad as everyone else. You realize that you need God's forgiveness just as much as everyone else. You need God's help as much as everyone else.
- viii. There was a boy who loved basketball, so his dad bought him a goal and put it in the driveway. He really wanted to dunk, so he practiced every day, and each day he got a little higher until eventually he could dunk the ball. And he kept practicing so that he could do all kinds of trick dunks. He was pretty impressed with himself. He could do a lot of the same dunks that the professionals were doing on TV. So one day he went inside and said, "Dad, I've been working on it and I learned how to dunk. I can do all kinds of tricks. Come and see." So, his dad went outside to watch, and sure enough the boy was doing some pretty neat dunks. He said, "Dad, I can dunk just like LeBron James." But then the dad went up to the goal, looked at it and said, "Son, you realize your goal is

not raised all the way up, right? Your goal is only at about eight feet, but a regulation basketball goal is ten feet tall. Then the dad adjusted the goal to ten feet. The boy tried to dunk, but he couldn't even touch the rim. The boy was impressed with himself because his goal was lower than it should have been. Once he realized how high the goal was supposed to be, he was humbled. Many people are prideful because their goal is too low; it is simply to be better than other people. As long as there are people who are worse than them, they feel good about themselves. But that's the wrong goal. Our standard of faith is Jesus Christ. That's who we are supposed to be imitating. That's who we need to compare ourselves to. When you compare yourself to Jesus, your pride vanishes.

IV. CONCLUSION

1. The bad news is this: Compared to Jesus, you are a sinner. And you deserve God's punishment. The good news is this: God loves you anyway. He sent Jesus to earth to save sinners just like you. When He died on the cross, He was dying for your sins. He was taking the punishment that you deserved upon Himself. And then He rose again. Now, if you will repent of your sins – hand the steering wheel of your life over to Jesus – and believe in Him, He will save you.
2. Maybe you are a Christian and this message has helped you to realize that you are struggling with pride. In the next few moments I encourage you to pray and confess your sins to God, and ask Him to help you grow in humility.
3. Or maybe you are not sure if you are a Christian, or if you are going to go to heaven when you die. When you die, you will either go to heaven or to hell for all eternity. God wants you to go to heaven. All you have to do is A, B, C. Admit you are a sinner in need of a Savior. This is where humility comes in. Believe that Jesus is the Savior who died for your sins and rose again. Call on Jesus to come into your life and be your Savior and Boss. If you do that and mean it, Jesus will save you right now, forgiving all your sins, and giving you the gift of eternal life.