

SEEK THE LORD

“Boasting is a Self Roasting”

The owner of a small foreign car had been irritating his friends by bragging incessantly about his car's gas mileage. So they devised a plan to bring his boasts to an end. Everyday one of them would secretly pour a few gallons of gas into the car tank. Soon the braggart was boasting of getting as much as 90 miles per gallon. The pranksters enjoyed watching his expression as he tried to convince people of the truthfulness of his claims. It was even more fun to see his reaction when they stopped refilling the tank. The poor fellow couldn't figure out what happened to his car.

One of the verses in the Bible about this subject is the 'Pride which goes before the fall' (Proverbs 16:18). This explains why so many people handle success and victory even worse than they handle defeat. Many a person has gotten so full of pride for their accomplishments that they get into all kinds of trouble. Frequently pride does go before falling on our faces.

By pride I don't mean the kind of pride we have in our children or others. Pride which gets us in trouble, is the type illustrated in the Bible. Rebellious pride is that which refuses to depend on God but give to yourself the honor that is due God. This is the very root and essence of sin.

I did not realize this emphasis placed on pride is a unique feature of the Christian faith. There is no parallel emphasis in other religions or ethical systems according to one Bible dictionary I consulted. In fact, some cultures have taught just the opposite. In Greece around the time of Christ, they considered pride to be a virtue and humility (the opposite of pride) was despised.

Which approach is right? I think we can see the wisdom of the Bible's warning against pride and holding up humility as the supreme excellence by looking at the lives of great people. One of the great things about Abraham Lincoln was his humility. And one of the great stories indicating such comes out of a visit Lincoln paid to General McClellan. The president waited patiently for some time for the general to return from a reception. When the general arrived home, he was told the President was waiting to see him, but he walked down the hall and up the stairs to his bedroom. Again they told him that the President was waiting to see him. But the response was that the general had gone to bed and couldn't be disturbed. Lincoln never spoke about the incident, though others found out about it.

In 1862, Lincoln went to the McClellan house one more time. The Union army had been defeated at Bull Run, and the President believed that McClellan was the only leader who could truly take charge of the army. Lincoln's friends couldn't understand how he could return in the light of McClellan's previous rudeness. Lincoln's response? "Why, I would be willing to hold McClellan's horse, if only he would give victory to our army." History would seem to illustrate the great Biblical truth – those who are proud will be brought low and those who humble themselves will be exalted.

Prayer: Our Lord, remind us of the example of Christ who was gentle and lowly in heart. Amen.

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