

MORNING DEVOTIONS

PRIDE COMES BEFORE A FALL

Two lawyers were busy at work one morning and they were talking about their boss. Jessica says "Our boss thinks he's so great ..he treats everyone working under him like idiots". And George says "I know. It's quite ironic really because he's honestly not that special. He has a very overinflated view of his own abilities". And Jessica winds up the conversation "Don't worry. Pride goes before the fall. He'll eventually get what he deserves". When I heard about that conversation I thought about an arrogant person I know, and how this old phrase "pride comes before a fall" could be paraphrased "an arrogant person will get his/her comeuppance". I'm thinking about this saying today because it's used quite a lot today and is another way of saying - 'Don't be too arrogant - you'll come crashing down sooner rather than later'. An arrogant person might think he cannot make a mistake, but will be highly embarrassed by any mistake he does make. Mark Twain said it this way, "Human pride is not worthwhile; there is always something lying in wait to take the wind out of it." But actually this phrase comes from the Old Testament .. Proverbs 16:18 "Pride precedes destruction; an arrogant spirit gives way to a nasty fall". The Message version says "First pride, then the crash - the bigger the ego, the harder the fall. (Proverbs 16:18,)

This ancient and simple Bible verse still is extraordinarily applicable to our lives today. We are living in a culture that does not accept God and His role in our lives. Our abilities to "make our own way" or "work hard enough to find success" are just a few obvious ways that our world has bought into the lie that we have the ability to control our destiny apart from a reliance on God. The poet Henley who died in 1903 put it well - 'I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul'. Much the same message. Why should I believe in God when I am the centre of the universe? When we live with the idea that "our way is best," then there is no room for God or the people around us to influence our lives. Philippians 2:3 captures the posture we should take in our relationships. Philippians 2:3 says "Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves." Yet, how hard is this to actually live by? When we recognize that our pride has brought us to a dead end, all we have to do is ask for God's forgiveness. He mercifully promises to be with us and guide us to more solid ground. I am sure this is great lesson to learn.

The amazing thing is the Bible has many illustrations of how God chose to use those who were humble, and not the self opinionated ..some were heroes who gained great respect and admiration from others - Like King David, who refused to kill his enemy, King Saul (on two separate occasions, reference 1 Samuel 24 and 1 Samuel 26) to the prophet Daniel, who strove to serve God and did not seek riches or glory (Daniel 5:17). Pride can severely inhibit our ability to do great things. As C.S. Lewis said, "A proud man is always looking down on things and people; and, of course, as long as you are looking down, you cannot see something that is above you." What a great and wise observation. I believe there is good pride and bad pride ..bit like a pair of plyers. If you use it to brush your teeth you're in big trouble. But using the tool to fix your fence is good and effective.. I recall Billy Graham answering a letter from someone who wanted to know if pride is a sin. Billy Graham said "It's not necessarily wrong to take pride in

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something we've done well. This kind of pride isn't boastful or self-centered, but is a feeling of satisfaction over what we've accomplished. But sinful pride—the kind the Bible condemns—is far different. Sinful pride is self-centered and boastful, and makes us take credit for everything we are and everything we do. Instead of realizing that we are dependent on God, in our pride we ignore God and believe we can get along without Him". I believe that to be true - The tragedy is that pride blinds us to our faults. More than that, pride blinds us to our need for God.

It's not necessarily wrong to take pride in our work, or in something else we've done well; There is nothing wrong with being confident and having pride in what we accomplish. As long as we have the right attitude coming from humility. The Bible urges us to be diligent and do our best. That's good pride. But bad pride exists when we think God is not necessary .. , pride cuts us off from God. We become like the proud Pharaoh in ancient Egypt who enslaved God's people and told Moses, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey him and let Israel go? I do not know the Lord" (Exodus 5:2). Pride seeks to promote myself rather than placing God as first in my life

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It would be a good exercise to pray the prayer of the Psalmist in Psalm 139 "Investigate my life, O God, find out everything about me, Cross examine and test me, get a clear picture of what I'm about. See for yourself whether I've done anything wrong- then guide me on the road to eternal life".