

First Peter Chapter 5

→ What do verses 1-4 tell us about Christian leadership?

THE BIG IDEA (v8-9 with v 5-7): You won't win the BATTLE of v8-9 without first attending to the PRINCIPLES of v5-7.

- * To win that battle, you're going to have to ⁷Give all your WORRIES and CARES to God, and ⁶HUMBLE yourself under the mighty hand of God.
- What do verses 8-9 tell us about the battle we're in? How does the enemy prowl? How does he roar? How does he devour?

THE PREMISE

Kingdom Way is not to fight our battles by 'COMING OUT SWINGING,' but by FALLING TO OUR KNEES.

- * To open the door as wide as possible to God's INVOLVEMENT and INTERVENTION, we must DRESS ourselves in HUMILITY and SWALLOW our PRIDE.
 - * The strongest battle stance we can take is ON BENDED KNEE.
- How do you tend to 'fight your battles?' Are you quick to your knees or slow?
→ How did Jesus set the example here?

DESCRIPTIONS OF PRIDE & HUMILITY

Pride says, 'MY WAY IS BETTER!'

Humility says, 'GOD'S WAY IS BETTER!'

Pride makes it ABOUT ME; humility makes it about OTHERS.

v5: Pride RESISTS its ELDERS, because it KNOWS BETTER.

v6: Pride doesn't want to WAIT for God to LIFT US UP, but sets about trying to DO IT FOR ITSELF.

v7: Pride HANGS ONTO hurts, offences, burdens and weights.

v8: Pride MISSES the enemy attack, because it's LOOKING in the WRONG DIRECTION.

→ How would you define pride and humility? What are the obvious, stand-out characteristics of the proud? What about the humble? Who's the humblest person you know?

→ What tends to provoke pride in your heart? Anything in verses 5-8? Where are you vulnerable? What makes you defensive? Are you a self-justifier? If you're honest, does your conversation tend to be about you? Are you good at asking questions of others?

Meanwhile, the Enemy is SNEAKING in and causing HAVOC.

- * CLINGING onto hurts and fears, and PROUDLY digging your heels in, both leave you at the MERCY of the PROWLING LION.
- * Giving all your WORRIES to the Lord and walking in genuine, Christ-like HUMILITY, put you in a very STRONG position to STAND FIRM against the DEVOURER.
- * Pride is RESISTED; humility is GRACED.
- * If there's evidence of PRIDE in any PARTICULAR AREA of our lives, we shouldn't be surprised if it's still HARD GOING.
- * If there's NO LIMIT to our HUMILITY, there will be NO LIMITS on His GRACE.

→ If we're overtly proud and unaware of it, what are we vulnerable to? How does the enemy use pride as his back-door? What are the potential and devastating consequences for someone overcome with pride?

→ What does 'resisted' feel like? What does 'graced' feel like? Have you been there?

→ Why does God resist and oppose pride? What would happen if He didn't? What was Lucifer's pride and how does that explain his operations?

→ If you're totally honest, are there any specific areas in your life where you're still a little proud? Why is that making that part of your life hard going? What could you do to change that?

→ Heidi Baker said, "There's only one direction in ministry: Lower still." John Wimber taught, "Get low and stay low!" Discuss!

Life is so much BETTER with God on the THRONE, Jesus at the CENTRE and the Holy Spirit in the DRIVING SEAT.

Which is one of the many reasons WORSHIP is so important

- * It gets US off the THRONE and puts GOD back on it.
- * It EXALTS God and moves us onto our KNEES.

Which is one of the many reasons GOD'S WORD is so important

- * As a discipline, it asks, WHAT WOULD GOD SAY?
- * Reminds us that His THOUGHTS and WAYS are HIGHER than ours.

If Jesus is at work in your life, you'll be taking a walk FROM PRIDE in the direction of HUMILITY.

→ Would you say you are humbler now than you were, say, 3 years ago? What are the factors in your life that have been most notable in making you humbler?

IN THE SPIRITUAL WARFARE CONTEXT

- * Pride OPENS the DOOR to the DEVIL; humility SHUTS IT.
- * Humility OPENS the DOOR for GOD to work in our lives; Pride CLOSES IT.
- * While pride is a NATURAL, FLESHLY, CARNAL fighting posture; humility is the STRONG, SUPERNATURAL one

→ Are you currently under attack? Where are you struggling? Is it because of pride? Is the enemy trying to make you proud? What's the strong, supernatural response? How can you train yourself to habitually respond that way?

→ How does this apply in our corporate / collective context (See 2 Chronicles 7:14)?

HOW DO WE INCREASE IN HUMILITY?

1. Make it a point to KNOCK YOURSELF OFF THE THRONE, every chance you get.
2. Always ask first, WHAT would the HEART of GOD do or say?
3. Make BENDED KNEE your DEFAULT position.

RESPONSE QUESTIONS

1. Where in your life is there any evidence of pride? → Be honest, dig deep. Are you repeatedly hitting any brick walls? Ask God to show you and repent.
2. Invite God to 'clothe you with humility.' → It's a beautiful cloak, but also a powerful force. Ask the Lord to work that in you. It's time to fall on our knees.