

# The Revival Attitude

## The VISION Newsletter / March 2015

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**2 Chronicles 7:14 (NKJV) “If My people who are called by My name WILL HUMBLE THEMSELVES, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”**

America is a troubled nation. America is sick with sin, blinded by pride, deaf to God’s truth, and is in need of a cure. The prophet Jeremiah said regarding Israel, “*Is there no balm in Gilead, is there no physician there? Why then is there no recovery for the health of the daughter of my people?*”<sup>1</sup> God has the prescription for what ails America. God’s prescription for a troubled nation is revival in the church. That prescription is found in 2 Chronicles 7:14 as stated above.

In my last article I talked about the first ingredient in God’s prescription, a revival *core*: “*If My people who are called by My name.*” God always begins with a remnant whose heart is burdened because of the sickness and whose spirit is stirred to obtain the cure. Are you a part of this revival core who are setting their face to seek revival?

The next ingredient in God’s prescription is the revival *attitude*. The root of the problem in any spiritual departure from God is the attitude of *pride*. Pride is also the root issue that prevents us from receiving the revival that we need. The attitude that is required for the church to receive God’s revival cure is *humility*.

There are two different kinds of pride—*noble* pride and *carnal* pride. It is important to differentiate between the two and identify the kind of pride that God rejects. Noble pride is a reasonable and justifiable self-respect. Noble pride gives God the glory while graciously acknowledging the contributions of others. Paul demonstrated noble pride when he said to the Corinthian believers, “*Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my boasting on your behalf. I am filled with comfort. I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation.*”<sup>2</sup> Noble pride is self-respect whose boast is in the Lord. It is pride generated by faith or confidence in God. We see this in the life of David when facing Goliath: “*Then David said to the Philistine, ‘You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. <sup>46</sup> This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. <sup>47</sup> Then all this assembly shall know that the LORD does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the LORD’s, and He will give you into our hands.’”<sup>3</sup>*

Carnal pride, on the other hand, is an improper or exaggerated esteem of oneself. Carnal pride is also known as conceit or arrogance. Paul exhorted the believers in Rome saying, “*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.*”<sup>4</sup> Carnal pride boasts in himself or herself rather than in the Lord. It is the direct opposite of humility.

Carnal pride stands in the way of revival. Revival and pride cannot co-exist. Where there is pride there can be no revival. Where there is revival there can be no pride. Pride keeps the sinner or the backslider from coming to God. Nehemiah acknowledged that it was pride that brought judgment on his nation:

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<sup>1</sup> Jeremiah 8:2-22 (NKJV)

<sup>22</sup> 2 Corinthians 7:4 (NKJV)

<sup>3</sup> 1 Samuel 17:45–47 (NKJV)

<sup>4</sup> Romans 12:3 (NKJV)

*"But they and our fathers acted proudly, hardened their necks, and did not heed Your commandments."<sup>5</sup> Puritan preacher Richard Baxter said: "God takes not pleasure in the death of sinners, but rather that they return and live. But men take such pleasure in sin that they will die before they will return." We must face the reality that the problem of pride will only increase in the last days: *"But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: for men will be...headstrong, haughty..."<sup>6</sup> James declares that God resists the proud.<sup>7</sup> In fact, God will humble anyone who seeks to exalt themselves: *"And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."<sup>8</sup>***

Revival is a time when God comes near, but pride will keep Him at a distance: *"Though the LORD is on high... the proud He knows from afar."<sup>9</sup> Indeed, pride sets a person up for all kinds of tragic consequences: *"Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."<sup>10</sup> Rather than revival, the proud will experience divine punishment: *"Rise up, O Judge of the earth; render punishment to the proud."<sup>11</sup>***

The opposite attitude to pride that will attract God's mercy in sending revival is *humility*. Humility is the revival attitude: *"If My people...will humble themselves"* Humility is having the proper perspective of oneself before God and others. Humility understands that apart from God we can do nothing. It also acknowledges the contributions of others in our success. Without humility we develop an inflated view of ourselves and of our importance. We become like the flea who said to another flea as they rode the back of an elephant across an old wooden bridge: "Did you notice how we shook that bridge?" An anonymous person once said, "A man wrapped up in himself makes a pretty small package." Benjamin Whichcote said, "None are so empty as those who are full of themselves." Rev. William Secker said, "I will not say a good man is never proud, but I will say a proud man is never good."

It is the responsibility of God's people to humble themselves. We are not instructed to pray "God make me humble". Asking for God to humble us is a request to be humiliated! Rather we are to willingly and reverently humble ourselves before Almighty God. That is not always easy.

Humility requires a high view of God. Isaiah experienced a high view of God when he received his call to be a prophet: *"In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. <sup>2</sup> Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. <sup>3</sup> And one cried to another and said: 'Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!' <sup>4</sup> And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. <sup>5</sup> So I said: 'Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.'"<sup>12</sup> In this vision Isaiah saw himself from a heavenly perspective and as a result felt his own doom. Puritan preacher John Flavel said, "They that know God will be humble. And they that know themselves cannot be proud."*

Humility is a prerequisite to revival because only through humility will we become honest with God and one another about the sin in our lives. Proverbs 28:13 (NKJV) says, *"He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy."* 1 John 1:9 (NKJV) says, *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all*

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<sup>5</sup> Nehemiah 9:16 (NKJV)

<sup>6</sup> 2 Timothy 3:4 (NKJV)

<sup>7</sup> James 4:6

<sup>8</sup> Matthew 23:12 (NKJV)

<sup>9</sup> Psalm 138:6 (NKJV)

<sup>10</sup> Proverbs 16:18 (NKJV)

<sup>11</sup> Psalm 94:2 (NKJV)

<sup>12</sup> Isaiah 6:1–5 (NKJV)

*unrighteousness.*” Humility results in acknowledgement of sin and accepting personal responsibility before God.

After committing adultery and then plotting murder to cover his sin, King David was confronted by God and amazingly found mercy when he repented. First King David had to acknowledge his sin. He knew that the only sacrifice that God would acknowledge in his forgiveness and restoration was an attitude of humility: *“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart—these, O God, You will not despise.”*<sup>13</sup> How did King David humble himself before God? He confessed his sin and asked for mercy: *“Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. <sup>2</sup> Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. <sup>3</sup> For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. <sup>4</sup> Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight—that You may be found just when You speak, and blameless when You judge.”*<sup>14</sup>

God’s people are to be clothed in humility. The apostle Peter instructed his readers, *“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.’”*<sup>15</sup> Paul said to the Colossian believers, *“Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;”*<sup>16</sup> The attitude of humility should be evident in our service to God and to others.

The attitude of humility will be rewarded by the Lord. Scripture says that the LORD will regard the humble: *“Though the LORD is on high, yet He regards the lowly; but the proud He knows from afar.”*<sup>17</sup> The LORD gives grace to the humble: *“Surely He scorns the scornful, but gives grace to the humble.”*<sup>18</sup> Again He says, *“God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Therefore submit to God...”*<sup>19</sup> In addition to giving grace, the LORD will also exalt the humble: *“And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”*<sup>20</sup> Again He says, *“Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time.”*<sup>21</sup> In addition, the LORD will save the humble: *“You will save the humble people; but Your eyes are on the haughty, that You may bring them down.”*<sup>22</sup> National “salvation” is called *revival!*

The LORD will revive the humble. In light of this hope and His promise found in 2 Chronicles 7:14, isn’t it time for God’s people to repent of their pride, to humble themselves before Almighty God, and to admit that they can do nothing without Him? I think it would do us well to consider a Puritan prayer that emulates the attitude of humility that our generation so desperately needs to recover.

### **The Prayer of Self-Deprecation**

“O Lord, my every sense, member, faculty, affection, is a snare to me, I can scarcely open my eyes but I envy those above me, or despise those below. I covet honour and riches of the mighty, and am proud and unmerciful to the rags of others; if I behold beauty it is a bait to lust, or see deformity, it stirs up loathing and disdain; how soon do slanders, vain jests, and wanton speeches creep into my heart! Am I comely? What fuel for pride! Am I deformed? What an occasion for repining! Am I gifted? I lust

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<sup>13</sup> Psalm 51:17 (NKJV)

<sup>14</sup> Psalm 51:1–4 (NKJV)

<sup>15</sup> 1 Peter 5:5 (NKJV)

<sup>16</sup> Colossians 3:12 (NKJV)

<sup>17</sup> Psalm 138:6 (NKJV)

<sup>18</sup> Proverbs 3:34 (NKJV)

<sup>19</sup> James 4:6-7 (NKJV)

<sup>20</sup> Matthew 23:12 (NKJV)

<sup>21</sup> 1 Peter 5:6 (NKJV)

<sup>22</sup> 2 Samuel 22:28 (NKJV)

after applause! Am I unlearned? How I despise what I have not! Am I in authority? How prone to abuse my trust, make will my law, exclude other's enjoyments, serve my own interests and policy! Am I inferior? How much I begrudge other's pre-eminence! Am I rich? How exalted I become! Thou knowest that all these are snares by my corruptions, and that my greatest snare is myself. I bewail that my apprehensions are dull, my thoughts mean, my affections stupid, my expressions low, my life unbeseeming; yet what canst thou expect of dust but levity, of corruption but defilement? Keep me ever mindful of my natural state, but let me not forget my heavenly title, or the grace that can deal with every sin."<sup>23</sup>

*"If My people...will humble themselves..."*

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<sup>23</sup> Arthur Bennett, The Valley of Vision (Carlisle, PA; The Banner of Truth Trust, 1975), 132-133