

Friday, May 29

Proverbs 16:18 *Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.*

1 Corinthians 10:12 *If you think you are standing strong, be careful not to fall.*

“As soon as enough people give you enough compliments and you’re wielding more power than you’ve ever had in your life, it’s not that you become . . . arrogant . . . or become rude to people, but you get a false sense of your own importance and what you’ve accomplished. You actually think you’ve altered the course of history.” Actor Leonardo DiCaprio

A New England pastor and a rabbi were having a conversation one day over lunch. The pastor proudly proclaimed, “One of my ancestors signed the Declaration of Independence.” He thought the rabbi would be very impressed by this.

To his disappointment, the rabbi responded, “I understand your pride. One of my ancestors signed the Ten Commandments.”

Pride is such a huge temptation for me. “Look what I did.” “I don’t want any special attention, but . . .” “That wasn’t necessary, but thanks for the compliment (do you have any more I can falsely say I don’t want?)”

The problem with pride is that there’s always going to be someone who can do something better than you. They have the ability to run faster (I still remember how humbling it was to be passed by a female in a running race), jump higher, be more successful, be better looking, or more intelligent, tell funnier stories, be more highly regarded – and sought after, and go beyond your best – without much additional effort. I used to have a number of top 10 times for my age in the Bolder Boulder 10k – now, my name is like the morning dew.

Pride is crippling. It affects our eyes by causing us not to see our shortcomings and sins. It affects our ears by causing us to listen only for that which validates how we evaluate ourselves. It affects our attitude because we begin finding fault in others, and become defensive about self. It affects our heart because it gives us a false sense of security about our (spiritual) health.

But the priority reason why pride is so crippling is that it is intentional disobedience to God’s most important command to love Him above all else, and love our neighbors as ourselves. Pride honors those whom the world honors and, consciously or subconsciously, neglects the weak, the inconvenient, and the unpopular, because they don’t seem to be able to offer us much. It puts us in opposition against God.

There’s only one who is to receive glory and praise, and when we try to steal some of that glory and praise for ourselves, we commit the sin of pride because we try to reinforce our identity with the applause of humans.

God spoke through the prophet Ezekiel these words to the king of Tyre: *Thus says the Lord God: “Because your heart is proud, and you have said, ‘I am a god, I sit in the seat of the*

*gods, in the heart of the seas,' yet you are but a man, and no god, though you make your heart like the heart of a god . . ."*

So, I humbly leave us with this: it's not about you . . . or me. It's all about Jesus. Psalm 2:11 *Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling,* and it will be well with your soul [my editorial addition].