

Fourth Quarter Strategies - Saturday, September 12, 2015

Pride is not an easy topic to take on, but it's certainly one worthy of discussion. We've all had proud moments in our lives. We may be proud of our kids' accomplishments. It's even okay to be proud of our own accomplishments. Where I believe we can easily go wrong is allowing our pride to go from our heart to our head. Once it gets into our heads, we may be setting ourselves up for a great fall! You probably know people, perhaps co-workers, who you feel have become "a legend in their own mind." I don't believe God has any real problem with pride as long as we don't put ourselves in the throne that needs to be reserved for Him alone. So tell me, have you ever found yourself being proud of your personal accomplishments? It's quite natural to take pride in all kinds of things.

Pride is fleeting and temporary and it leaves us vulnerable to be sifted by the Deceiver. Speaking of Lucifer, that most beautiful of angelic beings might be a good starting point to carry this discussion forward. Pride led to Satan's fall from Heaven along with a third of the angels who followed him according to scripture. He wanted to be like God and sit on that throne. Pride can certainly have the same effect on our lives as well. That's not to say that every prideful thought will lead to a great fall. Personally, I've experienced prideful periods in my life since becoming a follower of Christ that were appropriately followed by a period of being humbled by my Lord. I'm thankful He cared enough to discipline me in my egocentricity. Since the fall of man in the Garden of Eden, Satan has been in our midst tempting us to take control of the wheel of self-sufficiency. We'd be wise to let Christ have control of our lives. You may not see anything wrong with self-confidence, but I now know my confidence must come from Christ. Independence seems fine, but interdependence is what God wants from those who follow His Son. As Paul so aptly stated, "I can do everything through Him that strengthens me." (Philippians 4:13)

What I find interesting is our Heavenly Father being proud of His creation. As a young man, I longed for my earthly father's approval of my accomplishments on the baseball field. My Dad wasn't very good at showing approval. He would constantly focus on my bad at-bats or a poor fielding effort. He set the bar awfully high. Later in life, I found out just how proud my Dad actually was through numerous conversations with friends who knew him in those days. The good news is our Heavenly Father looks at us through much different eyes and He is proud of us just for realizing that we need Him to come into our lives and take control of what lies ahead. His Holy Spirit not only gives us comfort. He also gives us courage and encourages us to stand fast in what we know pleases Him. My pride is found in Christ and I trust you will call upon Him from this point forward in all aspects of your business life, your family life and your personal endeavors. Let Christ be your strength this day forward!

Passages to Ponder: Proverbs 3:25-26; Proverbs 16:18-20; Isaiah 13:11; James 4:6-10; Revelation 12:3-5

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Proverbs 3:25-26 New King James Version (NKJV)

²⁵ Do not be afraid of sudden terror,
Nor of trouble from the wicked when it comes;
²⁶ For the LORD will be your confidence,
And will keep your foot from being caught.

Proverbs 16:18-20 New King James Version (NKJV)

¹⁸ Pride *goes* before destruction,
And a haughty spirit before a fall.
¹⁹ Better *to be* of a humble spirit with the lowly,
Than to divide the spoil with the proud.

²⁰ He who heeds the word wisely will find good,
And whoever trusts in the LORD, happy *is* he.

Isaiah 13:11 New King James Version (NKJV)

¹¹ “I will punish the world for *its* evil,
And the wicked for their iniquity;
I will halt the arrogance of the proud,
And will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.

James 4:6-10 New King James Version (NKJV)

⁶ But He gives more grace. Therefore He says:

“God resists the proud,
But gives grace to the humble.”

Humility Cures Worldliness

⁷ Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. ⁸ Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *you* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *you* double-minded.
⁹ Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and *your* joy to gloom. ¹⁰ Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

Revelation 12:3-5 New King James Version (NKJV)

³ And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. ⁴ His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. ⁵ She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne.