

Grace – Part 4

Welcome to The Grace of God, Part 4, September 26, 2007. And this will be the last part on Grace today as I will wrap this session up. Remember with grace we first approached the transcendence of the grace of God. The common grace applied to all men. And then the special grace applied to believers. And then as believers, we began to learn that there's another dimension of grace called the greater grace of God that we access through humility. And today I will finish the session on the accessing of the grace of God. Last time we were comparing pride and humility drawing from Scripture using different frames of reference. I'll continue with a bit of that list today so as to complete it and that will serve as the segue then to the next session of the teaching.

- Pride says I deserve whatever rewards of God there are. But humility says I want God and I will leave the decision about rewards up to Him. So I don't pursue rewards independent of pursuing bringing maximal glory to God. But the maximal glory to God and the rewards promised to us in Scripture as believers can be distinguished but not separated.
- Pride declares opinion as truth. Humility seeks the one Who is truth and then seeks to declare the One Who is truth while having the self be basically unrecognized.
- Pride takes the Word of God and interprets it in the light of self. Humility interprets self in the light of the Word of God.
- Pride decides its need and then declares it to God and expects fulfillment. But humility knows that the heart of man is deceitful above all things and comes to God to ask God to show it its own need so that it will know how to pray.
- Pride holds onto things tightly other than God. But humility holds all things loosely except God.
- Pride resists true accountability. Humility requires of itself true accountability because humility acknowledges that it will have an obligatory blind spot that will remain so if others are not speaking into the blind spot and acknowledges that over time that blind spot will become ever larger if no one is ever sought to speak into the blind spot.
- Pride leads and expects others to follow. Humility follows Jesus and desires others to follow humility only as long as humility is following Jesus.
- Pride requires the obedience of others. But humility requires obedience of itself to Jesus Christ which is the fruit of the Spirit called self control.
- Pride hates constraint. Humility loves being constrained by the love of God and is always thankful for God's restraining grace apart from which the evil flowing from its own heart would be ever great.
- Pride's fixation is on having others view it accurately. But humility's fixation is on having others view Jesus accurately.
- So pride views Jesus in the light of self. Humility views self in the light of Jesus; Who He is, What He is, what He has done, what He is doing and what He will do.
- Pride tends to divide people into two groups: The good who unquestionably follow and the evil whom they see as challenging them in regard to power, position, insight, wisdom, and status. Humility divides people into two groups: Namely unbelievers and believers and all are evil but are separated only by the grace of God.
- Pride aligns the purposes of God to self. Humility aligns self with the purposes of God.

- Pride makes excuses. Humility makes adjustments.
- Pride accesses a fall. Why? Because God will not be mocked. He will exercise forbearance and He may be mocked for a season, but He will not be mocked as an outcome. So pride accesses a fall and the worst condition for a human being is to go through life unto death and never have a fall; because the fall is what leads to brokenness, brokenness leads to openness, openness leads to God and the introduction to God is what leads to humility, which accesses the greater grace of God.

So we'll make a couple of additional points about pride. II Corinthians 11:14 – For even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. How does this connect? Because that which is anti-Christ poses as that which is pro-Christ. There is an apparent humility which is not humility. It is pride disguised as humility. This can be described as pride in appearing humble. That's why we have to fulfill I Thessalonians 5:21 and discern all things including discerning what is true humility from that which is false humility. George Burns gave a secular quote: He said, "Sincerity is a wonderful quality. Once you learn to fake that, you can do anything." So in the church humility is viewed as a wonderful quality and once you learn to fake that you can do almost anything in the church. But over a period of time the truth will be known. Matthew 12:33 – By their fruits, ye shall know them. True humility will result in an increasing flow and manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit. False humility will not. False humility cannot produce the fruit of the Spirit over the longer term. A second point about pride and humility is that pride has two polarities. One exudes the attitude of superiority; the other exudes the attitude of inferiority. The commonality of the two is that both say this is about me. Both are self centered.

So this truth seems brutal to some. I don't say it out of a desire to be brutal. I say it so that all of us and all of those with whom we come in contact can walk in the freedom of Jesus Christ. There is one variant of walking in the flesh that is more immediately recognizable. And that's the exuded attitude of superiority. That one we tend to recognize over a period of time. He relates to his superior performance, including in the church, about the things of God. He believes that his performance merits acclaim. He either receives the acclaim or develops a certain sense of disgruntlement that he's not receiving the acclaim that he should as he does the things of God. And that others are simply not capable of seeing how much acclaim he truly deserves because they're not spiritually gifted to the degree he is. That's the superiority complex. He's said to be egotistical and self centered because he is. But he can be recognized.

The more insidious one is the opposite polarity; because that's the one that we tend to excuse and many times even applaud. But this one is every bit as much in the flesh, operating in pride with self as the basis as the one who has the attitude of superiority. So let's look at the second one. This is the one who has an inferiority complex and lives in self condemnation. The one who feels superior and the one who feels inferior are equally in the flesh and operating in pride. Both are sinful and to the same degree. We have to start at the beginning to understand what I am saying on this concept. In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth. Out of that flows these two unmistakable revelations about our creator God. Our God is the only uncreated thing in all of existence and the only self determined thing in all of existence. That means that His value and His meaning are intrinsic within Himself. But every other thing, which means everything which has been created, which includes us, has its value assigned by the God of Genesis 1:1. So how can the one with an inferiority complex be functioning in pride, in the

flesh? The one with an inferiority complex feels worthless, feels condemned, and lives by it. The truth is this person is in self worship because he is insisting on assigning his value himself rather than coming to the God of Genesis 1:1 and letting that God declare what his value is. This one judges God by judging that he can determine his own value better than the holy God of Genesis 1:1 can declare what his value is. He calls unclean and worthless and condemned that which has been called clean by the blood of Jesus. This one often has a hunger for the praise of man. The only difference is which performance is worthy of praise? The obvious, the proud one functioning in superiority views his absolute performance as worthy of praise. The one who feels inferior desires praise to the same degree; but he desires it for how well he performs in spite of his lack of gifts, how well he performs in spite of the many obstacles that he faces, and how well he performs in spite of all the burdens, including his past, that he has to carry and overcome. Praise desired by this one takes the form of, I don't know how you do it in the face of all this. This one's pride is that he equates his sense of his perceived worthlessness with humility. He, therefore, takes pride in his obvious humility in feeling worthless and condemned, when in fact it is not true humility at all. A sense of worthlessness is simply assigning one's own value rather than letting God declare what your value is as revealed by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross; because had that one been the only sinner on Earth, Christ still would have given up the glory of Heaven, come to Earth in the form of a man, gone to the cross to die the horrible death to the point of forsakenness by the Father, receiving the wrath of God, while forsaken by God, all to save that one sinner. That's the value that God places on that one sinner.

So when a person insists as a Christian living in worthlessness and self condemnation in spite of that, it is the audacity and pride of the flesh that would lead one to insist on declaring its own value rather than letting God declare its own value. So this one's happiness may be in fact obtained by getting empathy from others. The empathy flows by consistently appearing to have no cause for happiness. That in fact can be used to control others. The control of others can be implemented by either domination through strength or by helplessness. The obviously proud one fears loss. To the one functioning in inferiority in rebellion against God, gain can be loss. This is because with gain comes expectations and accountability. Thus, helplessness is not just the present condition; it is to be maintained at all costs, lest I be held to a higher standard, lest I be held accountable, lest I lose the attention of others, lest I lose the support of others, and lest I lose the praise of others for poor performance. None of that is pleasing to God because it is all in the flesh, all in pride, with self as the basis and self in the flesh cannot please God. This one is into self just as much as the obviously proud one. The techniques of implementation of walking by self are simply different. Each uses the technique that seems to work best in order to remain self centered in functioning.

So what to make of all that? Simply recognize the variants of being in the flesh with self as the basis in pride. Why? Because they're true and only truth can set us free. Here's the point. Empathy is good. Enabling is not. The narrow way is to discern when empathy has become enabling. The enabling then becomes facilitation of what is in fact rebellion against the spirit realm and rebellion against Jesus Christ with all things summed up in Jesus. It is rebellion because it persists in setting its own value rather than accepting the value that God has declared He places upon you through the sacrifice on the cross of Christ. We tend to think of pride as placing too high a value on yourself. Thus, we tend to think of humility as placing too low a value on yourself. But pride is not only placing a high value on yourself and humility is not

placing a low value on yourself. Pride is thinking that you set your own value at all regardless of the polarity used because that is God's job. When we think of pride as lifting yourself up, then we think of humility as putting yourself down. But humility is not putting yourself down. Humility is lifting Jesus up by letting Jesus tell you what your value is and then walking according to it. That's why Moses could pen the words, Moses was the most humble man on Earth. Well that sounds like pride but it was humility because he wrote exactly as God instructed him to write, which is what humility is.

Luke 14:11 – for everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled and he who humbles himself shall be exalted. Humbling ourselves before our God is our job. Exalting us, if we're to be exalted at all, is God's job. When we insist on doing His job, which is to exalt us, then He will insist on doing our job which is to humble us. That's why pride goes before a fall as we're told in Proverbs 16:18. Just remember what pride is. Pride includes thinking that you set your value at all, whether you set it high or low. Humility is submitting to the value that God has placed upon you because He is the only self determined thing in all of existence. And when you insist on setting your value high or low, you are insisting on functioning in self determination, declaring that the only self determined thing in all of existence is simply wrong when He says what your value is. That's to remain in a position of judging God whether you set your value high or low. So the commonality is, they're both pride.

Now all of us desire to have God flow in our lives. I'm going to use a scientific principle to illustrate how that's to occur and to illustrate what is often wrong with our thinking. Ohm's Law relates to the flow of current through electrical circuits. It's usually stated as $E=IR$. As you can see, I've taken the $E=IR$ and divided both sides of the equation by R . So we're left with E over $R=I$. The E in the electrical circuit is the electromotive force spoken of in the common usage of voltage. The R is the resistance to the flow of current through the circuit spoken of in units called ohms, hence the name, Ohm's Law. I is the amount of current that flows in the circuit spoken of in terms of units such as amperes. When you look at this, thinking only of electrical circuitry, you can see that if you increase the E , that is increase the force supplied and leave the R the same the numerator of the fraction gets higher, the denominator stays the same and so the number gets bigger. So you increase the force, you'll get more flow of current assuming the resistance stays the same. If you decrease the E , decrease the force, leave the resistance the same, you've made the numerator small, left the denominator the same, thus the fractional number becomes smaller and smaller. That is to say the flow of current gets less and less. With the R , if you increase the R , the resistance, the denominator is made bigger, the numerator stays the same, thus the fractional value gets smaller and smaller. That is to say the flow of current gets less and less as you increase the resistance. If you decrease the resistance, the denominator is made smaller and smaller, the numerator, the voltage stays the same, so the fractional number becomes larger and larger. That is to say the flow of current gets greater and greater.

Now having said all that from the physical realm, let's draw the spiritual correlation. The pride of man, which is the self image of self, when self is the basis of decision making, views this as follows. Man, meaning me, is the force that makes things happen. Circumstances, including other people, is the resistance. We tend to think that we're applying plenty of force to make maximal current flow; if the resistance of circumstances would only decrease, then we would see more results. The more results would be the fruit of God increasing in our lives, and would be

the advancement of the Kingdom of God through the church and through the community. But when we view it that way, we are in the flesh with self as the basis. And that's how one accesses grumbling about the unfavorable circumstances. This is the one that produces dead works, impotent testimony and the absence of the abundant life. Why? Because he's in self worship and God will not be mocked by self worship. He does not access the greater grace of God that God gives to the humble. Even thinking that we are the E increases the R. Even thinking that circumstances are the R, will increase the R. But humility which is the self image of self when Jesus Christ is the basis of all interpretation and decision making, which is the spirit realm, has a different interpretation, in the spirit. Humility correctly views God as the E, the force. Man, meaning me, is the resistance. Humility's goal then is to deny self, thus reducing the R to nearly zero, which then allows the flow of current to get greater and greater to approach infinity. So the reduction of resistance, by denying self, is done by taking up your cross. Now that means to embrace your present circumstances, as a God permitted opportunity to discover residual parts of your thinking in your unrenewed mind that cling to self as the basis, which means you are in the flesh, which means you are hostile to God and cannot please God. We have a steady stream of God given opportunities to decrease the R value. The problem is we call the God given opportunities problems. So that fleshly thought that is revealed by your circumstances, is then captured to the obedience of Christ which is to move into the spirit realm and to follow Jesus, embracing whatever pain comes in your present circumstances as an opportunity to have self revealed to self so as to deny self and turn to Jesus. Fix your gaze upon Jesus. Fix your hope upon Jesus. Follow Jesus. Sum all things up in Jesus. That's how one accesses and increases the flow of the grace of God in your life. That grace is then sufficient for you regardless of your circumstances. The fruit of the Spirit now manifests itself as you begin to live the abundant life, dependent on Jesus Christ regardless of circumstances.

This last poster will give some summary points that I would regard as a reasonable Scriptural end point of humility to help you know when you reach the proper point. Then you'll be accessing the free flow of the grace of God. In myself, apart from Christ, I am nothing. Galatians 6:3 – For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. All of your value comes from God. In yourself you have no value because you are not self determined so your value is not intrinsic within your self. In yourself you are nothing. You only have the value that the transcendent God of Genesis 1:1 assigns to you.

Secondly, in myself, apart from Christ, I have nothing. I Corinthians 4:7 – And what do you have that you did not receive, but if you received it, why do you boast as if you had not received it? All things that you have come from God, and all by His grace. You have never created anything. You have not really created holiness within yourself. You have not created spirit life within yourself, and so on.

Thirdly, in myself apart from Christ, I know nothing. I Corinthians 8:2 – If anyone supposes that he knows anything, he has not yet known as he ought to know. Because our God is transcendent and you know only as much of God as God has condescended to reveal to you. And you know far less than you ought to know by this time. Why? Because if you steadfastly from the moment of salvation had been denying self to decrease the R value, you'd have much greater the knowledge of God flowing through your circuitry. That's why you don't know as you ought to know because you've insisted in living life in pride with self as the basis with a high R value,

limiting the flow of the things of God through you. And when you do that, that's the hard head, stiff neck, and hard heart that precludes the greater grace of God flowing in your life. And that's why the limitation of the revelation of God itself exists.

Number 4 and lastly...in myself apart from Jesus Christ, I can do nothing. John 15:5 – Apart from Me (Jesus), you can do nothing. Not a little bit, not some good and some bad, nothing. Now these components are the self image of self when Jesus is the basis of all your thinking, all your analysis, all your interpretation, all your integration, and all your decision making. And that's what the spirit realm is.

So to summarize humility in myself, apart from Christ, I am nothing, I know nothing, I have nothing, and I can do nothing. Knowing these things positions you in the spirit realm with Jesus as the basis rather than in the flesh realm with self as the basis. If you know these things about yourself in the light of the Word of God, then you are humble. And if you are humble, you are blessed. Why? Because you have accessed the greater grace of God and it is in fact all by grace. The question is never, is His grace sufficient? The only question is, have I accessed the sufficient grace of God through my humility? So how do you know when you have fully accessed the grace of God through your humility? Because at that point you will sum up all things in Jesus Christ. And that'll be the topic the next time that we come together.

So my time is up and I thank you for yours.