

THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT HUMBLING OURSELVES

INTRODUCTION:

In the way of review, last week we looked at 3 reasons **why** we should humble ourselves:

1) Because God says we should!

2) Because if we don't humble ourselves, God can—and will—humble us!

3) Because God draws close to those who humble themselves in a way He does not with the proud!

Isaiah 57:15 “For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, **with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit**, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.”

Last Sunday I also mentioned that this week we would be looking at the **consequences** of us not humbling ourselves. Does it **make any difference** if we fail to humble ourselves? What happens if we don't? Based on what we just reviewed, there are 3 obvious answers:

1) If we don't humble ourselves, we are **disobeying God!** Are there any consequences for disobeying God? There **certainly are** and we will look at some of those this morning.

2) If we don't humble ourselves, God will **humble us!** What does that look like? For Pharaoh, it led to ten plagues on Egypt—and ultimately his own death!

3) If we don't humble ourselves, we **will not have the closeness with God** that He desires. **Psalm 34:18** “The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.”

This morning we are going to look at 3 related, but slightly different consequences of not humbling ourselves.

Please take your Bibles and turn to James 4, follow along as I read verses 1-3. The first consequence of not humbling ourselves is what I'm calling... **1. Absence instead of abundance**

What do I mean by that? James here states, “yet ye have not, because ye ask not.” In other words, you **lack** certain things—you are **missing out** on some things—because you **don't ask** for them!

But **why** don't we ask? There are obviously a number of reasons we **don't pray—disobedience, laziness, and unbelief**, to name a few—but another reason we don't pray is ...

A. Because pride prevents us from asking

Ever work with someone who was **too proud** to ask for help—and then they did what you asked them to do **the wrong way** and you had to do it **all over** again? Even worse than that is having them **break** something because they **did something wrong** instead of asking for help. That's why I don't go help Jim do mechanical things—I'd be the talk of the town at the coffee shop the next morning 😊!

Pre-Desert Storm—in the mid 1980's—I was in the medical unit in Chippewa Falls. I'm pretty sure it was a Friday evening, and we were heading down to Fort McCoy for a weekend drill. Everyone else had departed, and me and this other guy were finishing up loading a CUCV. What is a CUCV? Glad you asked 😊! CUCV is the military name for a Chevy Blazer that the military was using then instead of jeeps. But, of course, the military is not going to **call it** a Chevy Blazer—that would sound too “civilian-like.” So instead, they called it a “Commercial Utility Cargo Vehicle”—CUCV for short!

I'm locking up the building and heading to the CUCV with my last armload of stuff when the young man who was riding with me comes to me and says, “SGT Meinke, I broke the window in the tail gate!” I don't recall what I said, probably something **profound** like, “You **did** what???”

He repeated: “I broke the window in the tail gate!”

“How did you **do that?**” I asked him. He said: “I laid on the ground, and reached up, and grabbed the handle.

Then I cranked the window up. Then I got up off the ground, lifted up the tail gate, and slammed it shut. But when the tail gate shut, the glass kept going!” Why this young man thought he should lay on the ground and crank up the window, then close the tail gate is beyond me! One thing is for certain—if he would have *asked me* how to do it the right way, I would have told him!

Far worse than being too proud to ask for help regarding *physical* things is being too proud to see our needs in the *spiritual* arena. We are needy spiritually—and a lot of times don’t even see it! We see an example of that in Jesus’ rebuke of the church of Laodicea in **Revelation 3:16-17** “So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. ¹⁷ Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and *have need of nothing*; and *knowest not* that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:”

In their pride they thought they “had it all together”—but Jesus said the opposite was true!

Failing to ask is not the only reason we go without, however. We also “miss out” ...

B. Because pride leads us to ask for the *wrong* things

We see that in v 3: “Ye ask, and receive not.” Why? Not because they *didn’t ask*, but because they asked “amiss”—they asked for the wrong *things*—and with wrong *motives*. They asked to fulfill their *own lusts*—meaning selfish desires—which of course is rooted in pride.

Jesus pointed this out in His teaching on prayer. **Mt 6:5** “And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they *may be seen of men*. Verily I say unto you, **They have their reward.**”

--They prayed as a show; to be seen by men. Why? Because they were proud!

--What did Jesus call them? Hypocrites!

--Where their prayers answered? Nope! Men saw them—but God didn’t listen to them!

What about us? Do we sometimes *fail to pray* because we are **too self-satisfied**; we are **too proud** to see our needs? Or, when we *do* pray, is it possible that pride leads us to ask for the *wrong* things? We don’t pray on the street corner to be seen of men, but is it possible we can be too preoccupied with *us* and *our happiness* that we forget God is more concerned with making us *holy and Christ-like* than He is in making us happy?

There is a second consequence for not humbling ourselves and I’m calling it...

2. Resistance instead of assistance

I Peter 5:5b “for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.”

A. Explanation of resistance from God

What does it mean for God to *resist* the proud? We certainly saw it in the life of Pharaoh, didn’t we? Let’s not forget that God also resists *His children* when they are proud—it is called “chastening!” In fact, one of the sure signs that you are a child of God is if God *does* chasten you!

We have that truth in Hebrews 12, let’s turn there.

V 6 “For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.”

--“every son” refers to His children—those who are in His family because they are born again.

V 7 “If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?”

--If God chastens you, He is treating you as a child of His—the same way earthly fathers do/should do!

V 8 “But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.”

--If you are *not chastened*, you are not a son—you are an *illegitimate* child. Notice *every child* of God is a partaker of God’s chastisement; “all are partakers.”

And that's why the end of v 5 says "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him:" because it is a proof of His love to you!

We have an explanation of resistance from God, let's look next at an... B. Example of resistance from God
An excellent example—although probably *unfamiliar* to many of you—is found in a small Old Testament book called Haggai. Please turn there; feel free to use your Table of Contents to find it. Otherwise, you can go to the last book of the OT—Malachi—and work backwards past Zechariah to Haggai!

i. The Setting

The 12 tribes had been split from one large kingdom into two under the reign of Rehoboam, Solomon's son. The 10 tribes of the northern kingdom were deported by the Assyrians in 722 B.C. and never returned. The two southern tribes (Benjamin and Judah) were deported by King Nebuchadnezzar in 3 different stages, the final one being in 586 B.C.

God had promised that they would be in exile for 70 years, then be allowed to return. The 70 years were fulfilled, a remnant had returned and had started to build the Temple, **but they stopped**. **Sixteen years** later God sends Haggai to "stir up" the people to **finish** what they had started.

We have the setting; next let's consider... **ii. Their Sin (1:2-4)**

What was their sin? In a nutshell, their **priorities** were wrong!

Notice v 2. God knew that their attitude was that it was not **time** to build God's house. **Why** wasn't it time? Because they were **too busy** building their own houses!

That's not all, though. They were not just **building their own** houses first—they were also building themselves **expensive, decorative** houses. We see that in v 4: "Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your **ceiled** houses, and this house lie waste?" Ryrie suggests that a "ceiled" house was one that was **paneled with wood**—a sign of luxury because wood had to be imported!

Their **priority** was them...and their house...and outward beauty, instead of God...His house...and the heart!

Notice now... **iii. The Statements of consequences from God**

God very specifically states that they are facing some consequences **due to their misplaced priorities**.

V 5 "Consider your ways." In other words, **think about** what is happening to you!

V 6 you sow much—you plant a lot—but you don't reap much
you eat—but you're still hungry
you drink—but you're still thirsty
you put on clothes—but can't get warm

you make money—but it disappears as fast as you make it, almost like you are putting it in a bag with holes!

V 7 God again says, "Consider your ways." **Notice** what is happening—and ask yourself **why** it is happening!

How do we know **God** is behind all of this and it is not "coincidental?"

V 9 "Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, **I did blow** upon it." You have lack—your labor is not producing as it should—because **I am "blowing"** on it; **I am** making it disappear!

V 10 "Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit."

V 11 "I called for a drought upon the land" You know what happens when God calls for a drought?

A drought comes! And **what** did the drought **effect**? **Everything** they counted on to live!

The land failed to produce...the mountains failed to produce...cattle failed to produce...and the labor of their hands did not produce. **Nothing was working** because God was **resisting them**—He was **chastening them**—because of their wrong priorities!

Does God **still work** that way? Yes, He does— "for whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth!"

So what do we do when **hard** times come... and everything we **touch** seems to break...and everything we **try to do** doesn't work...and we feel like God is **fighting** us instead of being **for us**? What should we do? We should do what God asked them to do—**consider our ways!**

--We should get in the habit of asking ourselves, "Is God trying to get my attention about something?"

--"Are my **priorities** the priorities that God wants me to have?"

--"Is there something He **wants me to do**—that I'm not doing?"

--"Is there something He **doesn't want me to do**—that I insist on doing?"

Oh, how we need to pay more attention to the "attention-getters" that God sends into our life!

What are the consequences of not humbling ourselves? What are the perils of pride?

First, we **don't pray** like we should, so we have **absence instead of abundance**.

Second, our **priorities can become misplaced**, so we have **God's resistance instead of His assistance**.

Third—and obviously the **worst consequence** of all—is that pride keeps people from being saved.

The consequence, then, is **3. Hell instead heaven**

Does pride keep people out of heaven? It certainly does! How do we know? The Bible says:

Ps 10:4 "The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, **will not** seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts." Why doesn't the wicked person seek God? He **will not**—he makes a conscious decision not to—because of his pride!

Jesus taught that very truth a number of different times, we are just going to look at one. Take your Bibles and turn to John 9. The context here is that Jesus had just given sight to a man who had been blind since birth.

V 39 "And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind."

Is Jesus talking about **physical** blindness—or spiritual? **Spiritual!** How do we know?

1) Because we have no record of Jesus taking a person with sight and **making them blind**—except Paul on the Damascus road, but that was **after** Jesus had risen from the dead!

2) Because the Pharisees suspected Jesus was talking about **spiritual** blindness. We see that in v 40. They obviously weren't questioning whether or not they could **physically** see—but they were wondering if Jesus was speaking to them about their **spiritual** blindness!

3) We also know Jesus is speaking about **spiritual** blindness because of v 41.

Notice the first part of the verse: "Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin:"

Was Jesus saying that **physically** blind people are not sinners, that they are perfect? Nope!

Was Jesus saying that because they were **physically** blind He felt sorry for them and removed their sin?

Nope, He wasn't saying that either!

What He **was saying** was this:

Just as a **physically** blind person is humble enough to know **they need help**—and that they **cannot heal** themselves; a **spiritually** blind person is humble enough to know **they need help**—and cannot save themselves

Not sure if you know this or not, but in Jesus' time the only way blind people survived was by **begging**.

--They couldn't work—and there was no social security benefits or other government programs.

--They were able to live only because of the help of others. They were **needy**—and knew it.

And if they were **too proud** to ask for help, they probably didn't **live very long!**

Now the last part of **v 41** "but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth."

Jesus is saying, 'Because you **think** you have it all together—because you are self-sufficient and independent and don't need anyone or anything—**your sin remaineth.**'

Pride was keeping these Pharisees from seeing their need for forgiveness. What about **you?**

--Are you too proud to admit you are a **sinner**? If so, your sin remains and you will have hell instead of heaven!

--Are you too proud to admit that you **can't get rid** of your own sin?

If so, your sin remains and you will have hell instead of heaven!

--Are you so proud that you will **choose your way** over God's way to try to **get into His heaven?**

If so, your sin remains and you will have hell instead of heaven!

John 5:40 "And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." Are you too proud to come to Jesus?

So what does God want us to do in light of what we have heard from His Word today?

Humble ourselves, right? What does that look like?

1. For the unsaved—for those that won't admit they're a sinner—or who wrongly think they can “work” their way into heaven—God wants you to humble yourself and believe what **He says** over what you think! If you die without Christ, your sin remains. Jesus wants you to come to Him! Humble yourself—and do it!
2. What does God want His children to do? **Consider your ways**! Is God bringing things into your life to get your attention? Are you searching your heart—and your life—to see if you God wants you to change some things? If so, will you do it?