

# From Pride to Humility

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[ 0 : 00 ] This is the evening service at Holy Trinity on the 30th of January 2005. The preacher is Paul Barker. His sermon is entitled From Pride to Humility and is based on Philippians chapter 2 verses 1 to 16.

I watched the TV program Queer Eye for the Straight Guy. You can tell because I'm wearing a pink shirt. You see, I thought it might improve my fashion sense.

I thought that it would make me trendy. The only reason, the only time in my life I've actually ever been trendy is when I'm still wearing clothes that have gone out of trend and back into it 20 years later. It's not the only TV program of its kind around.

It seems that our TV, not that I watch any of the others, is full of these sorts of makeover type programs. You see, Queer Eye for the Straight Guy is all about the makeover of your wardrobe and your house style and all that sort of stuff so that you are something different.

And there are room changes or housing changes. I know in England it was called changing rooms. I can't think of what the program's called here. You can get your backyard made over. So backyard blitz. All of a sudden your backyard becomes sort of like the Royal Botanical Gardens in about an eighth of an acre or something like that.

[ 1 : 24 ] But in the end all these makeover programs, though they are so popular and it shows the depth of people's desire to be something different from what they are, in the end they're very superficial of course.

It's really about surface change. I mean I could wear all the trendiest clothes in the world but I'm still the same person on the inside. It doesn't change me. It's just a facade and yet that's how often people live in our world.

Well for all the dismissal of makeover type programs, whether it's clothes or houses or backyards or something else, the Christian life is meant to be one big makeover type job.

But unlike the TV programs, far from superficial. You see we might call the Christian life a godly eye for the sinning guy or something to that effect.

That is, it's about the change of our heart, the change of our sinful nature to being a godly nature. That's a radical change. It's a heart surgery type of change.

[ 2 : 35 ] Far from superficial. And yet we could also say that it is actually about clothes as well. One Bible verse, and we'll come back to this in a couple of weeks' time, refers to it as clothing.

So there's my excuse for the analogy. As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves, not with pink shirts or the latest trend, but clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, which is part of tonight's theme, as well as meekness and patience and so on.

Now again there, it's not just about a facade. It's not about superficial clothes. It's about the clothing of godly character. It's the godly eye for the sinning guy, sort of makeover of the heart.

Too little attention, I think even in evangelical Christian faith, these days, on godly character.

There's a lot of emphasis, rightly so, on the forgiveness that is ours in salvation through Jesus' death on the cross and his resurrection from the dead.

That's the heart of the gospel. But it seems to me a waning emphasis or concentration on godly character for Christian people.

[ 3 : 51 ] We sometimes have clear understanding of some sins, but not about godly character as opposed to sinful character.

Time and again though, through the New Testament, with regular and frequent, repeated emphasis, we are to be people who are godly in character in our thoughts, our desires, our intentions, our words, and our behaviour.

Right from the centre of our heart to be radically godly through and through. If I can go back to that passage in Colossians just for a minute, just to give you just one example of this very important emphasis on godliness.

If you've been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.

For you've died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, is revealed, then you will also be revealed with him in glory. Therefore, put to death whatever in you is earthly, fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which is idolatry.

[ 5 : 16 ] And so it goes on. That is, if you're a Christian and Jesus has not only died for you but you've died in him, then you must put to death sinful character, behaviour, words and action in your life.

It's not an optional extra. For a Christian person. The quest for godliness, which is really what this series is about and what so often the New Testament is driving us to, the quest for godliness is not simply a statement of what we call legalism or moralism.

That is, do the right thing, don't do the wrong thing. Do the right thing, don't do the wrong thing. It's not about that. Because the emphasis in the passage I just read from Colossians 3, similarly elsewhere, whenever it's driving us Christians to be godly in character, it is about appropriating Jesus' death and resurrection in our lives.

Not just appropriating Jesus' death for forgiveness so that on the final day we'll stand forgiven and go to heaven, though that's part of Jesus' death. But godliness now is about appropriating the power of Jesus' death against sin and the power of his resurrection to new life now, today, tomorrow, the next day, so that in practical effect stemming from our hearts we are godly in our words, our thoughts, our intentions, our desires, in our behaviour and our actions.

You see, Jesus just didn't die for us there on the cross to take away our sins so that we can be forgiven and go to heaven, he not only died for us but we died with him is the emphasis in that passage on Colossians amongst others in the New Testament.

[ 7 : 00 ] So that when he died, not only did he die taking our sin in our place but there's a sense in which we're identified in him as Christians so when he died to sin we die to sin in our lives now.

And as he rose to new life on Easter day the first time and ascended to heaven not only did he rise for us as our forerunner to go to heaven but we rose in him to a new life and that is a new life made in the likeness of Christ with godly not sinful character.

So in turning from sin as we'll see in this series it's not just about deciding for the good and not the bad it's not about simple legalism and moralism a whole set of rules and morals that we've just got to follow.

it's about turning back to Jesus' death on the cross and the power of his death and the power of his resurrection so that from our hearts outwards we might be changed to be godly people.

Now if you ask the person in the street to say what is sin they're probably going to say something like sin is things like murder child abuse and terrorism.

[ 8 : 11 ] And they're the big sins it seems in our society today. Go back 50 years they might say things like adultery but that's gone from the catalogue of sin probably in our society these days.

And theft well maybe some but even that's losing its place in a catalogue of sin in society's eyes. Now they're all sins those things that I've just mentioned.

But the Bible is driving us not to see sin as simply a bad act but as something corrupt within our heart. And if we're to be godly then our heart needs to be changed from a sinful nature which flows into bad actions from bad desires and intentions and wrong thoughts and so on.

So that's what this series is about. Traditionally these seven sins are called the seven deadly sins. I'm not quite sure where that originated but it's very old. maybe even going back to pre-medieval times 1500 plus years ago.

Certainly in Catholic thought in the medieval age the seven deadly sins started with pride and continue through the seven that we'll be preaching or I'll be preaching through in the next couple of months.

[ 9 : 29 ] But really like all sins they're deadly. But the thing that makes these so significant is that the New Testament does tell us not to practice them but that they are heart attitudes.

You see it's not about something out there murder it's something in here pride envy laziness greed and so on. The sins of the heart are so often covered up in our lives.

The sins of the heart are so often intangible. You stab someone it's an act that you can say you're guilty. You might even be spotted doing it. But sometimes our heart's so deceptive that we actually don't detect the pride in our heart.

And it's actually quite intangible. We don't hold ourselves as accountable for these sorts of sins as for some other sorts it seems to me. So this sermon series beginning tonight dealing with seven deadly sins as they're called will focus on each of those sins but as you know the title for each is not just pride in tonight's case but from pride to its opposite in this case humility.

That is moving from a sin or a sinful nature to a godly replacement for it. And we will see in each of these seven sermons a similar sort of corrective that is the heart surgery is in effect the same for each.

[10:59] There will be an element of repetition there. Although I've picked different Bible passages to try and illustrate the point in slightly different ways. But in the end it's the same correction that is needed.

An appropriation of the power of Jesus' death and his resurrection in our daily life so that we will be changed here and now to become godly not sinful. This is about a radical makeover.

The godly eye for the sinning eye. So let's pray as we turn to the issue of pride. O God our Father we pray that your powerful word will pierce to our hearts tonight expose them before us that we may see our proud natures.

Turn us to Jesus and his death and resurrection for healing as well as forgiveness that instead of being proud people we like him might be humble.

Amen. well the first cab off the rank in the seven deadly sins is pride. This is a biblical sin that our world actually thinks is a virtue.

[12:25] Our world thinks that pride is a good thing. Our world encourages us to be proud people. Today I believe in Melbourne there is a pride march to encourage particular people presumably to be proud about whatever it is they want to be proud about.

You see pride is paraded as a good thing. Pride is paraded as a counter to low self-esteem for example. Often I hear funeral obituaries when I take a funeral and somebody from the family or a friend gets up to speak about Fred or Mary or whoever it is.

And fairly often one of the characteristics about the person who has died that they are praising is their pride. Fred was a proud man.

I heard it this very week in a funeral. He was a proud man as though that's a good thing, a thing of dignity or a thing of virtue rather than a sin. An actress cursed the alley said pride is not a sin, it's some idiot who made all that up.

Well let her count the idiot on judgment day and see who wins the argument then. See in our society pride is paraded and promoted as healthy and good.

[13:44] Now there is an honest and a proper pride that is the pride of excellence or a pride that is satisfied in excellence.

You've done a really good job, you're proud of the job, it is genuinely good, you've genuinely done it well and you're proud about it. That's an honest and proper pride, a satisfied pride in a job well done.

But too often that quickly spills over the edge. So that it's not a pride that is satisfied in a job well done, but it's a pride that is actually grasping for and clinging for something more, some greater acclaim, some wider attention, some fawning praise from the throbbing crowds or something.

That is, it spills over too quickly into conceit, into boastfulness, into hubris or arrogance in our life.

That is, you might well have done a job well and you might well be proud, rightly so, honestly so, at a job well done.

Satisfied. That's okay, that's not sin. But as soon as you spill over to the edge, seeking and grasping for greater acclaim, didn't I do well?

[15:10] What a great job I did. I did it better than you. Why aren't people paying attention to the great job I did? A sort of self-promotion. That's not satisfaction. That's dissatisfaction because you're not getting a bigger or wider audience or applause.

that's the pride that's sinful. That's the self-promotion, the boastfulness, the arrogance, the conceit that the Bible frequently and in serious measure attacks.

Now when I say that pride is a virtue in our society, I don't actually think that that's a new thing. It may be that as societies do change, there are elements in which that aspect of pride is not so much

a virtue, but it's actually a virtue back in Greco-Roman society of Jesus' day and Paul's day. In fact, our society is becoming more and more like the society of the New Testament. Don't ever think that the Bible or the New Testament is becoming less relevant, it's actually becoming more relevant it seems to me. So the ancient Greeks pursued pride as a great virtue and by that I mean not just the proper satisfaction of excellence but the boastfulness, the arrogance, the conceit, the self-important parade, the desire for great acclaim, for pomp and praise from people for doing something maybe not even that well.

Our society is just like that. Ancient Greece is just like our society. That boastful arrogance, Paul says in 2 Timothy 3, marks the end days. He was writing in a Greco-Roman society, he could have been writing in ours.

[16:42] Boastful arrogance, a sign of the end days in which we live. You see, my point in making the comparison, apart from what I think is a fair comparison, is to say that the Bible, when it attacks the sin of pride, is not bound by its culture, as so many people try to dismiss the Bible.

They say, oh, well, yes, the Bible attacks sin of pride, but we've come to realise that pride's actually really healthy for your psychology. Well, that's Duncan. The Bible attacks its own culture.

It's not bound by a culture, by some form of primitive culture at all. The Bible is God's truth, and that's what we're to hege to as our ultimate authority.

It's thoroughly counter-cultural. Did you hear the verse in the reading tonight, as it was read for us near the end of the Bible reading, from Philippians 2, verse 15? That we may be blameless and innocent children of God without blemish, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, in which you shine like stars.

You look at a black sky, that's the world, is what Paul's saying, and the little glimmers of stars, that's us, we're different. We're to be counter-cultural, not following the mores and standards of our society at all.

[17:59] Often when I meet with wedding couples and preparing them for their wedding, I ask them, what sort of character or characteristics do you think are the best or the most important to have?

Part of the reason for doing this is I'm trying to direct them from thinking just about physical beauty to personal beauty of character. And they come out with all sorts of things like the character of being loving and honest and all these sorts of things.

Only once in eight years of doing that and asking that question to dozens of couples, only once I think, has anyone ever said humility. And I was actually astonished when they did.

But humility is a key characteristic for Christian people. It ought to be a characteristic which we pursue with some intent. And yet, so often it's not praised or promoted in our society at all.

It's regarded as a weakness, not a strength. It's regarded as a lack of esteem, something unhealthy. We might need a psychologist or a therapist to try and correct for us.

[19:05] Can you imagine today there's this pride march? Imagine if a church or churches got together and decided that they'd have a humility fest. Who'd ever come?

That's the sort of thing we should be doing, perhaps. Well, the Bible is full of warnings against pride, from the Old Testament as well as from the New.

The selection I've got tonight is certainly not thorough. It's highly selective. The purpose of the warnings is to keep on reminding us that pride is lethal.

It really is a deadly sin. It goes to the heart of our heart and the heart of our relationship with God. Pride is insidious and vicious and lethal.

For example, as Catron quoted, pride goes before a fall, or pride goes before destruction, actually, and haughtiness before a fall, says the writer of the Proverbs, chapter 16, verse 18.

[20:06] That shows us that pride is a deadly sin. If pride goes before destruction, it's telling us that if you pursue pride, you will end up being destroyed. Now, that could be under God's judgment, or it could just be the effects or the consequences of the pride that you pursue.

The writer's not wanting to distinguish between the two. It could be either or both. But it's saying, don't be proud. Don't pursue pride. Pride comes before a fall, before destruction.

So don't be proud. It's a warning, a serious warning, not to go down the path of pride. For it leads to destruction. It lacks godly wisdom.

A good example of that is the great Babylonian emperor called Nebuchadnezzar. He's one of the great men, powerfully politically speaking, of the ancient world. He ruled a vast empire, not quite as

great as Alexander the Great, but 250 years before him.

He was the ruler of Babylon, which conquered all of the Middle Eastern area into Egypt and Persia and so on in the early part of the 6th century BC. King Nebuchadnezzar was a proud man.

[ 21 : 13 ] I guess he had a lot to be proud about at one level. But he was very boastful about his power, so much so that he wanted people to bow down and worship him. In response, Daniel, a prophet in the book of Daniel in the Old Testament, counted and spoke against him.

And at the end, Nebuchadnezzar repents. And he says, I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honour the King of Heaven, rather than himself as he was doing.

For all his works are truth and all his ways are justice, and he is able to bring low those who walk in pride. He recognised there the folly of his pride and repented of it in Daniel chapter 4.

Again we find in the writer of the Proverbs, this time in Proverbs chapter 8, verse 13, we read, The fear of the Lord is hatred of evil, pride and arrogance and the way of evil, and perverted speech I hate.

So there at the heart of what is evil is pride, in that pithy summary of the writer of the Proverbs, Solomon in this case, in chapter 8, verse 13.

[ 22 : 35 ] The fear of the Lord is the basic statement of devotion to God, but the flip side in that proverb includes pride and arrogance. You see, fearing the Lord, properly so, is a statement or an act of humility.

Pride precludes us from fearing the Lord. So it's actually a significant sin, a crucial sin, not something trivial or peripheral in our Christian vision.

We see that even more graphically illustrated, I think, in the Psalms. In Psalm 10, verse 4. In the pride of their countenance, the wicked say, God will not seek it out.

All their thoughts are, there is no God. Pursue pride, which is foundationally opposed to fearing God, and in the end you live in a practical atheism.

That is, there is no God. God. Because in the end, pride is making yourself God. Pride disregards God.

[ 23 : 49 ] Pride dismisses God from the vision. Pride says, in effect, I am God. You see how close to the heart of sin pride lies.

It sets itself up in basic opposition to God. God. And that's the sin of the Garden of Eden, the first sin. Back in the garden where Adam and Eve ate the fruit, they're given a command by God, don't eat this fruit or you will die.

The serpent tempting them to say, you won't die. And their pride deciding that they will decide what is right. They set themselves up as God, in effect, to make a choice where they might think they have moral autonomy.

Putting themselves in the place of God, rather than submitting to God. You see, pride puts self on the throne. Pride is the heart ruling the world, in effect.

Pride says, I'm okay. Pride says, I'm God, in the end. And we also know from the New Testament, from the teaching of Jesus, that pride flows from the human heart.

[ 24 : 56 ] Remember the words of Jesus in Mark chapter 7, that it's out of the heart that pride, along with a list of other things, flows. And that it's such things as pride and other things that defile a person.

Coming from the heart, making us unclean, defiled in the eyes of God. It's the heart that's the problem. Paul says similarly in Romans chapter 1, that it's a debased mind, that from a debased mind, that haughtiness or pride comes.

Romans 1 verse 30. So what then is God going to say about this pride? This pride that is so foundationally opposed to God as God.

God says a great deal about it, actually. God does quite a deal to counter that, in fact, in the Bible. God's not going to tolerate pride against him forever.

See, again, going back again to the Proverbs, this time in Proverbs chapter 3, 34 and 34, we read, Toward the scorers, and they are proud people, God is scornful.

[ 26 : 12 ] To the humble, he shows favour. There's the two groups, the scornful as they're described in this verse, the proud, really. God is scornful.

To the humble, he shows favour. And the New Testament develops that verse and that idea. I mean, it's not only found there in the Old Testament.

It's not just one verse sort of plucked out. It's consistent with what God is saying in the Old Testament. If you remember Mary, the mother of Jesus, singing a song when she was pregnant before Jesus was born, about what God was doing in fulfilment of promise with the annunciation of the birth of Jesus to come.

And she said that God has shown strength with his arm. He has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly.

It's the same idea. God scorning the proud or God putting down the proud in Proverbs 3 and showing favour to the humble. Here in Luke 1 it is, verse 50 and 51.

[ 27 : 14 ] God lifting up the humble. God scattering the proud in their conceit. Same idea expressed by Peter when he writes in his first letter, chapter 5.

All of you must clothe yourselves with humility in your dealings with one another for God opposes the proud and gives grace to the humble. The proud think they're up here. God's putting them down. The humble, lowly, God's lifting up.

Same idea again we find in the letter of James. James chapter 4 this time, verse 6. God gives all the more grace, therefore it says, God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.

You see that idea keeps recurring in Scripture. It's there in Proverbs, it's there in Mary's lips, it's in Luke, it's there in Peter, it's there in James. And we'll find the same idea time and time again in the Scriptures in different words but the same idea.

That is, salvation from God is a great reversal. If you're proud, God will bring you down. Pride comes before a fall. But if you're humble to God, not proud, he will exalt you and lift you up and bestow his favor upon you.

[ 28 : 26 ] It's the great reversal of salvation. If we want to be saved, therefore, if we want to come into a relationship with God, therefore, humility must be part of our character.

For if we're proud, God is opposed to us and will bring us down. But if we're humble, he will exalt us and save us, is what those verses are saying.

That's salvation in a nutshell. The humble are those who know they cannot save themselves. The humble are those who know they need God to save themselves. The humble are those who know that their hands are empty when it comes to salvation.

The crowd think they can do it themselves. The proud think that they don't need God. The proud think that they can save themselves and help themselves. The proud think that they can contribute at least something to their salvation, not so.

God opposes the proud and exalts the humble, those who are reliant on God for salvation and not themselves. What a great reversal that is.

[ 29 : 30 ] And that's the reversal of salvation. Begun when Jesus came, it will be finished when he comes again. The proud on that final day will be brought low indeed.

You see, it's only humble, empty hands that can receive the cup of salvation. The proud try in vain to provide their own cup. And they're fools. Notice, you see, as I said before, intimated before, salvation is not just about forgiveness of our sins.

salvation humbles the proud. It changes us here and now. Salvation eats pride away, in a sense.

As we keep remembering the grace of God that saves us, humility understands and appreciates and appropriates grace. If there's no humility, we don't understand grace because we think we deserve something when we don't.

But knowing that we're undeserving, that is being humble, then we receive an appropriate salvation. You see, salvation actually changes us. It brings us to our knees.

[ 30 : 48 ] They used to say that, I haven't heard this for a long time now, that Jesus' death, in a sense, those three things with regard to sin. It pays the penalty for our sin.

It destroys the power of sin. And it takes away the presence of sin. The penalty is paid for on the cross. The presence of sin will only be finally taken away in heaven.

But between the cross and heaven in our lives now, the power of sin is being broken by the power of Jesus' death. It's a slightly simplistic analogy. But nonetheless, it is helpful to keep a bigger perspective on this.

See, it's not an instantaneous thing that when we become a Christian, humbly receiving the grace of God, all of a sudden, all our pride dissipates and flows away. Not at all.

The struggle with pride is something that each and every person grapples with. Those who are lower in our society's eyes, as well as those who are highly competent, highly skilled, with many

achievements.

[ 31 : 48 ] They can be just as proud, if not more so, as those who have few achievements in which to be satisfied. The salvation, though, affects us all.

The powerful and the unpowerful. All of us are vulnerable to the sin of pride. That's therefore why, in the passage before us tonight in Philippians 2, as well as the verse I read in 1 Peter 5 and all over the other place in the New Testament, we are constantly exhorted to be humble.

Paul, in many places, Peter and others, writes to Christians saying, be humble. Humble yourselves under the hand of God. Humble yourselves in your relationships with each other.

Not only does salvation deal with our pride, but salvation itself provides a model in Jesus of humility. And that's the essence of the passage in Philippians chapter 2 tonight that was read for us in those famous verses.

Let me read a couple of them to you again from verse 5. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus. That is, you and I must be like Jesus in our mind.

[ 33 : 03 ] What is that? Though he was in the form of God, he didn't regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave or a servant, being born in human likeness, and being found in human form, he humbled himself.

That's the focus of that extended sentence. It's the focus of what attitude is to be in our mind. Humility. Modelled by Jesus in bringing about the reversal of salvation of the bringing down of the proud and the exalting of the humble.

That is, not only does salvation do that, but the way that salvation occurs is modelling that. Jesus, from the glory of heaven, where he had everything to be proud about, if I can put it like that, humbled himself not only as a human, but humbled himself to death on a cross.

Not grasping at equality with God. Not being proud of where he'd come from, boasting of it, all that sort of thing. But rather humbly submitting himself to evil intent so that we might be saved.

So that our pride may not only be forgiven, but changed in our life as well. Salvation brings that great reversal. Bringing down the proud, lifting up the lowly.

[ 34 : 28 ] Salvation does that by modelling the great reversal. Jesus, from glory, to the depths of humility, dying on a cross for us.

Notice again in this the importance of the mind or heart. I don't want to distinguish too much between them. In ancient Hebrew and the Old Testament it's the same idea. Mind or heart, it's the one thing.

In ancient Greek they separated it a bit. But in biblical thought, really in the end there is a unity. What is our innermost core being? That's really what we're talking about here. And that mind must be in us.

That heart must be in us. That is in the deepest parts of our being, we're to be humble people. Pride, your sins, stems from the heart or the mind, as we saw in Mark.

And therefore, we've got to get our minds right. We've got to think things that are true. Later on in this same letter to the Philippians, we'll actually hear this passage preached on next Sunday morning by Tim.

[ 35 : 28 ] Paul exhorts the Philippians to think on truth. Think on whatever is pure. That is, fill your minds with right thinking about God and about who you are.

So foundational is that thinking on truth for getting our minds right so that our minds will be the same as Christ's. That is, humble and not proud. God. That's because God's word is powerful. God's word is not just sort of ink on page. We don't have an equal option to go to the Sunday Age or some other book to try and think on that. But it's to think on the truths that God gives us, which are powerful truths.

The word of God is powerful to pierce our heart, the writer to the Hebrews says. So there is actually, if we want to appropriate the power of God in changing our hearts from pride to humility, the word of God must be thought upon, must be meditated upon, must be before our eyes, so to speak.

In our conversations, in our mutual encouragement, as a regular part of our spiritual diet. You see, it's not just simple human effort.

[ 36 : 39 ] I'm not standing here tonight to say we're all proud to a certain extent. We've got to flog ourselves harder and harder to become humble. That's what a football coach does. Come on, do it harder.

But rather, by the grace of God, not only is our pride forgiven, but God provides resources to change our hearts in the powerful word of God that he writes in our hearts by his spirit. It's still our responsibility to humble ourselves. It's still our responsibility to read the word and to pray and to seek with effort to change. But it's not just our effort. It's the powerful word of God that will change us on the inside. And the power of that word comes from the power of the death and resurrection of Jesus to deal with sin once and for all. We die to pride. We rise to humility. It's a good way of thinking about this from pride to humility title of the sermon. That we're actually dying to it because Jesus died. [ 37 : 46 ] And in Christ, we're rising to humility to this new life that is ours in Christ. Not simply that our sins are dealt with on some great heavenly ledger in the sky so we're forgiven, but that the power of the death and resurrection of Jesus is affecting us each day as more and more our minds and hearts become like Jesus.

As that passage in Colossians said, we're to clothe ourselves with humility. In a sense, we open our spiritual wardrobes every morning and before putting on our jocks and socks and shirts and so on, we ought to be thinking what aspects of character am I putting on today? And first cab off the rank tonight, humility. So we clothe ourselves with humility each day. If I can extend the analogy like that. That will be practical. It will mean that in our conversations at school or at university or in our family, we're not boastful about our achievements, even if they're real achievements.

We're not keeping trying to put ourselves first. You know how people stand around and they tell stories. You know, I remember the time when I did such and such. Well, that's nothing. When I was your age, I did such and such that's bigger. Everyone's trying to outdo each other. That's pride, not humility. It'll mean that we're not too proud to ignore help. And so often we're so proud. We think that we can do it. We think that we can achieve it.

[ 39 : 06 ] We think that we can't learn something, especially in an area where we're good. Pride means that we're actually blind to learning to be better, learning from other people, even people who aren't very good, who might yet have shrewd observations from which we can learn.

Humility means that we won't be too proud to acknowledge our mistakes. But how often don't we acknowledge them? How often do we make an excuse for them?

How often do we lie to cover up our errors? Because we're proud and we don't want people to think lowly of us. Stupid pride rather than humility, which is much more honest.

Well, they're just some of the practical ways. But in our conversations, in as well as in our thoughts, let's practice humility, humbling ourselves under the hand of God, humbling ourselves with each other.

I wonder if God is doing a makeover job on you. Not just of your shirts and trousers or dresses or whatever, but in your heart.

[ 40 : 11 ] Is God doing that radical heart surgery, changing pride into humility in your heart? Have you asked him to do it? Or do you actually enjoy being proud?

Sort of cuddling the sinful character in your heart, thinking no one's ever going to tell you off or detect it. God knows our hearts.

He wants to change them. Let's pray. O Lord, you've searched me and known me.

You know when I sit down and when I rise up. You discern my thoughts from far away. You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, O Lord, you know it completely.

You hem me in behind and before and lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. It is so high that I cannot attain it.

[ 41 : 15 ] Lord God, indeed you know our hearts better than we do. Search out our hearts, O God. Test us and know our thoughts.

See if there is any wicked way in us. And lead us in the way everlasting. For Christ's sake. Amen.