



LAYING THE AXE TO THE ROOT SERIES

Matthew 3:10-12

We have emphasized the wonderful baptism in the Holy Spirit which Jesus provides for us. However, we have neglected that His coming also signaled the time when “the axe is laid to the root” and when the chaff will be burned with fire. Verse 11 that promises the baptism in the Spirit is preceded and followed by verses that talk about a cleansing work. However, so many of us have opted for one without the other. We received the Spirit baptism, but are not willing to allow God to lay the axe to the root.

Part 3 : LAYING THE AXE TO THE ROOT OF PRIDE Sunday May 29, 2005

Pride = arrogance, haughtiness, self-exaltation, self-confidence, boasting, an attitude that makes us think we are superior to others

PRIDE – PART OF THIS WORLD’S SYSTEM

1 John 2:16

There is a “pride of life” that is part of this world’s system. The world considers it “normal” to think highly of ones self, to think highly of certain things, etc. If we are not careful, we could get trapped in the same pattern of thinking and perceiving things.

PRIDE – AN ABOMINATION TO GOD

Proverbs 6:16-19

Pride is an abomination to God – some thing He totally hates.

PRIDE – KEEPS GOD FAR AWAY FROM US

James 4:6

God resists the proud. God avoids the proud. What a dangerous position to be – where even God does not want to come close.

This means that every other spiritual activity – worship, prayer, fasting, meditation, confession, giving, etc. – becomes less effective, if pride remains in our heart. Because no matter how much we pray, fast, meditate, confess or give – if we are unwilling to relinquish pride, God cannot draw close to us. And without Him, we are nothing!

God gives grace to the humble. Therefore humility makes it possible for us to receive divine grace.

Everything we will become and we will accomplish beyond ourselves will be by His grace. The one prerequisite to receiving the grace of God is humility. Without humility we will never “become” and we will never “accomplish” God’s highest and best for our lives.

Holiness is a product of grace, and God gives grace only to the humble. Therefore one must be humble if one is to become holy.

Numbers 12:3

Moses – a man with a meek spirit

Great leaders are men of great humility.

PRIDE – A SUBTLE THING

Pride is a subtle thing – it is very hard to recognize it in ourselves. We think we are free from it, when really much of the way we think, our attitudes, our behaviour, etc. is stained with pride.



MANIFESTATIONS OF A ROOT OF PRIDE (HAUGHTINESS)

1. Obstinate, Stubborn

We must be resolute and steadfast in the call of God and in the things of God. And yet, we must guard ourselves against stubbornness and an unwillingness to change that is birthed out of pride.

Daniel 5:17-21

Pride, stubbornness and cruelty go hand in hand.

Proverbs 29:1

"If you get more stubborn every time you are corrected, one day you will be crushed and never recover."(GNB)

When people speak godly counsel and correction into our lives and we are unwilling to listen – beware of stubbornness born out of pride!

2. Arrogance / Overconfidence

Jeremiah 48:29 Isaiah 13:11

Pride produces arrogance.

Proverbs 8:13

A genuine fear of God will cause us to renounce pride, arrogance and every evil way.

Don't confuse arrogance with aggressiveness – these two are not the same.

We must be spiritually aggressive (Matthew 11:12) without being spiritually arrogant.

Spiritual arrogance makes us think that we are the best, that we've got it all down just right, and every one else is not as good as us, that our way of doing things is the best way. Spiritual arrogance makes us think that our "brand" of Christianity (if there is such a thing!) is the best!

While we MUST stand for the truth of the Word, spiritual arrogance makes us think that we are the ones with the greatest personal revelation of the truth. It puts confidence in self, makes self important, promotes personal convictions, methods, styles and preferences as absolutes and disregards the fact that "there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all" (1 Corinthians 12:6)

3. Rebellious

Rebellion is unwillingness to submit to God appointed authority – His Word, His Spirit, His people.

Pride causes one to walk in rebellion towards God appointed authority.

1 Samuel 15:23

Partial obedience is still considered rebellion!

Isaiah 14:12-15

The greatest act of rebellion in known history is that of Lucifer, birthed out of pride.

4. Scornful



To be scornful is to be mocking, disrespectful, sneering and contemptuous of others. This is usually shown in the comments one makes and the opinions one has about other people.

There are some who rarely have any good thing to say about others. They almost always speak low and derogatorily of others. This is being scornful and usually is birthed out of pride.

Proverbs 1:22

Scorners take pleasure in scorning people.

Proverbs 3:34

God scorns the scorners!

Proverbs 21:24

"Show me a conceited person and I will show you someone who is arrogant, proud, and inconsiderate."(GNB)

Proverbs 29:8

Being scornful produces trouble.

5. Self Righteous / Hypocrisy

Luke 18:9 -14

Pride produces self-righteousness that leads to hypocrisy.

Self-righteousness makes us judge others, makes us think that we are better than others, without recognizing the flaws that we have in ourselves.

A hypocrite is one who excuses his own sin while condemning the sins of others.

Matthew 7:1-5

Get rid of the sin of judging others because it keeps us from discerning sin in ourselves.

We do not become holy by judging others, neither do we come nearer to God by pointing sin in others.

Christ died for sinners, becoming our Saviour, before He ascended to the throne where He one will be our Judge. In God's Kingdom, unless you are first committed to laying down your life for people, you are not given the authority to be their leader or judge. So before you judge some one ask yourself if you are willing to die for them to bring them out of where they are to a place of wholeness!

When we speak against sin, injustice and unrighteousness we must be motivated by the love of God with the objective of restoration and wholeness. If the love of God is not our motivation, with restoration and wholeness our goal, then we must learn to keep our mouth shut!

6. Contentious / Quarrelsome

Proverbs 13:10 Proverbs 28:25

Pride produces quarrels.

7. Prejudice

Pride births prejudice.

Prejudice is discrimination, intolerance, bias, predisposed unfairness towards certain kinds of people.

8. Highminded / Exclusive



Romans 12:16

1 Timothy 6:17

CONSEQUENCES OF A HEART OF PRIDE

In addition to all that we have already discussed -

1. Brings shame

Proverbs 11:2

2. Results in fall and destruction

Proverbs 16:18

Mark 7:14-23

Jesus listed pride as one of those things that defile a man.

3. Produces Self Deception

Obadiah 1:3

James 1:21

A pre-requisite to receiving the Word so that the Word becomes an experiential reality in our lives, is a heart of meekness.

There is a difference between having spiritual knowledge and having the Word become flesh – an experiential reality in our life. Just having deep spiritual knowledge without having it become an experiential reality, makes one proud (1 Corinthians 8:1).

Satan's lies enter our minds in quiet whispers not in flamboyant shouts. Satan walks in darkness not in light, although he pretends to be an angle of light.

4. Brings condemnation

1 Timothy 3:6

Here is the ultimate consequence of pride at work in our lives – it brings the condemnation and judgment of God upon our lives, the same way Satan was condemned and cast out of God's presence!

MAINTAINING A MEEK AND HUMBLE SPIRIT

1. We are called to be meek

Ephesians 4:2 Colossians 3:12 1 Timothy 6:11

Meekness, humility, lowliness – are our Christian virtues

Ministers must minister with a spirit of meekness (2 Timothy 2:25)

2. Understand that meekness is true strength

Matthew 11:28,29

Jesus described Himself as meek and lowly in heart.

Beware when some one speaks with contempt about being "meek and lowly" in heart. This is contrary to the very nature and character of Christ!

Meekness is a virtue of the risen Christ and is produced in us by His Spirit (Galatians 5:22)



Matthew 5:5

Meekness is not weakness, rather it is strength. The key to great conquests is a spirit of meekness because it is the meek who will inherit the earth.

3. Always maintain a servant heart

Matthew 23:10-12 Philippians 5:5-11

4. Always maintain a true estimation of yourself

Romans 12:3

Don't think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but think soberly (moderately) in proportion to the faith given to you by God.

Galatians 6:1

5. Humility is walking in utter dependence on the Lord at all times

James 4:6-10

True humility is more than an awareness of our weaknesses and the condition of our need. Even in times of great blessing, strength, and victory we must recognize and delight in our utter dependence on the Lord, knowing that every good thing we have has come from Him (2 Corinthians 3:5). This is true humility.

6. Submission & Repentance are key

James 4:7-9

Admit the possibility that we could have pride in our hearts and constantly examine our hearts, our thoughts, our attitudes and our actions. We must get rid of the assumption that we are absolutely free from pride.

Continually evaluate ourselves in the presence of the Lord. Continually ask the Lord to search our hearts and expose it in our lives by His Spirit.

The humble shall be honoured

Proverbs 29:23

Prayer:

Let us search our heart and life in the presence of the Lord.

Let us confess and renounce pride.