

# "Pride"

James 4:6-10 (1198)  
By Darrell Benhardus  
February 7, 2010

## INTRODUCTION

1. Jaguar automobile advertisement [Slide: Jaguar]



- (1). Committing the Seven Deadly Sins by buying one
  1. Pride
  2. Lust
  3. Greed
  4. Sloth
  5. Envy
  6. Wrath
  7. Gluttony

- (2). Using sin to sell something

## 2. What makes these seven sins the deadly sins?

- (1). Introduce new series
  - Follow up on *What is so Deadly about Sin?*
- (2). History of the list of Deadly Sins [Slide: Monks]



1. List not found in the Bible
  - Formed over 400 years after Bible times
2. Developed among desert monks

- (1). Separate themselves from the wickedness of the world
    - 1. Got away from worldly temptations
    - 2. Didn't get away from desires of their sinful nature
  - (2). Confronted by seven basic temptations
  - (3). They don't seem very dangerous or deadly
    - 1. Seem ordinary and trivial
      - Not the most terrible things people can do
    - 2. Sometimes called "**Capital Sins**"
      - (1). Capital punishment
        - Death sentence
      - (2). Latin word "Capitis" = head
        - 1. "Headwaters" = source
        - 2. Capital sins generate even worse sins
          - Not so serious within themselves
      - (3). Branches that produce poisonous fruit
  - 3. They are deadly because they are lethal to one's soul**
    - (1). **Chronic sins**
      - Like a persistent, chronic cough
    - (2). **Difficult to shake**
      - Can't overcome them in our own strength
- 3. Pride is the # 1 Deadly Sin**
  - (1). Most deadly of the deadly sins
  - (2). The Scriptures answer two critical questions about pride.

### **QUESTION # 1 Why is pride the most deadly of the seven deadly sins?**

- 1. Our culture has rehabilitated pride into a virtue.**
  - (1). Badge of honor
    - Purple Pride
    - Black Pride
    - Gay Pride
  - (2). Beneficial nature of taking pride in one's work
    - Striving for excellence
  - (3). Sees the real evil as low self-esteem
    - 1. Positive self-esteem will save our world
    - 2. William Willimon's conversation with an old prison chaplain
      - (1). Poor sense of self
      - (2). Chaplain:
        - "That's a lie. Those guys are not in jail because they think too little of themselves, but because they think too much of themselves. Every one of them thinks he's a brilliant mind who is above the poor saps who obey the rules, go to work, follow the law. Every one of them thinks he's a genius and his victims are stupid."
  - (4). Why is pride the most deadly sin?
    - READ James 4:6-10 (1198)
- 2. Pride isolates us from God and others.**
  - (1). God opposes the proud (4:6)

1. Lines up on the opposite side of the ball
2. Proud are enemies of God (4:4)
- (2). Pride is ultimate cause of fights with others (4:1)
- 3. Pride is the oldest sin.**
  - (1). Appeal to Adam and Eve
    - "You will be like God!"
  - (2). Cause Cain's resentment toward Abel
    - Pride had been hurt
  - (3). Motivation for the Tower of Babel
    - "Make a name for ourselves."
- 4. Pride is the most popular form of idolatry**
  - (1). Pride is self-centered.**
    1. Promote ourselves to 1<sup>st</sup> place status in our lives
      - "Be like God"
    2. Drives us to think a lot about ourselves and to think a lot of ourselves
      - "Look only out for our own interests"
  - (2). Pride is self-promoting.**
    1. Wants to impress others
      - Seeks the recognition and approval of others
    2. Reputation matters more than reality
      - Hypocrisy: trying to look better than one really is in order to win the approval and admiration of others.
  - (3). Pride is self-reliant.**
    - Relies upon one's own ability, status & money
  - (4). Pride is self-willed.**
    1. Unteachable
      - (1). Authority issues
        - Resist submitting to authority
      - (2) Redraw rules of life to suit themselves
    2. Go against the grain of life as God meant it to be
- 5. Pride kills communion with God and others**
  - (1). Pushes God out as the center of our lives
    1. No longer "Temples of the Holy Spirit"
    2. Competing with God instead of communing
      - "Opposes the proud" (4:6)
  - (2). Produces fights and quarrel with others
    - Competing instead of communing

**QUESTION # 2 What will over come the deadly sin of pride?**

1. God's answer to the sin of pride is **grace**. (4:6)

(1). "He gives more grace"

1. More than the need requires

- Grace = his mercy, power, love

2. Analogy to picture of Niagara Falls [Slide: Niagara Falls]



(1). Titles: "More to Follow"

(2). Billions of gallons spill over it each year

- Always more to follow

(2). All that **we have** and all that **we are** is the result of God's grace.

1. Every good gift comes from Him

2. Pride seeks to take the credit

2. Only **humility** enables one to receive God's grace.

(1). Humility **is not**:

1. Negative self-talk

- "I am such a loser!"

2. Letting other people control you

- Afraid to stand up for yourself

(2). Humility **is** submitting to the work of God's grace in our life.

1. Humility is the **appropriate response** to God's grace

(1). God is the initiator

- We are the responder

(2). Analogy to playing catch [Slide: Catch]



1. Carolyn Arends in *Christianity Today*
    - Roger Rosenblatt: "The Game of Catch."
    - "They do not call it a game of throw. They call it a game of catch."
  2. Our relationship with God is a game of catch
    - (1). He is the initiator
      1. "We love because he first loved us"
      2. He stands at the door knocking
    - (2). Humility let God and his grace have its rightful place in our lives
  - (3). 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 "For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again."
2. **Humility** and **repentance** are related.
- (1). **Humility** is submitting to this work of grace in our lives.
  - (2). **Repentance** is turning from that which resists this work of grace.
    - James 4:8 "wash our hands and purify our hearts."
    1. "Washing our hands"= sinful behaviors.
    2. "Purifying our hearts" = sinful attitudes.

## 3. How Troy Polamalu has been overcoming pride.

[Slide: Polamalu]



- (1). Three-time Pro Bowl strong safety for the Pittsburgh Steelers
  - Striving to maintain his Christian character since joining the NFL in 2003.
- (2). Interview with the Christian Broadcasting Network before last year's Super Bowl.

"Pride is tough. You go to high school, and it's pride, courage. It's all these types of words that we use to motivate us. I don't think there's anywhere in the Scriptures ... where pride was ever a positive characteristic of anybody. That kind of egotism is a really tough struggle—especially in this business. ... It's a big struggle of mine."

Polamalu went on to say that it's not the obvious things that are the hardest to deal with in his life. "It's ... the big things that are the easiest to turn away from. It's ... the accumulation of small things [that are hard]. ... People know adultery's bad and murder's bad. I'm not going to go out and sleep with the first girl I see. But when your eyes start wandering, [and you become] a little more jealous and envious, and these passions start rising up inside of you—that's when it really becomes dangerous. Because the Devil doesn't work that way. His strategy is always to be very subtle and continue to build on top of that evil seed that he planted."

Polamalu said prayer keeps him rooted. "As your prayer life becomes more and more fine tuned, and your conscience becomes more and more fine tuned, you're able to start plucking away at these things. [You're] like, 'Wow...this is not good.'"

- (3). Submitting to God's grace is an ongoing process.

1. Victory over pride is **not a once for all victory**
2. **Daily** we humbly submit to his grace

**KEY TRUTH: Submitting to God's grace will overcome the deadly sin of pride.**

1. Only God's grace can overcome the hold of pride over our lives.

(1). God's grace is working to make us:

- More **Christ centered** and less **self-centered**
- More **Christ-promoting** and less **self-promoting**
- More **Christ-reliant** and less **self-reliant**
- More **Christ-willed** and less **self-willed.**

(2). Humility is submitting to this grace

**2. Only grace can restore communion.**

(1). Pride kills it

- With God and others [Slide: Communion 1]



(2). The Lord's Supper demonstrates how His grace restores communion.

1. The Bread and Cup demonstrate the ransom paid

(1). Grace poured out to cover our sin

- Like Niagara Falls

(2). Restored communion with God

2. Receiving the Bread and Cup

(1). Demonstrate humility

(2). Demonstrate submitting to what his grace is already doing in our lives.

(3). Lee Eclov's experience serving communion

1. Member of his church admitted herself to a psychiatric hospital

(1). Visited her when he could

(2). Asked if he could bring communion

- She asked if other hospitalized Christians could join them

2. He writes:

"On that spring afternoon, five or six of us gathered in her room and shared the sacred meal. I think it was the most meaningful Communion service I ever shared—half a dozen strangers, each scarred by heartache, sitting helpless in a locked ward. Yet Jesus was there because we were there as his beloved. He was not only among us, but he was there *within* us. Even as broken people, we were one with each other. We were strengthened by his presence; we were healed, in a way. We were nourished, washed, and rejuvenated all because of his grace."

## **BENEDICTION**

1. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that in due time he may exalt you. Cast all your anxieties on him, for he cares about you.