

The Flawed Life of Samson


Part 2

The Problem of Pride

TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS

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Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. —Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. —Joshua 22:5

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

- Pastor Doug noted that pride is tricky—we usually recognize it in others, but not in ourselves. Tell us about a time that you recognized it in a friend, co-worker, or family member—but they didn't.

Did you say anything to them about it? Why or why not? If you did, how did they respond?

Has anybody ever said something to you about pride which you didn't see? Tell us about it.

If somebody has spoken to you about your pride, how did you respond?

- Review the "Four Warning Signs of Pride" in the sermon summary. Do any of them surprise you? We've all observed these traits, but usually attribute them to something other than pride. To what?

What message does our culture (advertisements, schools, etc.) send us about pride?

The biblical phrase for "culture" is "the world". Read 1 John 2:15-17, and then discuss these questions:

- What do you think it means to "love" the world (ie, culture which rejects God's lordship)?
- According to v. 16, what are the three key distinguishing marks of the world? What's so bad about those things? Why are they such a big deal?
- The end of v. 16 points to a deeper, more ultimate source of the world's culture. What is it?
- What do the following two verses say that those who embrace ("love") the world miss out on?
v. 15c
v. 17c
Does that alarm you?

*You can repent of pride and grow in humility.
Let a biblical counselor help you.
counseling@tcc.org*

Application-Challenge

Identify which of the four warning signs of pride you **most** need to work on...

Then pray, "Jesus, please help me in this area of pride.
Cultivate within me **your** humble attitude."

- 1 Pride never admits that it is wrong.
- 2 Pride craves recognition.
- 3 Pride doesn't listen to advice.
- 4 Pride doesn't think about others.

Sermon Summary

The Book of Judges records the stories of thirteen different leaders called judges who led Israel over a period of about 400 years. These leaders were supposed to help free God's people from their oppressors. During Samson's life the oppressors were the Philistines. Some of those judges were very strong and righteous leaders. And others were like Samson. Samson was destined to do great things, but he never reached his potential. Like us, he was a flawed person. But the problem was that he never let God help him with those flaws. He always gave in to them. We can all relate to Samson because we all struggle with pride. Pride is tricky—we usually recognize it in someone else before you see it in ourselves. Samson shows us four warning signs of pride that all of us are susceptible to. And if we don't deal with pride it will ruin our lives (Proverbs 16:18). What are the warning signs that pride might be a problem in your life?

Warning sign #1: Pride never admits it is wrong. Samson sinfully killed Philistines, but never admitted his wrong (Judges 15:15-17). If you proudly see yourself as being better than others, and smarter than others, and more important than others, why would you ever need to admit that you are wrong? Samson never does. When is the last time you said, "I was wrong. Would you please forgive me? I was wrong. I was selfish. I lied to you. I kept that from you, and I know that I shouldn't have. Please forgive me."

Warning Sign #2: Pride craves recognition. Samson even memorialized his sin, calling the place "Jawbone Hill" (Judges 15:17). Samson is not bragging about God; he's bragging about what he has done. We smile at the "look at me" focus in children—but then we take that same focus into adulthood. Anyone heard of a "selfie"?! "Look at me. Look at what I'm doing. Look at where I am. Like me, like me, like me!" Judges 15:16-17 is nothing but Samson's Facebook post, his Instagram video. "Hey, look at all these corpses I've piled up!" Look at what I've done. I need to spotlight on me. But pride is subtle. C.S. Lewis wrote: "Pride gets no pleasure out of having something. Pride only has pleasure in having more than the next person. Proud people are not really proud of being successful, or intelligent or good looking. They are proud of having more success, more intelligence and better looks than the people around them."

In Judges 15:18ff something subtle yet sinful occurs: Samson's killing spree has left him incredibly thirsty and he cries out to God for help. But even in the midst of this prayer Samson is subtly bragging. Prayer is supposed to keep pride at bay, but not for Samson. Pride is always complaining. It says, "I'm not getting what I deserve." Samson is like, "God, after my great victory, I should have an ice chest full of Gatorade!" Even in the face of Samson's complaining, God still graciously provides (v. 19). And what was Samson's response. He named the place after himself, not after the God who provided! Samson even made this instance of God's gracious provision, all about him. Can you get anymore prideful than this? Samson is saying, "Did you guys just see what my prayers did? Made the waters come out of ground. How awesome am I? I'm a great prayer warrior! Let's memorialize that and name this spot after me." Samson never gave God credit. Pride is ugly, isn't it? The problem is that we can see pride in everyone but ourselves.

Warning Sign #3: Pride never listens to advice. If you look back over these two verses, Samson is doing all the talking. He never reflects on what the Scriptures say. He never consults God on anything. Samson didn't listen to the wisdom of his parents either (see Judges 13). Samson does what he wants to do, when he wants to do it. What God wants isn't even on his radar. Pride never listens to advice, because pride doesn't need advice. Pride's ideas, opinions and desires are superior to everyone else's. It's easy to see arrogance Samson's life, but it's so hard to see in ourselves. How many times have you known what God would have you do, but instead, you did what you wanted to do, said what you wanted to say, went where you wanted to go, bought what you wanted to buy?

Warning Sign #4: Pride doesn't think about others. Pride doesn't ask, "I wonder what others need?" Samson led a proud, self-centered life for 20 year while he should have been serving his people (v. 20).

The antidote for pride is humility, which means "to make yourself low." That is how we battle pride. Humility is thinking of yourself less (Philippians 2:3-4). Humility is a powerful agent for change in the world. Think about what would happen in your family, workplace or school if this was your attitude, "How can I help you? How can I serve you?" Our most powerful example of this, of course, is the Lord Jesus Christ (Philippians 2:5-8). But how am I going to become more humble? I have to spend time with Jesus, because Jesus is the most humble person who ever lived. He is the exact opposite of Samson. You can't humble yourself further than to come from heaven to earth, being divine but putting on human flesh, and dying for others' sins! Spend with Jesus this week; read his Word. Humbly pray to him. Say "Jesus, help me to follow your example of humility. Better yet, express your life through me."

Suggestions for Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

Pride versus Humility Checklist

Nancy Leigh DeMoss

Instructions: For *each couplet*, mark the statement which better describes you.
Then, for each “proud” response, find a Bible passage that addresses it.

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- Proud people focus on the failures of others.
 - Humble people are overwhelmed with a sense of their own spiritual need.
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- Proud people have a critical, fault-finding spirit;
they look at everyone else’s faults with a microscope but their own with a telescope.
 - Humble people are compassionate;
they forgive much because they know how much they have been forgiven.
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- Proud people are self-righteous; they look down on others.
 - Humble people esteem all others better than themselves.
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- Proud people have an independent, self-sufficient spirit.
 - Humble people have a dependent spirit; they recognize their need for others.
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- Proud people have to prove that they are right.
 - Humble people are willing to yield the right to be right.
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- Proud people claim rights; they have a demanding spirit.
 - Humble people yield their rights; they have a meek spirit.
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- Proud people are self-protective of their time, their rights, and their reputation.
 - Humble people are self-denying.
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- Proud people desire to be served.
 - Humble people are motivated to serve others.
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- Proud people desire to be a success.
 - Humble people are motivated to be faithful and to make others a success.
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- Proud people desire self-advancement.
 - Humble people desire to promote others.
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- Proud people have a drive to be recognized and appreciated.
 - Humble people have a sense of their own unworthiness;
they are thrilled that God would use them at all.
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- Proud people are wounded when others are promoted and they are overlooked.
 - Humble people are eager for others to get the credit; they rejoice when others are lifted up.
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- Proud people have a subconscious feeling, “This ministry/church is privileged
to have me and my gifts”; they think of what they can do for God.
 - Humble people’s heart attitude is, “I don’t deserve to have a part in any ministry”; they know
that they have nothing to offer God except the life of Jesus flowing through their broken lives.
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- Proud people feel confident in how much they know.
 - Humble people are humbled by how very much they have to learn.
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- Proud people are self-conscious.
 - Humble people are not concerned with self at all.

Digging Deeper (continued)

- Proud people keep others' length.
- Humble people are willing to risk getting close to others and to take risks of loving intimately.

- Proud people are quick to blame others.
- Humble people accept personal responsibility and can see where they are wrong in a situation.

- Proud people are unapproachable or defensive when criticized.
- Humble people receive criticism with a humble, open spirit.

- Proud people are concerned with being respectable, with what others think; they work to protect their own image and reputation.
- Humble people are concerned with being real; what matters to them is not what others think but what God knows; they are willing to die to their own reputation.

- Proud people find it difficult to share their spiritual need with others.
- Humble people are willing to be open and transparent with others as God directs.

- Proud people want to be sure that no one finds out when they have sinned; their instinct is to cover up.
- Humble people, once broken, don't care who knows or who finds out; they are willing to be exposed because they have nothing to lose.

- Proud people have a hard time saying, "I was wrong; will you please forgive me?"
- Humble people are quick to admit failure and to seek forgiveness when necessary.

- Proud people tend to deal in generalities when confessing sin.
- Humble people are able to acknowledge specifics when confessing their sin.

- Proud people are concerned about the consequences of their sin.
- Humble people are grieved over the cause, the root of their sin.

- Proud people are remorseful over their sin, sorry that they got found out or caught.
- Humble people are truly, genuinely repentant over their sin, evidenced in the fact that they forsake that sin.

- Proud people wait for the other to come and ask forgiveness when there is a misunderstanding or conflict in a relationship.
- Humble people take the initiative to be reconciled when there is misunderstanding or conflict in relationships; they race to the cross; they see if they can get there first, no matter how wrong the other may have been.

- Proud people compare themselves with others and feel worthy of honor.
- Humble people compare themselves to the holiness of God and feel a desperate need for His mercy.

- Proud people are blind to their true heart condition.
- Humble people walk in the light.

- Proud people don't think they have anything to repent of.
- Humble people realize they have need of a continual heart attitude of repentance.

- Proud people don't think they need revival, but they are sure that everyone else does.
- Humble people continually sense their need for a fresh encounter with God and for a fresh filling of His Spirit.