

## WEEK 4 – CHOOSE BETWEEN PRIDE AND HUMILITY

### MONDAY – Wisdom from Mother Theresa



**1 Peter 5:** *All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, “God opposes the proud but shows favour to the humble.”*

**Proverbs 11: 2** *When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.*

There are a staggering number of verses in the Bible relating to pride; particularly in Proverbs – known as the Book of Wisdom. Therefore, this must be important to God. Perhaps this week is the time to take note of pride and humility and what part they play in our lives.

Mother Teresa, head of the Missionaries of Charity kept a list of practices to help the sisters in her care cultivate humility.

As a way of examining where we are, imagine Mother Theresa giving you these personal instructions:

1. *Speak as little as possible about yourself.*
2. *Keep busy with your own affairs and not those of others.*
3. *Avoid [nosiness].*

4. *Do not interfere in the affairs of others.*
5. *Accept small irritations with good humour.*
6. *Do not dwell on the faults of others.*
7. *Accept censures even if unmerited.*
8. *Give in to the will of others.*
9. *Accept insults and injuries.*
10. *Accept contempt, being forgotten and disregarded.*
11. *Be courteous and delicate even when provoked by someone.*
12. *Do not seek to be admired and loved.*
13. *Do not protect yourself behind your own dignity.*
14. *Give in, in discussions, even when you are right.*
15. *Choose always the more difficult task.*

#### **Reflection:**

Prayerfully consider where you are.



**Prayer:** Lord, help me to humble myself and to truly see myself as You and others do. Help me to grow in humility and put aside pride. Teach me to value others more highly than myself. Lord, in Your mercy, hear my prayer. AMEN

## TUESDAY – Pride and Prejudice



**Romans 12: 3** *For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you.*

Jane Austen, in the title of her novel, gave a subtle reference to the fact that there is a little bit of pride and a little bit of prejudice in all of us. It is a theme running right through the Bible as well. When pride becomes self-reliance and self-obsession, we are beginning to find our identity in something other than God.

But isn't it just a little tempting to puff up our feathers? And to see ourselves for more than what we really are?

A university professor gave one of his students, what I am sure he genuinely considered high praise: "Well done. You are **now** where you thought you were last year!"

We all laughed at that exchange but when I later stopped to consider it, I realised the truth in

his words, and that perhaps we did have a biased view of ourselves.

Pride is often difficult to detect. But it is when you are more focused on yourself than others. Humility is when you see you are not as special as you thought you were.

Pride or humility is a life choice which God is calling you to make. When you choose humility over pride, you choose God. When you live and speak as if life isn't all about you, but about others, you gain wisdom. And when you gain wisdom, you begin to see others as God sees them.

### **Reflection:**

Ponder on one of the 15 points from yesterday that stands out for you.



**Prayer:** Lord help me to gain my self-worth from You. Help me to value people with a humble spirit and to view myself with humility. Lord, in Your mercy, hear my prayer. AMEN

## WEDNESDAY – Pride goes before a fall



**Proverbs 16: 18 & 19** *Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall. Better to be lowly in spirit along with the oppressed than to share plunder with the proud.*

**Isaiah 2: 12** *The LORD Almighty has a day in store for all the proud and lofty, for all that is exalted (and they will be humbled).*

**Luke 14: 11** *For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”*

I imagine the age-old saying “how the mighty have fallen” would get many a wry smile with “oh I have been there ....”

Even Shakespeare gave a nod to this in *As You Like It*—“...my pride fell with my fortunes.”

Much of our journey is unpredictable but one thing is certain, at some point we will encounter trials or a sudden change in our course. You know where life suddenly gives you a *klap*. Will you still be proudly holding onto the fact that you have it all put together?

CS Lewis says it so well: “A proud man is always looking down on

things and people; and of course, as long as you are looking down, you cannot see something above you.”

You cannot see God or others who are trying to help you, or the beauty of the sun. If you are down – look up! Life has a way of humbling us, but God has a way of picking us up.

The wise man, however, STEPS down before falling down. He chooses humility and focuses on his God and others more than on himself. Don't wait until you fall.

### **Reflection:**

Are you looking down or up?



**Prayer:** Lord help me to move to a life of humility; to see the beauty of walking a lowly path with You and others. Help me to strive for the joy of friendship and simplicity. Lord in Your mercy, hear my prayer.

AMEN

## THURSDAY – If My people....



**2 Chronicles 7: 14** *if My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.*

Humility is realizing that you are not as special as you thought

Recently I found myself baffled by the construction of a tiny Lego vehicle. One of those that come with instructions so small, a magnifying glass is needed. As well as being optically challenged, I was also a bit confused. I had to repeat a few steps, start over and eventually give up. This took some humility, especially as the on-looking toddler was sure I could do it!

Life is like that sometimes. We are not as good at it as we thought we would be. Or we mess up. Or we just don't know what to do. But God says all that is okay – HUMBLE yourself; PRAY and

SEEK My face. If we stop trying to do things our way; or think that we know best and say “Lord forgive my pride and help me.” That is so reassuring that if we in humility, turn to Him and pray, He will heal us. In humility we can let others see our fallibilities and our needs, and let them come alongside of us. Pride can be a lonely place.

And finally, in our weakness we display strength. If we have the humility to be weak, others will come to us to find strength in their own times of trouble.

**Reflection:** Dwell on: HUMBLE, PRAY, SEEK



**Prayer:** Lord teach me to humble myself and seek Your will in all that I do. Show me where pride has taken hold of my life. Lord, in Your mercy, hear my prayer. AMEN

## FRIDAY – Then sings my soul



**Psalm 150: 1, 2 & 6** *Praise the LORD. Praise God in His sanctuary; praise Him in His mighty heavens. Praise Him for His acts of power; praise Him for His surpassing greatness. Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD.*

One of my most profound and moving experiences was at the Church of the Beatitudes on the shores of Lake Galilee. I had just come from a worship service in the church and was standing on the arched balcony looking across the Lake. It was a perfect day and the water was shimmering. The peace and tranquillity were audible. The only response to that was “My Lord and my God!”

Worship is the appropriate response to an encounter with God and with His creation. How can we be proud when we look at everything He has made? How can we be proud when the creator of EVERYTHING made us too? We are such little deals but when we come to Him in humility and

love, He makes us, each individual, important.

**Psalm 100: 3** *Know that the LORD, He is God! It is He who made us, and we are His; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture.*

“When we gather for worship we can experience joy regardless of what we are going through. When we realise that God is God and I am not.” (Adam Hamilton).

When we offer ourselves to God in worship, He binds us together and pride falls away. Where there is praise, there can be no pride. Therefore in every aspect of life give thanks and praise. Walk humbly with your God, all the days of your life.



**Prayer:** Lord, my spirit sings for joy and I give You my praise. You are a mighty God, the great I Am and worthy of praise. Teach me humility and love as I walk this life. Lord, in Your mercy hear my prayer. AMEN