**#5 PRIDE**

*Pride makes us artificial and humility makes us real.*

- Thomas Merton a Trappist monk.

*If we have built on the fragile cornerstones of human wisdom, pride and conditional love, things may look good for a while, but a weak foundation causes collapse when storms hit.*

- Dr. Charles Stanley, founder of In Touch Ministries

In our culture we are told to be the very best, and that nothing can stop us. There is nothing wrong with feeling proud of our personal accomplishments or achievements, as modeled by God the Father in Matthew 3:17. However, pride that is sinful can be better understood as conceit, vanity, haughtiness or even greed. At the root of virtually all sin is the sin of pride (1 Samuel 13:10). It is choosing to go our own way, independent of God.

Pride is insidious and takes many forms. As soon as you feel like you are humble, pride manifests itself in a new form. For instance, *prejudice* is a form ofpride. *Cliques* are motivated bypride. *Gossip* is fueled by pride and looking down on others. When we *brag* about what we have or what we’ve done that is pride. A big *ego* is heavy with pride.

The Bible is full of real people making real mistakes. The Gospel is a story of redemption and forgiveness of sin. Can you think of an example of pride in the Bible?

**THINK:**

-What do you think is the difference between pride and humility? Is there an area where you struggle with pride? This question may make you uneasy; However, you may have to look deeply to see how pride has masked itself in your life. Try not to rush past this question.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. Why is pride the root of all sin? Why is pride offensive to God in the first place?

2. What does the Bible have to say about pride vs. humility? You will have plenty of material to look at in the Bible. Look up Proverbs 16:18

3. Why is it hard to be humble when we are get some success or attention? How might you become more vulnerable with another follower of Christ and allow them to point out issues of pride they see in your life?

4. What are some of the common temptations toward pride in your chosen discipline? (The point here is to wrestle with it’s literal presence in life in general and your work.)

5. What would it look like to be humble and gracious instead of proud in your field or craft?

6. How can the grace of God change a heart that is filled with fear, pride or a desire for power or status?

**ENGAGING WITH OTHERS:**

Seek out others and ask them about their perspective on pride, or how they remain humble when handling success and fame. Actively listen to them by asking thoughtful questions. Ask clarifying questions – but don’t interrupt while they are sharing. Sincerely thank them for sharing with you. If it is appropriate or they are interested offer to share your struggles with pride.

**REFLECTION:** What emotions, sympathies, actions or thoughts does this discussion bring into sharp focus for you?

**PRAYER:**

In what ways has God encouraged you or challenged you? Pray about it.

Pray that your self-esteem and self-worth would be based on the unshakable love God has for you, not on what you have or do. *“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus…” Romans 8:1*

**OPTIONAL SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL:**

Mere Christianity, by C.S. Lewis

The Freedom of Self-Forgetfulness, by Timothy Keller