

A Light in the Valley

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

March 2018
Volume 4
Issue 3

Lesser Discussed Sins: Pride

by: Justin Brewer

In Romans 1:28-32, the Apostle Paul included “proud” and “boasters” among the list of sins that the rejection of God brings about. Consider also that Solomon included this concept in Proverbs 6:16-19: “These six things the Lord hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him: A proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that are swift in running to evil, a false witness who speaks lies, and one who sows discord among brethren.” Jesus included it among a list of rather despicable transgressions when He stated that what “comes out of a man, that defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man” (Mark 7:20-23). While being prideful might be overlooked often as being a “lesser” sin (compared, for example, to murder), Jesus said “All

these evil things,” which means that Christians should take note of it.

While pride is an issue that may frequently be mentioned in passing, how often do we sit and consider this concept specifically? However, being prideful and even boastful is an issue that is all too prevalent in our society today. For men (perhaps pride is more of an issue with men, generally speaking, but Christian ladies should be wary of it as well), pride can come about through a number of different factors; for instance, men might be proud of their academic achievements, their professional achievements, their material wealth, their fame (even perceived fame), and the list goes on. One problem that often develops due to pride is that an outlook on life is cultivated in which an individual believes himself to always be correct and no amount of evidence to the contrary will convince him otherwise. For instance, someone with this outlook might put forth the

argument that since they are “well educated,” everyone should listen to them on the topic rather than someone who is not so “educated.” Naturally, such an attitude will not be stated in such obvious terms, but the attitude is present nonetheless. Last year, I read an article in which the author was clearly trying to exert his intellectual abilities and he disparaged anyone who potentially disagreed with his stance as being less educated and of lesser intelligence (he even went so far as to mention his academic degrees and where he obtained them). Such is prideful and inappropriate on many levels.

In Proverbs 16:18, King Solomon wrote that pride “goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.” Likewise, in Proverbs 11:2, he wrote that when “pride comes, then comes shame; but with the humble is wisdom.” Again, he wrote that a “man’s pride will bring him low, but the humble in spirit will retain honor” (Proverbs 29:23). From just these few passages, it is easy to ascertain that pride will only bring shame upon the prideful. Pride can often lead to other sins; think back to Proverbs 6:16-19. How often does pride lead to these other abominations? For instance, mankind has become so prideful in their so-called evolved state of being that they determine that unborn babies are not human and therefore, in their pride, they extinguish those innocent lives (“...shed innocent blood...”). Likewise, in James 4:1-10, it is stated that fighting and war come about due to pride; this is contrasted with the concept of submitting to God (which requires humility rather than pride), resisting the devil (again, requiring submission), and finally it is stated, “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.”

The Bible contains multiple examples of those that God humbled, which included mighty kings of great empires. One such person was Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon; in Daniel 5:18-31, Daniel went before Belshazzar, the son of Nebuchadnezzar, to interpret the writing on the wall. Speaking of Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel stated that God had given him a great kingdom and had placed him in power, yet “when his heart was lifted up, and his spirit was hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him. Then he was driven from the sons of men, his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild donkeys. They fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till he knew that the Most High God rules in the kingdom of men, and appoints over it whomever He chooses.” However, Belshazzar, who knew of these events, had not humbled himself before God (Daniel 5:22) and God removed the kingdom from him because of this fact (Daniel 5:30-31).

Similarly, we have the accounts of King Manasseh, his son Amon, and his grandson Josiah. Manasseh allowed his pride to lead to further wickedness, and like Nebuchadnezzar, God removed him from power until he “humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers” (2 Chronicles 33:1-17). On the other hand, Amon “did not humble himself before the Lord, as his father Manasseh had humbled himself; but Amon trespassed more and more” (2 Chronicles 33:22), and so God allowed Amon to be murdered (2 Chronicles 33:24). Unlike Manasseh and Amon, Josiah followed the will of God from a very early age; at age 16, Josiah “began to seek the God of his father David” (2 Chronicles 34:3). Reading through the account of Josiah, it is easy to determine that he had humbled himself before the Lord God without having to be taught in the same manner as Nebuchadnezzar or Manasseh (2 Chronicles 34:1-35:27).

These are but brief examples from the Bible that teach the followers of God about the need for humbleness. It is clear from these passages where the sin of pride can lead and while pride may not be the first step in a long list of possible transgressions, pride can lead us down the wrong road. When we consider our own attitude, do we have a hardened heart like Belshazzar and Amon that will not be humbled? Have we had a heart like Manasseh that has been humbled by God? Or do we have a heart like that of Josiah?

Consider those that God has named as being humble; in Numbers 12:3, the following was stated; “Now the man Moses was very humble, more than all the men who were on the face of the earth.” If we stop and consider who Moses was, we realize that he had grown up in the house of Pharaoh, which means that he was well educated and, prior to his yielding to the will of God, very rich and powerful. Think also of the submission of Jesus to the Father, which required humility. Are we greater than Jesus? If Moses was powerful, Jesus was more so since He had all of the legions of heaven, yet He chose to do the will of the Father.

When the disciples asked Jesus about who the greatest in the kingdom of heaven would be, “Jesus called a little child to Him” and then said in answer to those disciples, “Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:1-5). As Christians, we are to be like Christ, which requires us to deny ourselves and submit to His will; this requires us to put aside pride and arrogance, and to be humble (not in word, but in action).

God's Will for You: Drink but Just Don't Get Drunk?

by: Jacob Gwin

There is an increasing trend among Christians to teach that the consumption of alcohol in moderation is perfectly acceptable to God. God's law on alcohol, they say, only prohibits the consumption of alcohol to the point of drunkenness and any consumption up to this point is permissible. Is this the correct view of the teachings of Scripture on this subject?

Certainly God's Word condemns drunkenness as a sin that will damn one's soul in Hell. I Corinthians 6:9,10 explicitly states, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither...drunkards...shall inherit the kingdom of God." The text is clear, and few argue, that getting drunk is a violation of God's will for the Christian.

If this is the sum of God's Word on alcohol, however, it places the Christian in a precarious position. Drunkenness will cause one to be lost eternally in Hell and, as a result, is a line no one can afford to cross. But, the problem is determining where the line is! What is drunkenness?

Perhaps a good place to start would be to look at the dictionary to determine the definition of drunkenness. Webster's Dictionary defines drunkenness as "a: having the faculties impaired by alcohol. b: having a level of alcohol in the blood that exceeds a maximum prescribed by law".

Since we're looking for the definite line for drunkenness that we don't want to cross, the second definition appears to be worth examining. It seems to be very concrete, absolute and even scientific! Maybe the answer is here! After all, one might suppose the authorities have done their homework and know when one is drunk and when one isn't. Unfortunately, a quick look at the laws of the land show no uniformity among the states. The state laws vary across a wide range of blood alcohol levels that are used to define when one is driving drunk, so this doesn't help us in determining the where this important line is.

Some might be quick to answer, "I won't get drunk because I know my limits!" But, how does one know his or her limits? The only way to know your limits is to

cross the line! For example, you might know your limits when it comes how much weight you can lift. How did you come to know this limit? You learned it when you tried to lift more than you could handle and woke up with a sore back the next day! Are we to believe that God has established a law for His people with regards to alcohol that we can only know we are violating AFTER we have crossed the line and violated it?

What's worse, the "limit" for an individual varies. The effects of alcohol on a person change based upon a number of factors including the type and amount of food that has been consumed before or during imbibing, one's physical condition, and even one's emotional state. So, the line that we're struggling to draw (that will send a soul to Hell) is now moving! Certainly there has to be a better answer!

Fortunately, instead of instructing us not to cross some vague line that is difficult to determine or is impossible to know until you've crossed it, God gives additional instructions about the consumption of alcohol that are more absolute. Repeatedly in the New Testament we are told to be sober. For example, in I Peter 4 we read the familiar condemnation of the Gentiles' use of alcohol ("For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry." I Peter 4:3 NASV). But, God doesn't say, "It is ok for you to go have a few with them, but just know your limits; just don't get drunk with them." Instead, in verse 7 of the context, God instructs His children to be sober ("The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers." I Peter 4:7 NASV). The Greek word translated "sober-minded" here (*nepho*) is defined by Strong as "to abstain from wine (keep sober), i.e. (figuratively) be discreet:—be sober, watch." Vine defines the word like this: "signifies 'to be free from the influence of intoxicants.'" This instruction about the consumption of alcohol is much more absolute, isn't it?

Study Opportunities

Sunday Bible Study: 10:00 AM
Sunday Worship Assembly: 11:00 AM

Meeting At

Homewood Suites of Bozeman
1023 E Baxter Ln,
Bozeman, MT 59715

Everyone Welcome!

“But, wait just a minute!” someone might object. “Why would God condemn drunkenness if he really wants Christians to be abstinent?” This is a worthy question and to answer it, it is important to note that other condemnations of sins of actions in excess do not always justify the engaging of the action in moderation. In other words, just because God condemns excessive consumption of alcohol (drunkenness), it does not mean that moderate consumption of alcohol is permitted. For example, the condemnation of “excess of riot” in I Peter 4:4 doesn’t mean riot in moderation is permissible. The prohibition of being like the world to the point of conforming to their standards in Romans 12:1,2 doesn’t mean that occasional behavior like the world is acceptable just as long as you don’t act like them all the time.

God’s law isn’t vague. Christians are to be sober, abstaining from alcohol, instead of consuming it and wondering if they’ve crossed some ambiguous line into drunkenness. Those who abstain won’t have to worry if they’ve “gone too far” and they won’t have given any opportunities to Satan to devour them (I Peter 5:8).

Does Your Speech Betray You?

by: Stacy Dean Crim

God has given man the gift of language and the use of words. Thoughts are formulated in the mind and then spoken by the tongue. Our words allow us to communicate with one another and express thoughts and ideas to one another. God has given animals very basic forms of communication through sounds and movement, but to man He has given thought and speech. With this wonderful blessing however comes great responsibility.

The Bible instructs us to be careful with our words.

Colossians 4:6 “Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.

The words we choose to use can either lift a man up or tear him down.

James 3:5 “Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles.”

James 3:9 "With it (the tongue) we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men who have been made in the similitude of God."

So many conflicts and hard feelings can be avoided if we take a moment to think before we speak.

James 1:19 :So then my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak and slow to wrath."

Paul showed Titus the value of choosing his words wisely when preaching the gospel.

Titus 2:8 "sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you."

When Peter was being identified as one of Jesus' disciples because his speech "betrayed" him, Peter began to curse and swear (Matthew 26:73-74). Peter understood that if his speech could connect him to Jesus, his speech could also disconnect him from Jesus. This is an important lesson for all of us who are Christians.

When the wanton woman of Proverbs 7:21 caused a young man to yield, she did it with her enticing speech and her flattering lips. She used powerful words to seduce the young man, but "her house is the way to hell" (verse 27).

We are blessed to be able to communicate with words, but our choice and use of words will be brought to judgment. Jesus said "But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment." (Matthew 12:36).

Spiritual Thoughts...

Good morning out there! Of whom was this said? "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!" It was a Roman centurion, who knew how authority worked to get things to happen. This man had said, "But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed." (Please see Matthew 8:5-10.) He had trusted not in imaginary things, but in the authority being demonstrated openly for all to see. Will "such great faith" be found in me? Thank you for reading this. Upward.

--David Dibbell

Daily Bible Reading

April 2018

April 2	Hosea 1:1-2:1	April 17	Hosea 14
April 3	Hosea 2:2-23	April 18	Joel 1:1-12
April 4	Hosea 3	April 19	Joel 1:13-20
April 5	Hosea 4	April 20	Joel 2:1-11
April 6	Hosea 5	April 23	Joel 2:12-32
April 9	Hosea 6-7	April 24	Joel 3
April 10	Hosea 8	April 25	Amos 1:1-2:3
April 11	Hosea 9	April 26	Amos 2:4-16
April 12	Hosea 10	April 27	Amos 3:1-4:5
April 13	Hosea 11-12	April 30	Amos 4:6-13
April 16	Hosea 13		

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