

~Other Speakers S-Z: K.P. Yohannan:

There was a time in my life when I would become quite impatient with others when they couldn't discern things that were obvious to me regarding people, circumstances, ministries or decisions to be made.

I would think ugly words such as: How dumb can you be? Can't you see this? What's wrong with you? Two plus two is four. What does it take for you to see this? I would go on and on in my head, and my emotions would get all charged up.

By God's grace, He didn't kill me. Instead, He slowly began to show me my heart of pride. It was as if the Lord said, "You see, it was I who freely gave you the grace, gifts, abilities, discernment, understanding and skills you possess. But now you are using them to beat up on others, and you condemn, criticize and put them down. Do you want Me to allow you to become a vegetable, lying in your bed, unable to talk or move around?"

It was a frightening thought to entertain, and I knew all it would take was a car accident. This rebuke from the Lord made me realize that my worst enemy is not the devil, but my own selfishness and lack of humility.

Look at King Nebuchadnezzar, King Uzziah, King Saul. Some of them started so well. But once their hearts were lifted up, they fell just like it says in the book of Proverbs: "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 16:18). If a time comes that we say like the Laodiceans, "We are rich, we are able, we got it made and we don't need anything," then the Lord will say back to us, "You are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked" (see Revelation 3:17). God opposes the proud (see James 4:6, niv). This statement from God's Word should cause us to be sober.

Why is pride so damning? Why is pride so dangerous?

Pride will not allow us to love others. In Luke 15, the older brother of the prodigal son was so proud of his responsible behavior and hard work that he had no compassion or love left for his younger brother. In fact, because he saw himself as so much more important and superior, before his father he no longer referred to him as "brother," but rather "this son of yours" (Luke 15:30).

Paul exhorted us in Philippians 2:3: "In lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself." There is no way we can have a heart of love and respect for someone, genuinely regarding them as better than ourselves, as long as there is pride in us and we feel that we are above others!

Pride seeks for man's honor and for position, no matter what. We will even use our worship and service to God to achieve this goal. That's why Jesus warns us: "Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them . . . as the hypocrites do . . . that they may have glory from men" (Matthew 6:1-2). For what purpose do we seek this glory? Does it bring honor to the Lord?

We can no longer see our own faults or sin. Pride blinds us. The Pharisee standing in the temple next to the tax gatherer prayed, "God, I thank You that I am not like other men . . . or even as this tax collector" (Luke 18:11). Jesus called the Pharisees blind leaders of the blind (see Matthew 15:14). We will not be able to accurately see ourselves, others or even God when we are trapped in pride.

It is obvious that the right choice for our lives is to choose humility. Who wants to reap the consequences that the path of pride will yield?

The question is: How can we maintain a life of humility? The answer is simple. There is only one medicine for all sicknesses caused by our pride: Follow Jesus. He is our life and our example in all things. Instead of striving to figure out how to respond to a situation, the best we can do is to choose to follow Him.

We will find that Jesus chose to serve instead of demanding to be served. He instructed His disciples: "If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet" (John 13:14).

Giving up all His own ideas, Jesus saw all things from the Father's point of view: "Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?" (John 18:11).

And He lived in total obedience to His Father, regardless of the cost to Himself: "And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:8).

As long as we continue to let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5), we will maintain lives of humility that God will honor and bless.

Choose to have this mindset of Christ.