

# A Bible Study About

## PRIDE

All human beings naturally have pride. Both adults and children have pride. But you might be surprised to know that in all 49 places in the King James Version of the Bible, pride is never mentioned as being a good thing. The Bible always treats pride as being bad. Throughout the Old and New Testaments, there are several words that are translated as "pride," but whichever word it is translated from, pride is always considered a bad thing.

In this study, we will look at a few of the places in the Bible where pride is mentioned and answer questions based on each of those places. For clarity, we will use the *Literal Translation of the Bible* (*A Literal Translation of the Holy Bible*, Copyright © 1976 – 2000 by Jay P. Green, Sr.) unless otherwise noted.

The first place pride is found in most English Bibles is Leviticus 26:19. This verse is part of God's warning to Israel about what He would do to them if they disobeyed Him. In verses 18 and 19, God says, "And if after these things you will not listen to Me, then I will chastise you seven times more for your sin; and I will break the pride of your strength, and will make your heavens as iron, and your earth as bronze." What God is saying here is that He knows that if Israel does not listen to Him, it is because they are prideful. So, to break their pride, he will make their heavens as iron and their earth as bronze. This means that He will make the sky give no rain and dry up the earth. This will dry up their farm crops and cause them to have a famine. This famine would make many Israelites go hungry and some would even starve to death.

**Do you think that God believes that pride is a serious problem?**

Proverbs is a book of wisdom, written to help us—especially young people—know right and wrong and how to live in a way that will avoid sad problems and make us happy.

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Proverbs 8:13 says, "The fear of Jehovah is to hate evil; I hate pride and loftiness, and the evil way, and the perverse mouth."

In this chapter, Wisdom is pictured as being a person, and Wisdom is speaking. In verse 13, Wisdom says that hating evil shows that we fear God. It is a good thing to have a proper fear of God. So, it is a good thing to hate evil. In the second half of this verse, Wisdom lists some other things that He hates.

**What is the first thing that Wisdom says, "I hate"?**

What do you think loftiness, an evil way, and the perverse mouth are? Here are some hints. The Hebrew word translated "pride" in this verse means to act in a way toward others that makes it seem that you believe you are better than they are. "Loftiness" in this verse is commonly translated pride in other verses of the Bible because it means swollen and, therefore, not humble. "Evil way" in this verse means bad road, and it means the wrong way to go. And "perverse mouth" comes from Hebrew words that mean to habitually say things that are the opposite of what is right and kind so as to create antagonism or trouble. Do you think these things are related to pride? How?

The next proverb to speak of pride is Proverbs 11:2: "Pride comes, then shame comes, but with the lowly is wisdom."

**Will being prideful cause you to be admired? What will it cause you to be? The Hebrew word "shame" here carries with it the idea of being publicly exposed and dishonored as being confused and foolish.**

Let's look at Proverbs 13:10: "Argument only comes by pride, but wisdom is with those who take advice."

**What comes from pride? Do you think this should be found in a Christian family where everybody is supposed to love one another? How do we get wisdom? What do you think happens when someone tries to give prideful people advice?**

In Proverbs 14:3, we read, "A rod of pride is in the mouth of a fool, but the lips of the wise shall keep them." This verse is showing the

difference between what a fool does with his mouth and what a wise person does with his mouth. A fool uses his mouth like a rod. It is as if he beats people with his words. **Do you think people will like him for this? Do you think they might try to get revenge?** Certainly, it is wrong to get revenge, but some people will do it anyway. Throughout history, people have been sorely punished or even executed because they let their pride cause them to say something unwise to people in power, such as kings. The wise person is pictured in this Proverb as using his lips to preserve himself. **What do you think this means? Hint: In English, we have a slang expression, "Button your lips." It means to keep your lips closed so you can't speak. We can't get in trouble by saying the wrong thing if we don't speak.**

Proverbs 16:18 is very clear: "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." This verse is saying almost the same thing twice as pride and a haughty spirit are almost the same thing, and destruction and a fall are almost the same thing.

**Do pride and a haughty spirit have good results? Why would anyone want to be prideful or have a haughty spirit?**

Proverbs 29:23 says, "The pride of man brings him low, but the humble of spirit takes hold of honor."

**What does this verse say brings someone low? Then how do you get honor? What do you think is the difference between being proud and being humble?**

In the New Testament, Jesus lists pride as one of the evil things that defile a man: "For from within, out of the heart of men, pass out the evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, greedy desires, iniquities, deceit, lustful desires, a wicked eye, blasphemy, pride, recklessness. All these evil things pass out from within and defile the man" (Mark 7:21-23). Notice that in this same list with pride are murders, thefts, and blasphemy. **Do you think that Jesus thought pride was a serious sin?**

In 1 John 2:15-17, John says, "Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him, because all that which is in the world: the lust of the flesh, and

the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and its lust. But the one doing the will of God abides forever." Is pride of God or of the world? Will it endure with God? What do you think this means for those who continue to be prideful?

Now notice Matthew 23:12: "And whoever will exalt himself shall be humbled, and whoever will humble himself shall be exalted." **If you lift your self up, which is another way of saying to be prideful, what will happen to you? If you are humble, which is the opposite of pride, what will happen?**

Notice how James and Peter say almost the exact same thing: "Be humbled before the Lord, and He will exalt you" (James 4:10); and, "Likewise, younger ones be subject to older ones; and all being subject to one another. Put on humility, because God sets Himself 'against proud ones, but He gives grace to humble ones.' Then be humbled under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in time" (1 Peter 5:5-6).

**How are you to be exalted? Who will exalt you? And who receives grace? (Notice also that we are to be subject to one another, meaning that we should act with humility to each other, especially the younger people to the older.)**

"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For each one that asks receives, and the one that seeks finds; and to the one knocking, it will be opened. Or what man of you is there, if his son should ask a loaf of him, will he give him a stone? And if he should ask a fish, will he give him a snake? Therefore, if you, being evil, know to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in Heaven give good things to those that ask Him?" (Matthew 7:7-11).

**Do you think God will take away pride and give humility to those who ask Him?** Of course He will. Our relationship with God is a loving and gracious one. He wants us to get rid of our pride because it hurts us and gets in the way of our being the children He wants us to be. And we want to please Him for all the blessings He has given us in Jesus Christ.