

Week 6: The Perils of Pride

Small Group Lesson

Introduction

King Uzziah became a leader at the age of 16. As long as he sought the Lord for guidance, God gave him success (2 Chronicles 26:5). In verse 16 of that same chapter we read that when he became powerful, he also became proud. This pride led to his downfall when he overstepped his authority and tried to offer incense in the Lord's temple, a task reserved for only the priest and as a result God struck Uzziah with leprosy until the day he died.

Pride is a deadly sin and the scriptures tell us that it is something that God resists (James 4:6). The problem is that we often cannot see it within ourselves. In this lesson we will examine the life of Uzziah for some key lessons about the sin of pride.

1. Pride is a Prowler

Uzziah started his reign in humility, seeking God for direction. As long as he sought God he excelled in his leadership militarily, agriculturally and in architecture. However in his life there was a gradual shift from humility to pride taking place. Like a disease that attacks our natural bodies, pride can begin to attack our spirit without our notice until the symptoms become obvious.

Question: Pride is often unseen by us in our lives. What are some things we can put into place as an early warning system against pride forming in our hearts?

2. Pride is a perspective

(verse 18) - Uzziah thought himself as above the rules. He felt as though nothing was off limits to him. Pride will cause you to have a distorted view of yourself and even the world around you. Proud people see others as beneath them and subservient. Philippians 2:3 says *"Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others better than yourselves."*

Question: In what ways does the world seek to divide and push an *"us versus them"* mentality? What does a healthy balanced perspective of oneself look like?"

3. Pride Brings Punishment

(2 Chronicles 26:19) - God's response to Uzziah's pride was swift and severe. As he raged against the priest for correcting him, leprosy immediately broke out on his forehead. Uzziah lived the rest of his life in

isolation. That spot of leprosy was really an example of the mercy of God. We can see in scripture where some offenses resulted in instant death to the offender but Uzziah would live but with a constant reminder of the penalty of pride.

Question: How can we foster an attitude of humility in a world that pushes pride?

4. Pride Has a Prescription

(Isaiah 6). The prophet Isaiah had a vision of the Lord in the year that Uzziah died. In his vision he saw the Lord sitting on His throne and the glory that surrounded Him. In the presence of God he cried out *"It is all over! I am doomed, for I am a sinful man. I have filthy lips, and I live among a people with filthy lips. Yet I have seen the King, the Lord of Heaven's armies."* C.S. Lewis said *"Pride causes us to look down on everyone around us. And if we are looking down at everything we will never look up and see what is above you"*. The prescription for pride is to look up and see your creator. You are valuable to Him but not superior. Each person made in the image of God is valuable. We all have value but only God is worthy of worship.

Question: In your own words, how would you describe how worship combats pride in our lives?

Conclusion

Pride is a dangerous thing to believers. It causes us to see ourselves as better than everyone else. If we continue in it we will have to face the consequences of God's judgment. A proper perspective of ourselves is that we are valuable to God but never superior. The key to combating pride is to give worship to the only one who is worthy, Jesus! We should daily spend time giving glory and praise to the only one upon the throne!