I was recently reading an article in Christianity Today in which Scot McKnight, the author, talked about a questionnaire he has his college students fill out on the opening day of class. The class is called “Jesus of Nazareth” and, after the students imagine Jesus’ personality, he asks them to answer a series of questions. For example, “Does he prefer to go his own way rather than to act by the rules?” and “Is he a worrier?” He then gives the students a second questionnaire to fill out about themselves. By comparing the results from both questionnaires, he concludes that the students “think that Jesus is like us. Introverts think Jesus is introverted, for example, and on the basis of the same questions, extroverts think Jesus is extroverted.” It should not come as a great surprise that people tend to shape Jesus, or even God, into their own image. We all see the world from our own perspective and interpret things based on our own experiences, personalities, and temperaments.

Ever since the fall of man in the Garden of Eden people have had to struggle against the sin of pride. Egocentrism (self-centered behavior) can be very damaging, leading to a victim mentality and entitlement attitudes. From a prideful heart and a desire to “have it my way” spring all forms of evil behaviors...

Egocentrism (self-centered behavior) can be very damaging, leading to a victim mentality and entitlement attitudes. From a prideful heart and a desire to “have it my way” spring all forms of evil behaviors...

In this issue of The Sower, Humility versus Pride, we continue exploring fundamental matters related to our ministry’s 2010 theme of Building on the Firm Foundation. In his article “Pride is Poison,” Mike Patten passionately provides us with the antidote of humility, while in The Contender, John Schoenheit helps us by defining what true humility is. Exposing the insidiousness of pride is fundamental to building healthy relationships and godly community, especially since pride’s very nature is to deceive those who are overtaken by it.

Obadiah 1:3
The pride of your heart has deceived you...

We trust that you will enjoy this issue of The Sower as we continue to promote the truth of God in both doctrine and practice.

Blessings in Christ,

Dan Gallagher

Note:
Contents

Volume 12 - Issue 4 - July/August 2010

Lead Article
Pride is Poison
by Michael L. Patten
Page 4
Pride is always about self and has no regard for the other. It is what is behind quarrels, strife and slander.

The Contender
What is Humility?
by John W. Schoenheit
Page 10
It is humility when we read the Bible and accept it as the will of God for our lives... It is pride that denies the work of God and holds a devalued estimation of itself...

Partner Profile
Michael & Claudia Zahn
by Michael & Claudia Zahn
Page 23
Michael & Claudia explain why they are partners with Spirit & Truth Fellowship.

Putting Others First!
by Dan Gallagher
Page 28
Pride is always about self. Pride always separates people and it destroys community or togetherness because of its selfish nature.

Research Websites

TruthOrTradition.com
Over one thousand articles pertaining to many biblical issues.

BiblicalUnitarian.com
Explore an entire website dedicated to the truth of One God & One Lord.

Home Office

180 Robert Curry Drive
Martinsville, IN 46151
888.255.6189 or
765.349.2330
M-F 9 to 5 (ET)
Fax: 765.342.8430
STF@STFonline.org
STFonline.org

You may view the electronic version of this magazine at STFonline.org/sower

View back issues at STFonline.org/backissues

All scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved. References taken from other translations or versions will be noted, e.g., King James Version® (KJV). In verses or quotations from other authors, the author has emphasized words by placing them in bold print. Words inside [brackets] have been added by the author.

Scripture quotations marked (ESV) are taken from The Holy Bible,English Standard Version™. © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. All rights reserved.

7 Women's Retreat
9 Our Books on The Kindle™
13 Upcoming Events
17 Featured Article
21 Is There Death After Life? - iPad™
25 Temptation Plan - PDF
30 Dear Sower
31 Becoming a Christian
32 Audio Seminars Online
Pride is poisonous:

Someone of far greater authority than the Surgeon General of the United States has declared that pride is poisonous. Poison is that which taints or destroys moral purity or health (Noah Webster 1828).

God Almighty has been very explicit in His written Word that pride is very damaging to mankind. Yet today in our post-modern culture, especially in the United States, pride is epidemic. Even more sobering is the fact that the Body of Christ is not immune, but has indeed been infected with this serious problem. There are a number of reasons for this; however, as with most health threats, chief among them is ignorance (Hosea 4:6a).

Pride is a posture of a person’s heart that lifts itself up to something other than God. Like poison in our system it is not always apparent but produces damaging results. The heart of man, the innermost part of our being, is complicated and difficult to understand on our own.

Jeremiah 17:9 and 10
(9) The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?
(10) “I the LORD search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve.”

Complicating the issue of knowing our heart is that, in part, the nature of pride is deceptive (Oba. 1:3; Jer. 49:16). Matthew Henry, commenting on Proverbs 6:16 said, “There are seven things that God hates, and pride is the first, because it is at the bottom
Poison

Poison is that which taints or destroys moral purity or health (Noah Webster 1828).

BY MICHAEL L. PATTEN

of much sin and gives rise to it. Indeed God goes as far as to call pride iniquity.

Ezekiel 16:49 (KJV)
Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.

Hosea 5:5 (KJV)
And the pride of Israel doth testify to his face: therefore shall Israel and Ephraim fall in their iniquity: Judah also shall fall with them.

Many times identifying pride is difficult because it remains under the surface. Pride's connection to iniquity is instructive.

Isaiah 53:5
But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

The word “crushed” is a great key to understanding this submerged aspect of pride. Other versions of the Bible translate it as “bruised,” and rightly so. A bruise happens when there is an impact to the body that causes the capillaries to be crushed, allowing blood to seep into surrounding tissue. Jesus Christ was beaten very extensively and much bruising was a result. He bled internally for our iniquities, of which pride is certainly one.

Symptoms
Like some types of cholesterol which harden blood vessels, pride has a hardening effect on the heart. When speaking of King Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel records:

Daniel 5:20
But when his heart became arrogant and hardened with pride, he was deposed from his royal throne and stripped of his glory.

Pride hardens the heart to the views or input of others. Interestingly, after Nebuchadnezzar had been humbled by God, Zedekiah, the king of Judah, had a similar experience due to pride.

2 Chronicles 36:11-13
(11) Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eleven years.
(12) He did evil in the eyes of the LORD his God and did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet, who spoke the word of the LORD.
(13) He also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him take an oath in God’s name. He became stiff-necked and hardened his heart and would not turn to the LORD, the God of Israel.

It is recorded of Pharaoh, who is a type of the rulers of this world, that at least ten times his heart was hardened. Whenever our heart is lifted to what the world has to offer, it will harden due to pride.

1 John 2:16 KJV
For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

Another major way that pride shows up is in how it causes one to treat others. Pride is always about self and has no regard for the other. It is what is behind quarrels, strife and slander (Prov. 13:10; 28:25; Ps. 101:5). When unchecked it eventually leads to violence.

Psalm 73:6-9
(6) Therefore pride is their necklace; they clothe themselves with violence.
(7) From their callous hearts comes iniquity; the evil conceits of their minds know no limits.
(8) They scoff, and speak with malice; in their arrogance they threaten oppression.
(9) Their mouths lay claim to heaven, and their tongues take possession of the earth.

Like King Zedekiah, the proud of heart do not turn to God because their hearts are turned elsewhere, and as a result there is no room for God.

Psalm 10:2-4
(2) In his arrogance the wicked man hunts down the weak, who are caught in the schemes he devises.
(3) He boasts of the cravings of his heart; he blesses the greedy and...
reviles the LORD.

(4) In his pride the wicked does not seek him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God.

Examination

In medical situations a doctor must be well acquainted with the healthy condition of the body or mind in order to be able to recognize what is aberrant. Spiritually, the righteous or healthy condition of the heart is a heart that is pure or uncontaminated by the world.

Psalm 24:1-4

(1) The earth is the LORD’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it;
(2) for he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters.
(3) Who may ascend the hill of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place?
(4) He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false.

The Old Testament Hebrew word most frequently translated “pride,” is ga‘own, with its related forms. Strong’s (# 1347) defines this group of words as generally meaning “that which is high, exalted, lifted up, majestic, splendid, and excellent.”

Exodus 15:7

In the greatness of your majesty (ga‘own) you threw down those who opposed you. You unleashed your burning anger; it consumed them like stubble.

Exodus 15:21

Miriam sang to them: “Sing to the LORD, for he is highly (ga‘ah) exalted (ga‘ah). The horse and its rider he has hurled into the sea.”

Deuteronomy 33:26

“There is no one like the God of Jeshurun, who rides on the heavens to help you and on the clouds in his majesty (ga‘avah).

Diagnosis

Yahweh and all He created is high, lifted up, excellent, and splendid. However, due to pride and the sin that resulted, the Father’s creation has been contaminated. The classic case study of pride involves Lucifer. Speaking metaphorically, Ezekiel refers to him as the King of Tyre.

Ezekiel 28:12-17

(12) “Son of man, take up a lament concerning the king of Tyre and say to him: ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: “You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.
(13) You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: ruby, topaz and emerald, chrysolite, onyx and jasper, sapphire, turquoise and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared.
(14) You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones.
(15) You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness (avon, iniquity) was found in you.
(16) Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, O guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones.
(17) Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings.

P. personal
R. reputation
I. myself or me
D. devalued
E. estimation

Pride is always about self and has no regard for the other. It is what is behind quarrels, strife and slander (Prov. 13:10; 28:25; Ps. 101:5). When unchecked it eventually leads to violence.
the position God intended. Lucifer was invested with beauty, power, and position, however due to his unhealthy preoccupation with self, which is pride, he fell.

Isaiah 14:12-15
(12) How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations!
(13) You said in your heart, “I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain.
(14) I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.”
(15) But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit.

Every person is confronted with issues of pride as a result of our flesh and fallen nature. These challenges may show up in different ways for different people, but they will generally fall into one of two categories. To help remind myself and others of this I often say, “I am always in the middle of p.r.i.d.e.” The following acronym further clarifies these two categories;

P. personal
R. reputation
I. myself or me
D. devalued
E. estimation

I believe each person will be tempted to lean toward one side of this construct more than the other. However, at different times and situations one may find the other side as a challenge as well. The Personal Reputation portion is what we classically understand pride to be, where a person is elevated in their own eyes. The self talk that may accompany the PR side of pride could sound something like: “I’m the exception, I’m entitled, I want, I’m better…”

On the DE side, Devalued Estimation is what is many times called “false humility.” It is in fact the other side of pride because the focus is still on self. The DE self talk may go something like this: “I can’t do anything right, I’m not spiritual enough, I’m not good enough, I’m not smart enough, or I’m not popular enough…”

In our culture self-esteem is a trendy topic which gets a lot of attention in many circles. The way someone thinks of himself or herself is an important issue. However, this subject has often been hijacked to convince people to be prideful. The Bible gives us healthy parameters for how we are to think of ourselves.

Treatment
Our hearts are to be undivided and lifted only to God. This requires constant vigilance by guarding our hearts so as not to let anything take up residence that would contaminate the heart. In the future, as the prophet has foretold, we will all have undivided hearts. However, that is what God wants from us now.

Ezekiel 11:19
I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh.

When things enter our hearts that divide them and replace God, they are idols.

Ezekiel 14:2 and 3
(2) Then the word of the LORD came to me:
(3) “Son of man, these men have set up idols in their hearts and put wicked stumbling blocks before their faces. Should I let them inquire of me at all?

Good vs. Evil and Pride vs. Humility

Watch this 10-minute video by Mike Patten on the subject of Good vs. Evil and Pride vs. Humility from Proverbs 3:5-7.

TruthOrTradition.com/video39
Either side of pride, Personal Reputation or Devalued Estimation, is harmful to relationships. The Lord has provided ample warning of this in the Church epistles. Romans and Ephesians both have sections devoted primarily to practical application. Romans starts its practical section with a warning about pride, while Ephesians has a command to be humble.

Romans 12:3
For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.

Ephesians 4:1 and 2
(1) As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.
(2) Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

Humility is the only remedy or antidote to pride and the idols that attend it. Pride is a choice to lift one’s heart and to set up idols that pacify it. Conversely, humility is a choice we make to submit ourselves to God and not allow anything between our heart and the Father. Jesus Christ has set the standard for all who desire a healthy heart.

Philippians 2: 5-9 REV
(5) Have this mind in you that was also in Christ Jesus,
(6) who, existing in the form of God, did not regard being equal with God a thing to be grasped,
(7) but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men.
(8) And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even to death, yes, the death of the cross.
(9) Therefore also God highly exalted him, and gave to him the name which is above every name,

Prevention
Great care is required if we are to keep pride at bay. Our flesh is weak and naturally defaults to pride. While the love of God always gives to others what they need, pride always takes from others what it thinks it needs to placate the flesh. Note the giving and the interest in others in the verses below. God, and thus those like Him, always give, and are not prideful.

John 3:16
“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

1 Corinthians 13:4-6
(4) Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.
(5) It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.
(6) Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

Conclusion
Humility is the polar opposite of pride. One of the most damaging lies the Enemy has foisted upon the mind of man in this context is that pride has to do with strength, while humility is weakness. This is upside-down thinking. Due to our fallen nature, pride is the easiest path to take. Elevating ourselves is the course our fallen nature follows when confronted with our own weakness and sin. A coward often puffs himself up to appear strong. However, putting ourselves under another, submitting to another, takes great strength of character and this requires humility. When the entire scope of Scripture on the subject of pride is considered, it becomes strikingly apparent that pride equates to disobedience to God, while humility requires that one obey and is prerequisite to godliness. The consequences and benefits of each are profound.

James 4:6
But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

Proverbs 18:12
Before his downfall a man’s heart is proud, but humility comes before honor.

Daniel 4:37
Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything he does is right and all his ways are just. And those who walk in pride he is able to humble.

There is a day coming when every knee will bow. Those who willingly humble themselves now will be honored; not so for the proud.

Notes:
2. In newer versions of Scripture, some occurrences of Greek words render “pride” as a virtue. This is the case in the New Testament with kauchema. Strong’s #2744. The New International Version is an example of this, translating kauchema as “pride” five times. However, kauchema and its related words, (kauchma, G2745; kauchesis, G2746), are always a declaration or something spoken and mean to exalt, boast, or commend. They appear a total of 64 times in the Greek New Testament, of which R.C.H. Lenski, commenting on Romans 5:2 and 3, defines as “to speak with high exultation,” (p. 335), and “to speak in lofty, exultant language,” (p.336). Translating these words “pride” or “proud” is drawing a conclusion. This is therefore an interpretation, which confuses the issue, since pride is a posture of one’s heart, not something spoken.
CELEBRATING THE BIRTH
AND LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST

Women’s Retreat 2010: September 16 (6:30pm) - 19 (11am)
(Registration starts at 3pm on Thursday)

As women, we often become weighed down with the cares of this world and caring for others. We are nurturers and caregivers by nature. As a result, we often neglect our own needs. For many of us, this can become problematic when we approach the busy holiday season each year. For this reason we have decided to move our Women’s Retreat to September, and will take the time then to celebrate together the birth and life of Jesus Christ, our Firm Foundation.

Take time for you
This year’s Women’s Retreat will focus on our personal relationship with our Lord Jesus. We will take the time to enjoy a traditional “Christmas in September” celebration without having to bake, wrap gifts, plan parties, send cards, decorate, or complete any of the other “busyness” of the season. Instead, we will take time to revisit the joy of celebrating Christ’s birth, the pleasure of giving to one another in service, and the peace of worshipping unhindered by distractions. You are warmly invited to come and enjoy the fellowship of sisters in Christ for this celebration.

Location
Camp Vision, 7541 N. Fox Hollow Rd., Bloomington, IN 47408

Cost
Early registration (until Sep. 2nd) - $155.00
Regular Registration - $195.00

Please contact us if you have any special needs, concerns, or requests at STF@STFonline.org and we will forward them to the Event Coordinator.

Register Now!
◆ Register online at STFonline.org/register
◆ Call us toll free at 888.255.6189 M - F 9 to 5 (ET)
◆ Or mail your registration information to: Spirit & Truth Fellowship, 180 Robert Curry Dr., Martinsville, IN 46151

For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, so that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have life in the Age to come.
John 3:16 - REV
What is Humility?

By John W. Schoenheit

“You, my Father, are Creator of the Heavens and the Earth, and I desire to do your will.”
We all want to do well, get ahead, be successful, and be blessed by God. Therefore we should take special note of the fact that two separate times the New Testament says, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble” (James 4:6, 1 Pet. 5:5). If God gives grace to the humble, then being humble is a well-marked doorway to being blessed and spiritually successful in life. However, many people in this day and age do not have a clear idea of what it means to be humble. This can be easily seen by watching television or movies, or from reading the dictionary.

**Defining humility**

The first definition of “humble” in the *Oxford English Dictionary* is “Having a low estimate of one’s importance, worthiness, or merits.”¹ Included in the definition of *Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* are meanings such as “not assertive, ranking low in a hierarchy,” and “insignificant.”² While the dictionaries also point out that humility is the opposite of pride, it is safe to say that the average person “on the street” thinks of humility in terms of a person who does not think of himself as very important, is very submissive, and does not stand up for himself, but allows himself to be pushed around. That attitude was expressed more than a century ago by Josh Billings (1815-1885), who said, “The more humble a man is before God the more he will be exalted; the more humble he is before man, the more he will get rode roughshod.”

It is true that one meaning of “humble” or “humility” refers to when something high is “made low” or someone proud is forcibly “humbled.” When it is used that way, “humble” refers to being at a lower point than one was before, or to have lost prestige or status, or even to have been abased or humiliated. However, humility is used in two different ways in Greek culture and in the Bible, and the other use of humility refers to a godly posture of the heart.

In this article, we want to focus on the godly side of humility and get a clear understanding of what it is, and therefore what it looks like to be a humble Christian. Godly humility is, like the dictionaries say, the opposite of pride. However, a humble person never has a low estimate of his importance or thinks of himself as insignificant. Furthermore, humble people can be some of the most assertive people on the planet.

In the Greek text, the noun (humble) and verb (humbles, humbled) are from the same root word and refer to something that is low, or made low. In the godly sense,
“humble” refers to a knowledge and recognition that we are lower than God, and humility is expressed by a state of voluntary submission to His will. Godly humility starts when we see things as they really are, and realize that God is the Creator of the universe and the standard by which everything is measured or evaluated.

If we do not understand that humility is always measured in terms of belief and submission to God’s will, we will not be able to recognize it when we see it. That is because humility occurs in the heart of a man or woman, and is not a standard “of the flesh.” Because humility is always measured in terms of submission to God’s will, the clearest indicator of true humility is a person’s obedience to God. The humble person lovingly and honestly obeys God, not like the Pharisees, who only made a show of obeying God, but omitted important parts of the Law such as mercy and justice (Matt. 23:23).

It is precisely because true humility is expressed in believing and obeying God that the humble Christian never has, as the dictionary says, “a low estimate of his importance” or thinks of himself as “insignificant.” It is God, our creator, who said that every member of the Body of Christ is important and significant (1 Cor. 12:12-26), and that is the truth on the matter.

In some ways, the dictionary definition of humility illuminates the clash between the Christian and non-Christian worldview. Dictionaries express the basic concept of humility, which is to be low in one’s own eyes. However, the dictionaries contrast the “humble” person’s worldview in terms of other people—that he is “lower” than they are, and thus we embrace definitions such as “a low estimate of one’s worthiness; not being assertive; insignificant.” A Christian definition of “humble,” modeled by Jesus Christ, is someone who in his own eyes is lower than God his Creator and thus always willing to believe what God says or do what God asks.

**Jesus Christ—the model of humility**

The clearest picture of humility in the Bible, indeed, in history, is Jesus Christ. He modeled godly humility for us.

**Philippians 2:5 and 8**

(5) Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus…

(8) …he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!

Jesus “became obedient.” That, in a nutshell, is “humility.” We think of ourselves as lower than God so we obey Him, which Jesus did. For example, Jesus wanted to live, not be tortured and die. We know that because on the eve of his arrest he prayed three different times to God, asking if there was a way he could fulfill his messianic mission without going through what the prophecies had foretold (cp. Ps. 22:6-18; Isa. 52:13-53:10; Zech. 13:6, 7).

**Matthew 26:39, 42 and 44**

(39) Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”

(42) He went away a second time and prayed, “My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.”

(44) So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.

Jesus certainly modeled true humility, and from his example we learn that humility is putting the will of God before our own will. It is imperative that we understand that, or we will get caught up in trying to judge humility by the standard of behavior. Some examples from the Bible will help us to be clear about this. One myth about humility is that if you tell others you are humble, then you are not. While that may be generally true, it is not “truth.” Again, let us look at the example Jesus set.

**Matthew 11:29**

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

With the popularity of Amazon’s Kindle™ reader, we saw this as an opportunity to spread God’s Word in yet another way.

We have started the process of converting our books to make them available in digital format for download through Amazon’s Kindle™ Store.

Our books The Bible: You Can Believe It and Is There Death After Life? are now available. Many more are coming soon (and for all eReaders)!

STFonline.org/kindle

Our goal is to have all of our books available online in a digital format. This is all possible by the continued support of our wonderful partners & contributors.
Jesus pointed out to his followers that he was humble. Although the Bible does not say why he did it, we can certainly imagine one possible reason. The Greco-Roman culture in which Jesus and his followers lived extolled strong, self-willed people who bullied their way through life and “came out on top.” King Herod, the man who was king when Jesus was born, is a good example of this. Through singular focus, worldly ways, and forceful moves, he came to reign over Judea even though he himself was from Idumea, the Greek name for Edom. The fact that he was a terribly oppressive ruler often gets skimmed over, and he is referred to as “Herod the Great” in our history books. People such as Herod would never have been thought of as “humble,” and they were not. In that culture, just as in ours today, “humble” can be mistaken for “weak.” Thus, one reason that Jesus might have said that he was humble in heart was so that others could see what “humble” really was.

It takes great inner strength and confidence to be humble. We have to be completely comfortable with who we are before God alone, and with not being recognized by earthly authorities. In that light, it is significant that the angel Gabriel told John the Baptist’s father that John “would be great in the sight of the Lord” (Luke 1:15), because John was never acclaimed by earthly powers, and ended up dying in prison.

Jesus told a parable about one way that humble people act: they take the least important seats at a feast.

Luke 14:7-10
(7) When he noticed how the guests picked the places of honor at the table, he told them this parable:
(8) “When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited.
(9) If so, the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, ‘Give this man your seat.’ Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place.
(10) But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, ‘Friend, move up to a better place.’ Then you will be honored in the presence of all your fellow guests.

This parable has a happy ending. The humble person did not vie for an important seat, but the host noticed him and invited him to move up to a more honored place. However, we all know that does not happen very often. What usually happens in situations like this (if the seating is not assigned) is that no one really pays attention to where the guests sit. At that point, the situation becomes a test of true humility. The humble person recognizes that he or she is a servant to everyone and is comfortable with the seating and the people he or she is close to. In contrast, the person who is not humble, but prideful and self-important, is upset at the company close by and wants to be with “more important” people.

The above example fits our standard idea of humility; that a humble person would naturally take the lowest seat at a banquet. But notice the humility Jesus demonstrated in the following record.

John 2:13-16
(13) When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem.
(14) In the temple courts he found men selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money.
(15) So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables.
(16) To those who sold doves he said, “Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father’s house into a market!”

Although we may not be used to humility looking like this, Jesus was once again demonstrating...
humility. Jesus had been in the Temple many times before and had never done anything aggressive like this. Furthermore, he would be in the Temple many more times, but only confronted the dishonesty and merchandizing that regularly occurred there one more time (Matt. 21:12ff; Mark 11:15-17; Luke 19:45ff). Why this show of his authority? God prompted him to do what he did, and he obeyed (John 5:19, 30). This action of his, along with the other things he was doing, led many to conclude that he was the Messiah (John 2:23).

Interestingly, it would be possible to confuse Jesus’ action in the Temple and call it pride instead of humility. What Jesus did was so powerful and assertive that many people could assume it was motivated by pride. However, pride is two sided. In what some linguists would refer to as a “happy coincidence” of the language, the English word P-R-I-D-E portrays both sides of pride. In the middle of “pride” is always “I,” humility! In fact, we often refer to it as “false humility.” That is the “D-E” of pride, “devalued estimation.” Devalued estimation occurs when we do not submit to God’s will and thankfully and fearlessly accept what He has done for us. Paul’s humility shines brightly when he says, “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God…” (Col. 1:1). Paul accepted who he was and the ministry God gave him.

In the instance of Jesus clearing the Temple, Jesus knew he was the Messiah and he was acting on the will of God. He would have been happy to walk right by the moneychangers and animal salesmen without a confrontation, as he no doubt had done many times before. But humility is submitting to the will of God.

It is humility when we read the Bible and accept it as the will of God for our lives... It is pride that denies the work of God and holds a devalued estimation of itself...

It is hard to be humble As the song writer says, “it’s hard to be humble.” However, not for the reason Mac Davis gave when he wrote the song and the now famous line, “Oh Lord, it’s hard to be humble when you’re perfect in every way.” There are real reasons that it is hard to be humble. One is that we humans have a sin nature that is always trying to express itself. The Bible warns us that “the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit” (Gal. 5:17 - ESV). Our flesh and sin nature are always prodding us to be self-willed and ignore or disobey the commands of God. Humility takes self-denial.

Audio Seminars Online
Hours of teaching, straight from the Word of God. Absolutely Free.

Death & Resurrection to Life
John Schoenheit systematically sets forth what the Scriptures teach: that the dead are dead, and not alive in any form until they are raised from the dead by Jesus Christ.

New Life in Christ
This class covers all the topics necessary to give a beginning student the tools needed to understand and apply biblical truth in everyday life.

Truth Matters
Truth Matters is a series of teachings by Dan Gallagher in which he examines the existence of truth, seeks to discover what truth is, and learns what it means to walk in the light of truth.

A Journey Through the Old Testament
A 26-hour audio presentation designed to give you a scope and understanding of the chronology and important events of the Old Testament.

For free at TruthOrTradition.com/audio
Another reason it seems hard to be humble is that often we do not work hard enough at it. This reason is related to the reason above, that we have a sin nature, but we often “wish” we were obedient and humble, but do not actually make the concerted effort to do it. The Apostle Paul knew that a half-hearted effort to be humble would never work. He wrote to the Church at Corinth, “I beat my body and make it my slave…” (1 Cor. 9:27). Many of us would like to think that obedience to God is easy, but it is not. Humility takes hard work.

A third reason it is hard to be humble is because the Devil makes sure we pay a high price for it. The god of this world is Satan (2 Cor. 4:4), and one of his chief characteristics is pride. In fact, it was due to his pride that he was ejected from his heavenly position before God (Isa. 14:12-14; Ezek. 28:17). He submits to God in nothing, and refuses to acknowledge any good in God’s work, which is why he only steals, kills, and destroys (John 10:10). Satan, and the world he controls, hates God’s work, which is why the New Testament tells us, “Do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you” (1 John 3:13).

To the world, Christians are narrow-minded, bigoted, exclusive, and even foolish or dangerous. Furthermore, the world mistakes the gentle, loving, and humble ways of Christians for weakness. The Adversary and those who work for him make sure that whenever Christians speak up, the world reacts violently against them. That is why Scripture says, “In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” (2 Tim. 3:12). The truth of these words is evident, and the persecution of Christians is occurring all over the world.

It seems certain that we would see more persecution of Christians than we do if more Christians were truly humble, i.e., truly submissive to the will of God. For example, God tells us to share our faith with others, and even that He has made us ambassadors of His Kingdom and committed to us the message of reconciliation between man and God (2 Cor. 5:18-20). Yet many people ignore the commission God gave us and do not share their Christian faith—sadly, many times for fear of being persecuted, which in the United States usually comes in the form of being mocked, laughed at, spoken against, or excluded, but can also take the form of being fired from a job or not considered for promotion.

God says that Jesus Christ is a “stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence” (Rom. 9:23 KJV), and no matter how hard we try, we cannot change that. The holy and singular nature of God clashes with the “do-what-I-want” nature of the world, and the world reacts violently to the fact that they are not “good enough just as we are” to come to God, but that they must come with and through the blood of Jesus Christ.

The violent behavior of the world causes many Christians to squelch their obedience to God, and thus their humility. As was pointed out earlier in the article, it takes great inner strength and confidence to be humble; weak and fearful people are almost never truly humble because they submit to their weakness instead of submitting to God. Thus, often because of fear or a dislike of conflict, many Christians do not openly express their love, devotion, or thanks to their heavenly Father, even though He greatly deserves it and would love to have it. Humility takes courage.

Humility in a nutshell

In summary, humility is submitting ourselves to the will of God and obeying Him. Humility is expressed as believing what God says and doing what He asks. It is an attitude of the heart that naturally recognizes that we are lower than God and owe our lives to Him. We learn about humility from studying the words and actions of Jesus Christ, the only perfectly humble person who ever lived. Finally, we have to resign ourselves to the fact that developing and maintaining a humble heart takes constant work and great courage. If we are not careful, our sin nature will rise up within us and produce pride and an entitlement attitude that will then be quickly followed by greed, anger, gossip, and other such sins. Also if we are not careful, our courage will give way to fear, and we will submit to it and not to God, and act in ways that do not bring the honor and glory to God that He deserves. Yes, it is hard to be humble, but God deserves it, so as Paul wrote, “...we make it our goal to please him…” (2 Cor. 5:9).

Notes:

Get Social: Stay connected and up to date

Social networking websites are among the top visited websites in the world. With hundreds of millions of users, these websites are filled with hungry people seeking Truth. TruthOrTradition.com now has a viable seat at the table, able to minister 24/7. Log on and see how TruthOrTradition.com is reaching out with the Word of God.
EVENTS

COMING SOON

STFonline.org/register

WOMEN’S RETREAT
Date: September 16 - 19, 2010
Location: Camp Vision, Bloomington, IN
Theme: Celebrating the Birth and Life of Jesus Christ

MEN’S CAMP
Date: October 21 - 24, 2010
Location: Camp Vision, Bloomington, IN
Theme: TBA

SILENT RETREAT
Date: October 27 - 31, 2010
Location: Camp Vision, Bloomington, IN
Theme: TBA

LIVE OUT LOUD
Date: December 29, 2010 - January 1, 2011
Location: Bradford Woods, Martinsville, IN
Theme: TBA

20S CONFERENCE SUSPENDED
Attention: Out of respect for a wedding amongst the 20’s community falling on the same weekend and for those who desire to attend that wedding, the 20’s Conference has been suspended until further notice. For information concerning its possible re-scheduling, please contact the Home Office: 888.255.6189, M-F 9 to 5 (ET), or STF@STFonline.org.

REGISTER: Register online at STFonline.org/register
I woke up this morning with great anticipation as I hurried over to look out my window. It was predicted that we would be getting a lot of snowfall through the night, but the weatherman’s predictions are not necessarily something I like to rely on. To my surprise, not only had it snowed, but it had snowed a lot and it was still coming down in flakes the size of quarters. Many of the distinguishing features of my yard had already disappeared under the blanket of white frozen wafers.

Later in the dark I navigated through the drifts to retrieve the morning paper. Something that I should know by now is that it is never delivered when the snow impedes the carrier. As I returned to the house I reflected on the deep quiet that always accompanies the snow. In the solitude of the dawn I thought, “There must be a lesson I can learn from the snow.” Then, as usual, the thought quickly vaporized as my mind raced ahead to the details of morning, the many tasks that lay ahead of me in the day, and the need to feed the bouncing dog that paced between my feet like a yo-yo gone astray (so much for trying to be spiritual).

A few hours later I settled in behind my desk at work, moving from task to task, answering emails and handling various ministry matters. As I paused between the busyness of the day, I looked out my office window and was stunned once again by the blanket of white outside that covered everything as far as I could see. That’s when I remembered the prophet Daniel and the vision he had of God with His clothing white as snow.

Daniel 7:9

“As I looked, “thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze.”

If I ever had a vision like the one Daniel describes my hair would probably turn white (or at least whiter than it already is). God has always used white to convey the idea of purity and holiness, and there is nothing holier than God Himself. In the Old Testament, God’s people looked forward to a day when He would wash away their sins, making them holy and whiter than snow.

Psalm 51:6 and 7

(6) Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place.
(7) Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

Today, we have the joy of knowing that when we are “saved”1 we have the assurance of our sins being forgiven because of the sacrifice of Christ. In addition to the spiritual reality of us being made holy because of the gift of holy spirit, God also desires that we live in accordance with this new nature.

Ephesians 4:22-24

(22) You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires;
(23) to be made new in the attitude of your minds;
(24) and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

God desires that the innermost part of my being, my heart, be filled with truth. When I humble myself to learn
and follow God’s ways, He can wash me, making me cleaner and whiter than snow. Is there anything you can think of that is whiter than snow? How about rice, or sugar? Well, although they may be as white as snow for us today, it is only through our modern technology and bleaching processes that they are that white. Even cotton in its natural state, although it is as white as snow, still has bunches of black seeds spread throughout it. Nowadays we can take the color white for granted because we are surrounded with so many materials and products that are pure white.

Besides the secretary’s bottle of “white-out,” my short-list includes white copy paper, tee shirts, and plastic milk jugs. But in biblical times, other than hair and snow, there were not many things that were pure white. God uses the vivid imagery of the whiteness of snow to convey some very powerful spiritual realities.

Isaiah 1:18b
“Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.

A blood stain is one of the most difficult stains to remove, and yet in the above verse God tells us that although our sins are as scarlet, red, and crimson (like blood), He will remove them so completely that they shall be as white as snow. This means they will be absolutely, completely, totally removed without any trace or stain left behind. In order for God to thoroughly cleanse us we must humble ourselves to do things His way. The immediate context of us becoming as white as snow is for us to “stop doing wrong, learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow” (Isa.1:16b-17).

God tells us that there are two paths we can choose, the path of humility or the path of pride, and both can lead to us becoming white like snow. In the Old Testament there are two people that God turned “white like snow,” and in both cases pride was a dominating presence in the person’s heart. The first was Moses’ sister Miriam. She challenged Moses and his position, stirred up Aaron and gave place to envy. They asked, “Has the LORD spoken only through Moses… Hasn’t he also spoken through us?” (Num. 12:2). Miriam’s and Aaron’s slander against Moses was fueled by their pride, which is always the source of slander.

Psalm 56:2
My slanderers pursue me all day long; many are attacking me in their pride.

God confronts the two of them and the result was that Miriam was turned white like snow, but not because she was holy. She was white like snow because she was covered in leprosy, a condition of defilement.

Numbers 12:10
When the cloud lifted from above the Tent, there stood Miriam—leprous, like snow.

A person covered with leprosy would have been a dreadful image to see. Moses and Aaron must have been horrified at the sight of their sister covered with so much leprosy that it looked like snow. She was covered with skin lesions, blisters, and sores. When pride takes root it always putrefies the soil of the heart, resulting only in rancid fruit like slander, envy, and malice. Miriam’s leprosy was an outside reflection of the internal uncleanness of her prideful heart. Just like Miriam, pride transforms us into a ghastly image. Fortunately, Miriam’s healing came when Aaron repented and humbled himself before Moses, calling him “my Lord” and confessed his sin.

Numbers 12:11b and 12
(11) “Please, my lord, do not hold against us the sin we have so foolishly committed.
(12) Do not let her be like a stillborn

Follow us on Twitter!
If you like biblically-based articles & videos, you can follow TruthOrTradition.com on Twitter. Visit TruthOrTradition.com/twitter
infant coming from its mother’s womb with its flesh half eaten away.”

The representation that Miriam was like “a stillborn infant” with her flesh “half eaten away” is ghastly. And, like Miriam, the prophet Elisha’s servant Gehazi also experienced a similar lesson about pride and selfishness. In the book of 2 Kings there is the record of Naaman, a commander of the army of Aram coming to Elisha seeking healing of leprosy. After he was healed, he returned to the prophet offering gifts of gratitude for the miracle of healing he experienced. He presented Elisha a large amount of silver, gold, and other material possessions, which the prophet rejected. However, without Elisha’s knowledge, his servant Gehazi ran after Naaman and deceitfully obtained some of these items. Later when Elisha confronted Gehazi he lied about what he had done. The end result was that he was cursed by Elisha and Naaman’s leprosy “clung” to him, making him white as snow.

2 Kings 5:26 and 27

(26) But Elisha said to him, “Was not my spirit with you when the man got down from his chariot to meet you? Is this the time to take money, or to accept clothes, olive groves, vineyards, flocks, herds, or menservants and maidservants?

(27) Naaman’s leprosy will cling to you and to your descendants forever.” Then Gehazi went from Elisha’s presence and he was leprous, as white as snow.

In his pride, Gehazi acted directly against the prophet’s refusal of Naaman’s gifts. Absorbed with his own envy and greed, He pursued his own lusts, blinded by the pride in his heart. Pride is at the fountainhead of evil and from it flows deceit, envy, slander, malice, and murder. It is a malignancy of the heart leading to disgrace. Elisha’s heart must have broken as he grieved for his friend and trusted servant as he watched him wander off to a life of pain and suffering, forever rejected by society and left in a state of defilement.

Proverbs 11:2

When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.

The Old Testament was in many ways a training manual for Jesus. There must have been times when Jesus would have read these records and pondered the dreadful consequences of pride. Unlike Miriam and Gehazi who became white like snow as a result of their pride, Jesus was resurrected with clothing “white as snow” because of his holiness.

Matthew 28:3

His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow.

Jesus humbled himself to God’s plan and was raised in righteousness and holiness. He has blazed a trail for all to follow; doing so requires humility. Like Christ, we too need to humble ourselves and be obedient to God in all that we do, knowing that some day we will be clothed in robes whiter than snow.

Notes:
1. According to Romans 10:9 and 10, to be “saved” today requires that a person confess Jesus as Lord and believe that God has raised him from the dead.
2. The term “leprosy” in the Bible is now thought not to be, or not exclusively to be, the result of Hansen’s Disease but most likely includes a number of inflammatory skin conditions such as eczema, psoriasis, etc. Nowadays, the term “leprosy” actually refers to Hansen’s Disease (HD), named after Norwegian physician Gerhard Armauer Hansen. It is a chronic disease caused by the bacteria Mycobacterium leprae and Mycobacterium lepromatosis. (source: Wikipedia).
3. Aram is the country immediately to the north of Israel in the location of modern day Syria.
Is There Death After Life?
on Apple’s iPad™, iPhone™ & iPod Touch®.

Our book, *Is There Death After Life?*, is now available in many formats via the free Kindle app for iPhone™, iPod Touch®, iPad™, BlackBerry® smartphones*, Mac® & PCs.

with his methods. The Christian’s hope is not death, but the appearing of Jesus Christ. When He appears, each Christian who is still alive will exchange his mortal body for a glorious immortal body, and each believer who has died will be raised to glorious and everlasting life.

Who Needs Resurrection?

A second consequence of believing the doctrine that the dead are alive is one that has drastic implications for biblical integrity and harmony. Believing that all the dead are conscious in heaven or hell reduces the great truth of resurrection to virtual insignificance. Death must be true death if resurrection is to be meaningful. If death involves only the body, with the soul and/or consciousness living on, then resurrection has lost at least half its significance.

If all believers have gone into the presence of God at their deaths, the monumental importance of Jesus Christ’s resurrection is negated. Abraham, David, Job and others were already in heaven as disembodied souls or spirits, enjoying the presence of God in “eternity,” then our enemy death, had already been vanquished before Christ’s resurrection, and eternal life was available without...

STFonline.org/kindle

*Amazon’s Kindle™ is a registered trademark of Amazon Technologies, Inc. or its affiliates. iPad™, iPhone™, iPod Touch®, and Mac® are registered trademarks of Apple Inc. The Sower is an independent publication and has not been authorized, sponsored, or otherwise approved by Research In Motion Limited, Apple Inc. or Amazon Technologies, Inc.*
Who Is Your Lord?
The Choice is Yours

If someone asked you whether you would rather have one dollar, or one thousand, which would you choose? Most people would choose to have one thousand. If someone asked you if you wished to have one true friend, or many true friends, which would you choose? Most people would choose to have many true friends. And if someone offered you a finite or an infinite life, which would you choose? Most people would choose eternity.

Though obtaining everlasting life may seem difficult to some, it is in fact quite the opposite. In Romans 10, God offers a clear, concise path to gaining everlasting life... but it is a choice:

Romans 10:9
That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

The choice is to believe in His son and in the power of the Creator who raised Christ from the dead. What greater wisdom can be found than to confess Jesus as your Lord and to believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead... and to be saved for eternity? By the discerning of wisdom, one can attain true salvation.

What would you choose?

Video: Becoming a Christian

Watch a quick 10–minute video on how and why to get saved. This video goes further in–depth and answers common questions.

TruthOrTradition.com/becoming

Although Claudia and I belong to a wonderful church, complete with fantastic believers whom we dearly love, it is still very important to us to receive a diversity of accurate biblical teaching. As such, Spirit & Truth Fellowship is an important connection in our attempt to better understand God’s will for us through His Word.

Our relationship with Spirit & Truth Fellowship goes back to a workshop that John Schoenheit presented to our fellowship in 1997. John’s knowledge of the Bible and his commitment to teaching the accuracy of God’s Word was inspiring. Although neither Claudia nor I had a solid understanding of the Bible at that time, we knew that we were both searching for that life-changing encounter with the truth as described in John 8:32.

Thanks to some good friends, we learned about the TruthOrTradition.com website. We thrived for a long time on the knowledge and nourishment we found there. In fact, “One God & One Lord” and “Is There Death After Life?” are still two of our most treasured books.

As we maintained contact with Spirit & Truth Fellowship over the years, the heart of this ministry became clear to us: the hard work and dedication; the integrity; the perseverance. Most of all, we saw an incredible unselfishness and dedication to service. We saw people giving freely of their time and effort to provide the family of God with a better understanding of our Father’s love and His plan for us.

One day God spoke to my heart while I was reading Luke 6:38:

Luke 6:38 (KJV)
Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

After that it didn’t take much to see that we had a responsibility to carry at least some of our own weight. So as much as I wish I could say that our reasons for supporting Spirit & Truth as partners were noble in their origins, the truth is that they are actually quite selfish. On the one hand, the insight into God’s Word which Spirit & Truth Fellowship provides us is simply too important for us to miss out on. On the other hand, we cannot ignore the generosity of the wonderful people who make this ministry possible and not give something back in return.

Michael and Claudia Zahn
Germany
In buildings we post an evacuation plan, to be prepared in case of an emergency. Why not also have temptation plans so we can be prepared in case of temptation? When temptation strikes, it’s very helpful to have a plan in place. We often fail simply because we do not have a battle plan for defeating a temptation. Thankfully, Scripture gives us keys for what to do during a temptation and from these keys we can develop a temptation plan.

**Step 1: Realize You Are Being Tempted.**

According to Proverbs, there are people who “walk in darkness” and “do not know over what they stumble” (Prov. 4:19). We do not want to be like that, so we have to become self-aware when we are being tempted. We have to train ourselves to realize, “Hey, I’m being tempted now!” It helps to call it out loud. Instead of being washed about by the feelings of temptation, say: “I see what’s happening here; I’m being tempted to sin right now.” This will give you power over your feelings and put you back in control to decide how to act, rather than just unconsciously going along with enticing feelings. To get better at this, we should pray to the Lord to help us to become more self-aware during temptation.

**Step 2: Refute Rationalization.**

No sooner than you realize you are being tempted, rationalization kicks in; and oh how clever we can be! Like in Step 1, we must recognize our propensity to rationalize, realizing, “There is a way that seems right to a person, but its end is the way to death” (Prov. 14:12 NRSV; cp. Prov. 16:2). Here’s a good passage to memorize and recite when we catch ourselves trying to rationalize giving in to a temptation:

Proverbs 3:5-7
(5) Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.
(6) In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.
(7) Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil.

**Step 3: Tattletale on Your Feelings.**

Once we become aware of temptation, it helps to tattletale on those feelings to the Lord. Scripture says “we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ” (2 Cor. 10:5b NIV). Imagine yourself physically handing the thought to Jesus, telling him you caught this culprit in your brain and you are turning it over to him for prosecution.

**Step 4: Rebuke the Adversary Behind the Temptation.**

Not every temptation is demonic; mostly it’s our own lust that draws us away (cf. James 1:14), but it doesn’t hurt to shoot in both directions, just in case. In other words, treat the problem as though it’s your own sinful flesh, and as though it were spiritual. Be like Jesus who, when he rebuked Peter, looked past the physical situation to the underlying spiritual force. He looked right past Peter and said, “...Get behind me, Satan!” (Matt. 16:23). If you are struggling with pornography, for instance, look past your computer and say the same.
Step 5: Replace the Lie by Stating God's Truth.

It helps to state out loud your choice to obey God rather than succumb to the temptation. As Psalm 119:13 says, “With my lips I declare all the rules of your mouth.” Instead of focusing on the lie we do not get to participate in, we should focus on the beauty of God’s heart we do get to participate in: “Your testimonies are wonderful; therefore my soul keeps them” (Ps. 119:129). It helps to think, “I don’t want to participate in this evil, because I see the beauty of God’s righteous ways, and I want that beauty for my life.”

Step 6: Expect the Second Wave of Attacks.

How many times have we survived the first five steps only to feel immediately tempted again, and give in? Know that Satan will almost always throw a second or third wave of attacks to wear away at your resolve. He tempted Jesus three times in a row (Matt. 4:1-11). If we expect the feelings of temptation to remain momentarily, we will be one step ahead of Satan’s game. He will try to get us back to forgetting Step 1 and to go into autopilot mode in the direction of sin, but if we expect him to do this we will be better equipped not to fall.

Step 7: Physically Remove Yourself from the Source of Temptation.

Remember how Joseph ran away from his master’s wife when she tempted him to commit adultery (Gen. 39:12)? He physically ran away. Speaking of Lot living in Sodom and Gomorrah, Scripture says, “As he lived among them, that righteous man tormented himself day by day” (2 Pet. 2:6 HCSB). Is there any way you are “tormenting yourself” by hanging around the source of your temptation? Perhaps you need to say, along with the Psalmist, “Depart from me, you evildoers, that I may keep the commandments of my God” (Ps. 119:115), or perhaps you need to depart yourself.

Step 8: Ask Jesus to Help you to Resist the Temptation.

Hebrews 4:15 and 16

(15) For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

(16) Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

If we would just turn to him, Jesus would help us during the times we are tempted. Also, he is always ready to give mercy and grace after we sin (1 John 1:9-10). But instead of simply going to him after we sin, why don’t we turn to him during the temptation! As the Scriptures say, “I call to you; save me, that I may observe your testimonies... Let your hand be ready to help me, for I have chosen your precepts” (Ps. 119:146 and 173).

Step 9: Now Make the Right Choice.

Ultimately it comes down to a decision. We each have to decide to be faithful to God in the moment of temptation; He will not make the choice for us. But this temptation plan will help. Having all these steps lined out in our minds will put us in the best possible place to resist temptation, because we are “pondering the path of your feet” beforehand (cp. Prov. 4:26). “When I think on my ways, I turn my feet to your testimonies” (Ps. 119:59). It’s when we are not thinking about it that we can get into trouble, so having a plan like this can help. Why not practice going through these steps several times with a fellow Christian? This will help to cement the process in your mind, so you can remember it in the time of temptation.
The ability to communicate with words is one thing that sets mankind apart from all other creatures. God is the Author of language, and no one has ever used language as precisely as God does in the Bible, including His use of figures of speech, of which there are more than 200 varieties in Scripture. When most people say, “a figure of speech,” they are speaking in general terms of something that is not true to fact. However, genuine “figures of speech” are legitimate grammatical and lexical forms that add emphasis and feeling to what we say and write. In the Bible, God uses figures of speech to emphasize things that He wants us to see as important. Many people who read the Bible never think to ask themselves, “How do we know what God wants emphasized in His Word?” God uses figures of speech to put emphasis where He wants emphasis, so it is important that we recognize and properly interpret the figures of speech in the Bible. Knowing the figures of speech God uses in the Bible helps us to understand the true meaning of Scripture and enables us to more fully enjoy its richness.

The figure of speech we are going to study in this issue of The Sower is referred to by E. W. Bullinger as Asterismos (Aster-is-mos), or “indicating.” The Greek word ἀστέρ means “star,” and in English today we put an “asterisk,” or “little star” beside something we want to mark in a way that catches the reader’s attention. When we are speaking, we might catch our audience’s attention by saying, “Pay attention,” or “Listen up,” particularly if we think the person is not giving us his full attention. When we write, it is a little more difficult to catch someone’s attention. Some authors use bold, italics, or ALL CAPITAL LETTERS to call the reader’s attention to a word or phrase. However, the original text of the Bible was written in all capital letters (Hebrew and Aramaic do not even have upper and lower case letters). So what does the Bible do to catch our attention?

The figure of speech asterismos is the use of words such as “behold,” “look,” “verily,” or “yes (yea),” in a way that does not add essential meaning to the sentence, but rather just catches the attention of the reader. If the words in the Bible are a direct quotation of what a biblical character said, the words still were originally spoken to catch the attention of the person listening and not to add essential meaning to what he or she said. A good example of a Hebrew word used as an asterismos is hinneh (Strong’s #2009, pronounced, hin-nay’), which means, “behold, lo, look, see.” A person who takes the time to look up the Hebrew word hinneh in a concordance will see that it is used hundreds of times in the Old Testament, and thus will have many examples of the figure asterismos in the Hebrew text. Here is one example:

Genesis 17:4 (ESV)

“But behold, you shall conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.”

- Luke 1:31 (ESV)
and note how many times God speaks without using “Behold” or any other asterisms. Once we have a feel for how seldom it is used, we can see that when God does use it, we should sit up and pay attention. In the example above, the Abrahamic covenant is one of the most important covenants and promises that God makes in the entire Bible, and deserves our full attention. Since the asterism is not essential to the meaning of the sentence, some versions of the Bible almost always leave it out. The NIV is a good example of a version that usually ignores the asterism, which is too bad, because then God’s emphasis on that verse is lost.

A good example of a Greek word used as an asterism is idou (Strong’s #2400, pronounced id-oo’). It means “behold, see, look, lo.”

Luke 1:31 (ESV)
And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.

The angel Gabriel emphasized his point to young Mary concerning the birth of the Messiah with “behold.”

Jesus emphasized his point to the apostles with “Behold.”

And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments:

Here God draws our attention to the angels that appeared to the women at the tomb of Jesus by the use of asterism, “behold.”

One last thing we need to know about asterism is that the presence of “behold,” “look,” or “see,” in the sentence does not automatically mean it is the figure asterism. Those words can be an essential part of the sentence. A good example is when Pilate displayed Jesus to the crowd and said, “Behold your King!” At that point Jesus had already been slapped around all night long by the Jews, who had arrested him the previous night in the Garden of Gethsemane; then he had been taken before Pilate; then mocked by Herod and his men; and now was back with Pilate. He would have been bloody and swollen by that time, and Pilate’s shout to the crowd, “Behold your King,” was equivalent to “Look at your King!” It was meant to elicit their pity, but instead it just incited them to shout for Jesus’ crucifixion. Thus, just because a sentence contains “behold,” for example, does not make it the figure of speech asterism. We must pay careful attention to the sentence and the context to be sure a “behold,” “look,” “verily,” “truly,” or “yes” is an asterism.

Visit TruthOrTradition.com/figures for many more figures of speech used in the Bible.

The other day I had the privilege of sitting next to a brother in Christ on an airplane flight from Chicago to a conference. I asked him if he lived in Chicago or if he was on his way home, and then we began to exchange some typical small talk. Soon we both learned about each other’s lives, our families, our jobs, and that we were both followers of Christ. Later that evening while in my hotel room, I reflected back on our conversation, and especially how close I felt to him as we traded stories and insights about our walk with Jesus. In the quiet of my hotel room I thought about how our lives had crossed paths and the bond I felt with this brother in Christ.

Over the course of my more than thirty years of following Christ, I have met many other Christians, most of whom follow another denominational flavor. Many of my doctrinal beliefs and theological positions place me outside of most mainstream Christian churches, so feeling close to another brother or sister in Christ has not always happened as it did with my new friend on the airplane. As I asked myself, “What was the difference in this incident?” I realized it was the sense of genuine interest in each other and the lack of contention.

Frequently I have noticed that oftentimes there is a sense of competition between Christians. Almost as if the conversations and exchanges have undertones of “my doctrine or beliefs are better that yours.” In my conversation with my newfound brother on the plane there was no sense of a contest between us. I was not driven by a desire to show him how “wrong he was,” or how “right I was.” What was present was a genuine sense of humility and a lack of pride or arrogance.

Pride is always about self. Pride always separates people and it destroys community or togetherness because of its selfish nature. Pride is a lifting of yourself, an exalting of self over others. People who act pridefully bring attention to themselves, or to their accomplishments. Pride causes others to feel inferior, having a sense of not measuring up or being good enough. Pride can enter whenever love (agape) is missing.

1 Corinthians 13:4 and 5a
(4) Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.
(5a) It is not rude, it is not self-seeking…”

As my friend and I talked we discovered some differences in our Christian theologies; however we still felt a sense of connection because of the humility that was present between us. When there is humility there is a submission to one another.

Philippians 2:3 and 4
(3) Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.
(4) Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.
Have you ever been in line and seen someone come along shoving and pushing himself ahead of the others? Not only is it rude or irritating, but there is a general sense that it is wrong. The offender’s self interest and lack of caring for the others in line is offensive, and sin always causes offense. I find it very intriguing that of all the sins there are, pride is a sin that God says He hates. It shakes me awake when I consider that God would say that He hates pride. It is like being hit in the face with a glass of ice water, or like hearing a fire alarm in the middle of a class session.

Proverbs 8:13
To fear the LORD is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech.

While God makes it clear that He hates pride and cuts the arrogant man “down in size,” He also tells us that he promotes the humble of heart.

Psalm 18:27
You save the humble but bring low those whose eyes are haughty.

Psalm 25:9
He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way.

Proverbs 3:34
He mocks proud mockers but gives grace to the humble.

Every one of us has a sin nature, so pride is a challenge that we all must guard our hearts against. Few enjoy being part of something where the leader always has to be right or the one to make all the decisions. Pride closes the ears and shuts the heart to the input of others. It elevates our personal opinions over the opinions of others and it leads to hard-heartedness. Whether we think too highly of ourselves or too lowly, there is always a root of pride causing it. In our relationships and dealings with others we must do all we can to root out pride and arrogance. A heart filled with love is never self-seeking, prideful or arrogant (1 Cor. 13:4 and 5). As we move forward in community with other brothers and sisters in Christ, let’s root out pride and put others first!

Note:
1. Agape is the Greek word that should be thought of as a “targeted love.” Although I do not “feel” like doing something, I obey and do it because of my love (agape). It is always a “doing” love and is not based upon feelings of the heart, such as brotherly love (phileo), or love for family (storge), or even a passionate, sexual love (eros). For more on this topic see our teaching, The Four Kinds of Love, at TruthOrTradition.com/4kinds

June 2010 Audio Teaching
by Mike Patten

Get in the Right Line

Have you gotten in a line, and then patiently waited as you slowly crept forward towards the front, only to suddenly realize, “I’m in the wrong line!”

In this teaching, “Get in the Right Line,” Mike Patten uses a very clear idea of a line to teach about each Christian’s need to make sure that we are doing what Christ wants us to do. By examining the eleventh chapter of Matthew’s gospel, Mike demonstrates what is involved in Jesus’ statement, “…no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him” (Matt. 11:27b).

The listener will learn how a lack of repentance is the core issue in this chapter as Jesus instructs not only his followers, but challenges the unbelieving crowd as well. The thrust of this message encourages followers of Christ to Get in the Right Line so that Jesus can reveal to them the Father.

Listen to this audio teaching for free at STFonline.org/podcast or TruthOrTradition.com/audio7
How to Read the Bible

Thank you so much for this video [How to Read the Bible]!
We watched it last night at fellowship and I told Frank we need to see it again on Sunday so those who weren’t here can see it. It helped me a lot!

Joan (and Frank) Rutkowski
Scranton, PA

Teaching on Communion

These 10-minute video teachings are great! I’ve been a student of the Word for over 25 years and the teaching on communion is changing my life. Not only every time that I eat and drink do I repledge myself but teachings like this mean so much more. (For more info, go to TruthOrTradition.com/communion)

Thanks,
Michael Lewis
A Facebook Fan

Believers in Pakistan

I have shared many of your teachings with believers in Pakistan!
I have been sharing God’s Word with the youth over there! Praise God!

Raymond

Sunday School Class

Thanks for your time that you gave to make these [videos on Pentecost].
I’m leading my college age Sunday School class through the book of Acts, and these videos are very helpful.

Joe
A Sunday School Teacher

Social Networking Sites

Thank you guys for being around to minister to our ears and hearts...
Your presence here on YouTube, and on Facebook / MySpace as well, has been such a blessing. Keep up the good work!

(An anonymous comment left on our YouTube channel.)

Send us your Feedback

Do you have questions about the Bible? Comments about our articles, audio teachings & videos?

We would love to hear from you!
Email us at STF@STFonline.org
Below is a list of the languages that our booklet *Becoming A Christian - Why? What? How?* has been translated into:

- **Arabic** - TruthOrTradition.com/15
- **Cebuano** - TruthOrTradition.com/16
- **English** - TruthOrTradition.com/17
- **French** – TruthOrTradition.com/18
- **Italian** - TruthOrTradition.com/19
- **Korean** - TruthOrTradition.com/20
- **Polish** – TruthOrTradition.com/21
- **Portuguese** - TruthOrTradition.com/22
- **Spanish** - TruthOrTradition.com/23
- **Swedish** - TruthOrTradition.com/24
- **Urdu** - TruthOrTradition.com/25

Would you like to help us translate this booklet into your native language???
Contact us at STF@STFonline.org
Audio Seminars Online.

Hours of teaching for free.

On the go. In the car. Wherever you are.
For the first time, all of our audio seminars are online for free. Now you can listen to them while you mow the lawn, drive to work, clean the house, etc.

MP3 format. No restrictions.
All of our seminars are in MP3 format. You can download them to your computer and play them on your iPod®, MP3 player, and many new cell phones.

Run a class in your area.
These seminars are great for home fellowships and for grabbing a bunch of friends and running a weekend class.

TruthOrTradition.com/audio

*iPod® is a registered trademark of Apple Inc. This is an independent publication and has not been authorized, sponsored, or otherwise approved by Apple Inc.*