

**GOD OPPOSES PEOPLE WHO ARE PROUD.
HE BLESSES HIS HUMBLE CHILDREN.**

A Bible Teaching by Jack Hartman

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This month we will study what the Bible teaches about pride and humility. I believe that any person who carefully studies and meditates on the Scripture references in this Bible study will find that our Father has given each of us very specific instructions pertaining to pride and humility. (All of the Scripture references are from *The Amplified Bible* unless otherwise stated.)

SATAN ONCE WAS AN ARCHANGEL WHO FELL FROM HEAVEN BECAUSE OF PRIDE. Satan once was an archangel in heaven named Lucifer who was *so proud* that he wanted to be like God (see Isaiah 14:12-17). God cast Lucifer out of heaven because of his pride (see Ezekiel 28:17). Lucifer had many followers who also were cast out of heaven with him. Lucifer now is called Satan. The angels who were cast out of heaven with him are called demons.

Satan and his demons attempt to influence people in many subtle ways. Some people will "...[develop a beclouded and stupid state of mind] as the result of pride [be blinded by conceit, and] fall into the condemnation that the devil [once] did." (I Timothy 3:6)

Please note the words "beclouded and stupid state of mind" in the first amplification in this verse. These words refer to the thinking of people who are proud. Satan and his demons do everything they can to influence people to be proud.

THE LIVES OF PROUD PEOPLE ARE CENTERED AROUND THEMSELVES. All proud people have cloudy thinking. They are stupid as far as knowing and obeying God's instructions pertaining to pride. "...if any person thinks himself to be somebody [too important to condescend to shoulder another's load] when he is nobody [of superiority except in his own estimation], he deceives and deludes and cheats himself." (Galatians 6:3)

Proud people believe that they are superior to other people. These people “deceive and delude and cheat” themselves.

WHAT DOES GOD THINK ABOUT PEOPLE ARE PROUD? We now are ready to study what God thinks about pride. “Everyone proud and arrogant in heart is disgusting, hateful, and exceedingly offensive to the Lord...” (Proverbs 16:5).

All people who are proud are “exceedingly offensive to the Lord.” There is *no* question that God is strongly opposed to pride. People who are proud actually sit on the throne of their lives where God should be. They are their own little gods. “Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall.” (Proverbs 16:18).

We now are ready to study what God thinks about people who are proud. Proud people ultimately will destroy themselves. They will fall because of their pride. Proud people always will pay a price for their pride. The only question is when they will pay this price and not if they will pay this price.

GOD OPPOSES PEOPLE WHO ARE PROUD. HE BLESSES PEOPLE WHO ARE HUMBLE. Proud people keep God at a distance. “...though the Lord is high, yet has He respect to the lowly [bringing them into fellowship with Him]; but the proud and haughty He knows and recognizes [only] at a distance.” (Psalm 138:6)

God respects people who are humble. Proud people cannot have a close and intimate relationship with God.

PROUD PEOPLE ULTIMATELY WILL PAY A BIG PRICE FOR THEIR PRIDE. “...God sets Himself against the proud and haughty, but gives grace [continually] to the lowly (those who are humble enough to receive it).” (James 4:6)

What thinking person would want to put himself or herself in a position where the Creator of the universe actually will “set Himself against” that person? Please note the word “continually” in the first amplification in this verse. People who truly are humble will receive God’s grace *continually*.

You decide throughout every day of your whether you will cause God to oppose you or to give you the wonderful grace that He reserves for His humble children.

JESUS CHRIST IS YOUR EXAMPLE IN EVERY AREA OF YOUR LIFE.

The Bible, speaking of Jesus, says, “Who, although being essentially one with God and in the form of God [possessing the fullness of the attributes which make God God], did not think this equality with God was a thing to be eagerly grasped or retained, but stripped Himself [of all privileges and rightful dignity], so as to assume the guise of a servant (slave), in that He became like men and was born a human being. And after He had appeared in human form, He abased and humbled Himself [still further] and carried His obedience to the extreme of death, even the death of the cross!” (Philippians 2:6-8)

When Jesus was in heaven, He knew that He was equal to God. He willingly gave up all of the privileges of this relationship that He had to come to earth as “a servant.” At the end of His earthly ministry Jesus humbled Himself even more when He died a horrible death by crucifixion.

Jesus is so humble that He came to earth as a human being to pay the full price for the sins of every person who chose to believe that He paid this price (see I Peter 3:18). Jesus had no interest in receiving glorification from other human beings. He said, “I receive not glory from men [I crave no human honor, I look for no mortal fame],” (John 5:41)

God wants you to be like Jesus. He does not want you to base your focus in life on what other people think of you. He wants you to focus your perspective on doing your very best to obey Him, serve Him and to help other people.

DEVOTE YOUR LIFE TO SERVING GOD AND HELPING OTHER

PEOPLE. “...Do nothing from factional motives [through contentiousness, strife, selfishness, or for unworthy ends] or prompted by conceit and empty arrogance. Instead, in the true spirit of humility (lowliness of mind) let each regard the others as better than and superior to himself [thinking more highly of one another than you do of yourselves]. Let each of you esteem and look upon and be concerned for not [merely] his own interests, but also each for the interests of others.” (Philippians 2:3-4)

This passage of Scripture instructs you to “do nothing” that is based on pride, conceit or arrogance. You are instructed to deal with other people in the “true spirit of humility”. God instructs you to look at other people as being better and more important than yourself. Jesus Christ is your example of humility. “Let this same attitude and purpose and [humble] mind

be in you which was in Christ Jesus: [Let Him be your example in humility:]” (Philippians 2:5)

Do you live your life in such a way that you put God in first place, other people in second place and yourself in last place? God wants each of us to live our lives centered around Him and other people instead of focusing on ourselves and our interests and goals.

GOD OPPOSES PEOPLE WHO ARE PROUD. HE GIVES BLESSINGS TO PEOPLE WHO ARE HUMBLE. God always emphasizes through repetition. You can see in this month’s teaching that God repeatedly emphasizes the importance of humility. “...Clothe (apron) yourselves, all of you, with humility [as the garb of a servant, so that its covering cannot possibly be stripped from you, with freedom from pride and arrogance] toward one another. For God sets Himself against the proud (the insolent, the overbearing, the disdainful, the presumptuous, the boastful)—[and He opposes, frustrates, and defeats them], but gives grace (favor, blessing) to the humble.” (I Peter 5:5)

At the beginning of this verse, you are instructed to “clothe” yourself with humility. When you put on clothing, you cover yourself with that clothing. God instructs all of His children to be *covered* with humility and to be free of all pride and arrogance toward other people.

This verse of Scripture says that God “sets Himself against the proud.” The fourth amplification in this verse explains that God actually will “oppose, frustrate and defeat” you if you consistently are proud.

Grace is unearned favor from God. God always gives grace to His humble children. You can see from the Scripture references that we are studying how God *opposes* pride and how He consistently instructs His children to be humble.

Your Father wants your humility to be so great that this covering of humility “cannot possibly be stripped from you.” Do these words describe you?

Satan always wants the opposite of what God wants. Satan and his demons will do everything they can to attempt to consistently influence people to be proud, self-centered and selfish instead of being humble.

HUMBLE CHRISTIANS FOCUS ON OTHER PEOPLE INSTEAD OF FOCUSING ON THEMSELVES.

God repeatedly emphasizes the importance of humility. “Do nothing from factional motives [through contentiousness, strife, selfishness, or for unworthy ends] or prompted by conceit and empty arrogance. Instead, in the true spirit of humility (lowliness of mind) let each regard the others as better than and superior to himself [thinking more highly of one another than you do of yourselves]. Let each of you esteem and look upon and be concerned for not [merely] his own interests, but also each for the interests of others.” (Philippians 2:3-4)

This passage of Scripture instructs you to “do nothing” that is anchored in pride, conceit or arrogance. You are instructed to deal with other people “in the true spirit of humility.” God says that being humble in regard to other people is better and more important than focusing on your own selfish interests.

People who are proud center their lives around themselves. Christians who are truly humble put God first, other people second and themselves last. They are ready, willing and able to adjust in any way that the Word of God instructs them to adjust. They are strongly focused on doing what God teaches us to do to serve Him and to serve other people.

JESUS CHRIST SAID THAT GOD BLESSES HIS CHILDREN WHO ARE HUMBLE. Jesus said, “Whoever exalts himself [with haughtiness and empty pride] shall be humbled (brought low), and whoever humbles himself [whoever has a modest opinion of himself and behaves accordingly] shall be raised to honor.” (Matthew 23:12)

The Word of God says that proud people will be humbled by God. However, if you truly are humble, you “shall be raised to honor” by God.

Do not attempt to impress other people with how great you are. Turn away from all desire for human recognition. Make the quality decision that you will consistently live your life the way that your Father instructs you to live.

We do not deserve to receive blessings from God. We receive our Father’s blessings because of His grace and His great love for us.

GOD GIVES UNDESERVED BLESSINGS TO HIS HUMBLE CHILDREN.

“...He gives His undeserved favor to the low [in rank], the humble, and the afflicted.” (Proverbs 3:34)

God Himself will be your teacher if you truly are humble. “He leads the humble in what is right, and the humble He teaches His way.” (Psalm 25:9)

Humble Christians turn to God for the guidance that He promises to give them. Humble Christians are teachable. They want to learn from God. They consistently pay the price of studying and meditating on His Book of Instructions, the Bible. The more you humble yourself before God, the more your Father will bless you. “Humble yourselves [feeling very insignificant] in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you [He will lift you up and make your lives significant].” (James 4:10)

In this month’s teaching on the subject of pride and humility, you can clearly see what your Father instructs you to do to be humble. Make the quality decision that you will learn everything the Bible teaches about humility and that you will faithfully obey these instructions. If you do this, God will bless you.