

Before the Lesson

Read the Scriptures and overview below before your LIFE Group meets.

Scripture passages: James 4:6-12 and Philippians 2:1-11, 3:7-11

If asked, would you consider yourself a proud or a broken person? Don't answer that! Contemplate these questions first: Do you think highly of yourself and look down on others, or do you esteem others as better than yourself? Do you harbor an independent or self-sufficient spirit, or do you recognize your need for other people? Do you desire to serve or to be served? Do you grieve over your sins, or do you look for excuses for them? Do you have an ongoing heart attitude of repentance, or are you blinded by your own presumed perfection?

These are just a few of the questions that can help you understand the true condition of your heart. Pride is destructive. It kills relationships and reputations, stirs up strife, and hinders spiritual growth. So what is the antidote for the disease of pride, you ask? The Cross. Daily looking to the cross, counting the cost of Jesus' sacrifice, and turning to Him out of pure love and devotion is the best cure for an ailing attitude of pompous presumption. The Cross of Christ, the Gospel, the magnificent gift of grace bestowed on us from God in the flesh will cause us to turn from self and run to Him. Don't complicate your life with pride. Look to Jesus and His amazing grace.

Focus question:

How can preaching the Gospel to yourself daily remind you that your spiritual progress is a work of God's grace, not your own perseverance or performance?

Group Discussion

- Think back to your initial salvation experience for a moment. How did you view the Gospel then? How do you view it now? Was it more real to you then or now? Was it more precious to you when you were a new believer, or is it more precious now?
- Would you consider yourself a God-sufficient person or a self-sufficient person?
- Read James 4:6-12 (for context begin with verse 1). List the nine to ten "staccato statements" or commands given in verses 7-12. Is it possible to accomplish any of these commands apart from Christ and the grace that is at work in our lives through Him? Why or why not?
- How does pride ... Prevent growth? (Proverbs 10:17 and 26:12) Poison relationships? (Proverbs 13:10 and 1 Corinthians 13:4) Produce stress by creating a performance mentality? Give examples.

- How do we rid ourselves of pride and make ourselves useful for the Kingdom? Read Philippians 2:3-8 and study the example of Jesus to find your answer.
- What enables us to humble ourselves and take on the form of a servant as Christ did? Is it a list of do's and don'ts? Our own strength and discipline? A positive attitude? The grace that was ushered in when Jesus went to the cross for our sins?
- Read Romans 5:8 and explain these statements in light of that Scripture: *Grace is love coming at you when it has nothing to do with you. Grace is being loved when you are unlovable. The Gospel is one-way – descending love.* (Quotes by Jeff Warren)
- In his message, Pastor gave four principles that can help us turn away from the self-centeredness of pride and turn toward the grace of the Gospel. Discuss how each of these principles can be accomplished only through depending on Christ and His work of grace in our lives.
 - Submit to God and detach yourself from yourself. (James 4:7)
 - Resist the deceiver because he promotes self-reliance. (James 4:7)
 - Draw near to God by developing an intimacy with the Gospel. (James 4:8)
 - Rely on Christ's work, not on your own merit or ability to keep the law ("cleanse your hands"). (James 4:8 & Galatians 5:4-5)
 - Cultivate a broken spirit (As you look at the Gospel take sin seriously – count the cost). (James 4:9-10 & Psalm 51:17)
- Read Philippians 3:7-11. Talk about how this passage gives validation to the principles discussed in the statements above. How did Paul remain focused on the Gospel? (See also John 3:30.)

Further Study (to be used in your personal Quiet Time)

Nancy Leigh DeMoss has an excellent resource on her website on the subject of pride and brokenness. Go to her site to download the document linked below. Take time this week to prayerfully consider the areas where you need to cultivate a humble spirit. Ask God to pour an abundance of His grace on you to help you look to and depend on Him in those areas of your life.

- Nancy's resource can be found here: <https://www.reviveourhearts.com/articles/brokenness-bookmark-the-heart-god-revives/>