

Be Clothed with Humility

The VISION Newsletter / May 2018

Pastor E. Keith Hassell

1 Peter 5:5–7 (NKJV) *“Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for ‘God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.’⁶ Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time,⁷ casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.”*

Pride is a big problem. In fact, pride is the root of most sins. Pride caused Lucifer to fall from heaven: *“How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations!¹³ For you have said in your heart: ‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north;¹⁴ I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.’¹⁵ Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit.”¹ Pride is what caused Eve to take and eat the forbidden fruit in order to “be like God”.² Pride is what caused God to confuse the language of the people when building the tower of Babel.³*

A more contemporary example of the destructive consequences of pride is the British passenger luxury liner called the *“Titanic.”* It was named after the Titans who were regarded as invincible Greek gods. The Titanic was the largest ship in the world being 882’ long (approximately three football fields) and weighing 46,328 tons. It had sixteen water-tight compartments in its double-bottomed hull. Four of these compartments could be flooded without sinking the ship. It was generally considered unsinkable. Reportedly someone boasted, “Not even God could sink this ship.” On April 10, 1912 the Titanic set sail on its maiden voyage from Southampton, England to New York. It had 2,224 passengers. Third class tickets were thirty-six dollars and first-class tickets were four thousand three hundred dollars. The passengers included families, children, honeymooners, lovers, the rich and famous, older couples, and friends. The passengers were eating, drinking, being merry, dancing, and enjoying music. In order to set record time, the captain of the ship chose to keep speeds of 22 knots (25 mph) and to go through a northern path even after being warned of icebergs. Just before midnight on April 14 the ship struck an iceberg that ripped a 245’ gash in its right side filling up *five* compartments. The unimaginable had happened and the ship was going down. The Titanic only had lifeboats available for 1,178 of its 2,224 passengers. Within three hours the ship went down. The number of dead was 1,513. If it had not been for pride, the Titanic might be in a harbor museum today.

The Bible has a lot to say about pride. Consider the following:

Proverbs 11:2 (NKJV) *“When pride comes, then comes shame; but with the humble is wisdom.”*

Proverbs 13:10 (NKJV) *“By pride comes nothing but strife, but with the well-advised is wisdom.”*

Proverbs 16:18 (NKJV) *“Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.”*

Proverbs 29:23 (NKJV) *“A man’s pride will bring him low, but the humble in spirit will retain honor.”*

Billy Graham once said: “Pride consists not in wanting to be rich, but in wanting to be richer than your neighbor. It is not wanting to be noticed but in wanting to be the most noticed. It is not in wanting to have things, but in wanting more things than others.” August B. Black said: “Pride is tasteless, colorless, and sizeless. Yet it is the hardest thing to swallow.”

¹ Isaiah 14:12–15 (NKJV)

² Genesis 3:5

³ Genesis 11:1-9

Peter says that God resists the proud. This means that God sets Himself in battle array to fight against the proud. In the Book of Job the LORD mentions a creature named Leviathan who cannot be conquered by man. He is the king over the children of pride.⁴

Peter then asserts that God gives grace to the humble. Grace is a gift of God. It is unearned and undeserved. It is God's power and ability working in us what we cannot do and cannot be on our own.⁵ The psalmist declared, *"Though the LORD is on high, yet He regards the lowly; but the proud He knows from afar."*⁶ Solomon declared, *"Surely He scorns the scornful, but gives grace to the humble"*⁷ Jesus said, *"And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."*⁸ The apostle James declared, *"But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: 'God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.'"*⁹

Due to the consequences that accompany pride and the grace that comes through humility, Peter exhorts us to be clothed with humility and to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God. We must remember how awesome God is and how insignificant we are without Him. Pride cannot exist where the majesty of God is clearly understood. Billy Graham said: "Pride flees when we compare ourselves to God instead of [to] other people."

Paul, likely the greatest apostle who ever lived, was once filled with pride. However, once he came to Christ, he saw himself in the light of the divine perspective. He said, *"And we have such trust through Christ toward God."*⁵ *Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God,"*¹⁰ Paul also declared, *"But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."*¹¹ Again he said, *"For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith."*¹²

Regarding humility, Jesus is our Supreme Example. He said, *"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."*¹³ John 13:1-20 At the Passover meal on the night in which He was betrayed, Jesus clothed himself with a towel and washed His disciples' feet.¹⁴ Paul exhorts us to *"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, ⁷ but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. ⁹ Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, ¹¹ and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."*¹⁵

The fashions of this world are always changing. However, the unchanging fashion of God's kingdom is the garment of humility. God is establishing His kingdom and building His church with those clothed in humility. God will resist the proud but give grace to the humble. The great need of the hour is to repent of pride and be clothed with humility.

⁴ Job 41:34

⁵ Philippians 2:13

⁶ Psalm 138:6 (NKJV)

⁷ Proverbs 3:34 (NKJV)

⁸ Matthew 23:12 (NKJV)

⁹ James 4:6 (NKJV)

¹⁰ 2 Corinthians 3:4-5 (NKJV)

¹¹ 1 Corinthians 15:10 (NKJV)

¹² Romans 12:3 (NKJV)

¹³ Mark 10:45 (NKJV)

¹⁴ John 13:1-20

¹⁵ Philippians 2:5-11 (NKJV)