

Pride

The Exaltation of Self

Pride turns the self into the reference point: my status, my wisdom, my recognition, my control. Biblical humility does not deny God-given worth; it receives everything as grace and gladly gives Christ the highest place.

22 Study Sections

Theology + application

3 Biblical Case Studies

Trace the pattern in context

Interactive Tools

Diagnostics · scenarios
· mapping

7-Day Practice

Humility

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Course Dashboard

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study sections completed

Progress is saved privately on this device.

Chapter Aim

Pride turns the self into the reference point: my status, my wisdom, my recognition, my control. Biblical humility does not deny God-given worth; it receives everything as grace and gladly gives Christ the highest place.

Opposite virtue: Humility

Primary passage: [Philippians 2:1-11](#). Read the complete passage before working through the study.

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How to Use This Study

This Go Deeper chapter is designed for slow study rather than quick completion. Read passages in context, answer honestly, and use the tools to move from recognition to repentance and practiced obedience.

Important distinction: self-examination is not self-condemnation. Conviction names sin truthfully and moves toward Christ, grace, repair, and obedience.

Questions to carry through the chapter

- Where do I need recognition in order to feel secure?
- How do I react when corrected, overlooked, or contradicted?
- Where am I functionally self-reliant instead of prayerfully dependent?
- Do I use spiritual knowledge, service, or morality to rank myself above others?

Before you begin, what do you want God to expose, renew, or strengthen through this chapter?

Primary Passage Lab

Read: [Philippians 2:1-11](#)

Pride turns the self into the reference point: my status, my wisdom, my recognition, my control. Biblical humility does not deny God-given worth; it receives everything as grace and gladly gives Christ the highest place.

Observation — What words, contrasts, commands, motives, promises, or movements stand out?

Theology — What does the passage reveal about God, Christ, grace, holiness, or human dependence?

Heart — What does the passage expose about desire, fear, worship, relationships, or self-rule?

Response — What specific faith and obedience does the passage call for?

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Word Study

Original-language study is useful when it clarifies the inspired text in context. These terms are not “secret meanings”; they are study aids that should remain subordinate to the passage as a whole.

hyperēphania — pride / arrogance

Reference: [Mark 7:22](#)

A New Testament term associated with an inflated or haughty posture toward self and others.

tapeinophrosynē — humility / lowliness of mind

Reference: [Philippians 2:3](#)

A posture that refuses selfish rivalry and considers the good of others.

kenoō — to empty / make of no reputation

Reference: [Philippians 2:7](#)

In context, Christ does not cease being divine; He takes the form of a servant and embraces the path of obedient humiliation.

Which word or concept most sharpened your understanding, and how does the surrounding passage control its meaning?

Biblical Theology Trace

Trace the theme across the biblical storyline. The goal is to see both continuity and development rather than building doctrine from one isolated verse.

Creation & Fall	Genesis 3:1-7	The serpent's temptation invites humanity to grasp autonomy and determine good and evil apart from God.
Wisdom	Proverbs 16:18; 18:12	Pride is repeatedly connected with downfall, while humility precedes honor.
Kings & Prophets	Daniel 4:28-37	Nebuchadnezzar's self-glory is humbled until he acknowledges the Most High.
Jesus	Matthew 23:1-12; John 13:1-17	Jesus exposes religious self-exaltation and embodies servant-hearted greatness.
Church	Romans 12:3-10; Philippians 2:1-11	Believers are commanded to think soberly, honor others, and adopt the mind of Christ.

What changes or deepens as you trace this subject from the Old Testament through Christ and the church?

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How This Sin Hides

Sin often survives by changing clothes. Mark the expressions you have seen in yourself or want to examine more carefully.

☐ Needing the final word in every disagreement

☐ Quiet resentment when someone else is praised

☐ Refusing help because dependence feels weak

☐ Apologizing vaguely without naming wrong

☐ Using knowledge to dominate rather than serve

☐ Comparing ministries, gifts, families, or spiritual maturity

☐ Treating correction as an attack on identity

☐ Doing visible service while neglecting unseen faithfulness

Which hidden expression is easiest for you to excuse or rename? What would truthful language sound like?

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Anatomy Map

Use this map to catch the pattern earlier. The earlier you recognize the movement, the more choices you can make before the behavior becomes entrenched.

Trigger

Being overlooked, corrected, threatened, or compared.

Desire

To preserve status, superiority, control, or the appearance of competence.

Lie

"If I admit weakness, lose recognition, or submit, I become less valuable."

Consent

Defensiveness, self-promotion, contempt, blame-shifting, or refusal to listen.

Fruit

Distance in relationships, teachability declines, dependence on God weakens.

Renewal

Remember grace, behold Christ's humility, listen, confess, serve, honor others.

Map one recent real situation through these six stages. Where could faithful interruption have happened earlier?

Biblical Case Studies

Biblical narratives let us watch motives and consequences develop in context. Avoid flattening every detail into a formula; ask what the text itself emphasizes.

Nebuchadnezzar — Daniel 4:28-37

Read: [Daniel 4:28-37](#)

He attributes Babylon's greatness to his own power and glory. God humbles him, and restoration follows acknowledgement of God's sovereign rule.

Trace the trigger, desire, lie, choice, consequence, and possible point of interruption in this account.

The Pharisee and tax collector — Luke 18:9-14

Read: [Luke 18:9-14](#)

The Pharisee measures righteousness by comparison; the tax collector appeals for mercy. Jesus reverses the human ranking.

Trace the trigger, desire, lie, choice, consequence, and possible point of interruption in this account.

Diotrephes — 3 John 9-11

Read: [3 John 9-11](#)

A church leader “likes to put himself first,” rejects apostolic correction, and uses influence to control fellowship.

Trace the trigger, desire, lie, choice, consequence, and possible point of interruption in this account.

Gospel & Opposite Virtue

What must be put off?

Pride is not only a behavior to suppress. It is a pattern of worship, desire, reasoning, and action that must be brought into the light.

What must be put on?

Humility is not a personality style. It is Christ-shaped character practiced through concrete choices.

Gospel foundation: We do not practice holiness to make Christ receive us. In Christ, grace creates a new identity and trains believers to live differently. See [Titus 2:11-14](#) and [Romans 8:1-14](#).

How would fighting this sin change if you fought from acceptance in Christ rather than for acceptance?

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Heart Diagnostic

This is not a spiritual grade or clinical assessment. Use it to notice recurring themes worth prayer, Scripture, counsel, and concrete practice.

1. I become defensive before I have fully listened to correction.

2. I replay moments when I was not thanked or recognized.

3. I am more comfortable giving help than receiving it.

4. I compare my spiritual maturity with other believers.

5. I find it difficult to say “I was wrong” without explaining myself.

6. I assume my preferences are usually the wisest approach.

7. I feel threatened when someone else succeeds in an area important to me.

8. I pray less when I believe I can handle something myself.

9. I want people to know when I have sacrificed or served.

10. I dismiss people whose knowledge, status, or experience seems lower than mine.

11. I confuse strong conviction with never needing correction.

12. I sometimes use truth to win rather than to love.

Answer the statements prayerfully. This tool does not diagnose or grade your spirituality.

What two or three themes deserve the most honest attention right now?

Scenario Lab

Choose the response that best reflects truthful, grace-shaped faithfulness. These are formation exercises, not attempts to cover every pastoral detail.

1. Recognition

You contributed heavily to a project, but another person receives most of the public praise.

Correct everyone immediately so they know your contribution.

Say nothing outwardly but rehearse resentment for days.

Celebrate what God accomplished, then address any real attribution issue calmly and without self-exaltation.

2. Correction

A younger believer points out an inconsistency in something you taught.

Dismiss them because they have less experience.

Ask for the specific concern, examine Scripture, and correct yourself publicly if needed.

Avoid the topic and hope nobody notices.

3. Service

You are asked to do an unseen task while someone else gets the visible role.

Decline because your gifts are being wasted.

Serve faithfully if the task is appropriate, while remaining open about genuine gifting and limits.

Do the task but make sure people know you did it.

4. Disagreement

Someone strongly disagrees with your interpretation on a secondary issue.

Treat disagreement as evidence they are spiritually immature.

Listen, distinguish essentials from secondary matters, answer from Scripture, and preserve love.

Refuse all future discussion.

Write one realistic scenario from your life. What would an impulsive response, a self-protective response, and a Christ-shaped response each look like?

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Truth vs. Lie Builder

Sin is often sustained by believable-sounding claims about God, self, other people, or what will satisfy us. Practice answering the lie before the next moment of pressure.

Lie

I must be noticed to matter.

Truth

My identity and worth are received in Christ; faithfulness is not measured by applause.

Scripture

[Colossians 3:3-4](#); [Matthew 6:1-6](#)

Lie

Admitting wrong makes me weak.

Truth

Confession is an act of truth and humility; grace frees me from image management.

Scripture

[James 5:16](#); [1 John 1:9](#)

Lie

My gifts make me superior.

Truth

Every gift is received and exists for service, not boasting.

Scripture

[1 Corinthians 4:7](#); [12:4-7](#)

Lie

If I can do it myself, I do not need prayer.

Truth

Dependence is creaturely wisdom, not failure.

Scripture

[John 15:5](#); [James 4:13-16](#)

Lie

Humility means thinking badly of myself.

Truth

Humility thinks truthfully about self under God and seeks the good of others.

Scripture

Romans 12:3; Philippians 2:3-4

Write one recurring lie in your own words.

Answer it with a truth drawn from Scripture, in context.

Scripture Investigation Lab

Proverbs 16:18

Read the passage in context, then answer below.

What does this text reveal, warn, command, promise, or re-order? How does it apply to this chapter?

James 4:6

Read the passage in context, then answer below.

What does this text reveal, warn, command, promise, or re-order? How does it apply to this chapter?

Daniel 4:28-37

Read the passage in context, then answer below.

What does this text reveal, warn, command, promise, or re-order? How does it apply to this chapter?

Luke 18:9-14

Read the passage in context, then answer below.

What does this text reveal, warn, command, promise, or re-order? How does it apply to this chapter?

Romans 12:3

Read the passage in context, then answer below.

What does this text reveal, warn, command, promise, or re-order? How does it apply to this chapter?

1 Peter 5:5-6

Read the passage in context, then answer below.

What does this text reveal, warn, command, promise, or re-order? How does it apply to this chapter?

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Put Off · Renew · Put On

New Testament change is often more than stopping. Old patterns are put off, the mind is renewed in truth, and new Christlike practices are put on.

PUT OFF — What specific behavior, access point, speech pattern, or habit must stop?

RENEW — What truth about God, identity, desire, or neighbor must become more believable?

PUT ON — What would Humility look like as observable action?

Personal Pattern Mapper

Common trigger

What I want in that moment

The lie or interpretation

My usual response

What it costs God, neighbor, or faithful stewardship

Truth I need ready

A wise boundary or friction point

Who can help me stay in the light

Cross-Reference Explorer

WARNING

Proverbs 16:18

Pride precedes destruction.

WARNING

James 4:6

God opposes the proud.

EXAMPLE

Daniel 4:28-37

Nebuchadnezzar is humbled.

EXAMPLE

Luke 18:9-14

Self-righteous comparison is exposed.

COMMAND

Romans 12:3

Think with sober judgment.

COMMAND

1 Peter 5:5-6

Clothe yourselves with humility.

PROMISE

Isaiah 57:15

God dwells with the contrite and lowly.

GOSPEL

Philippians 2:5-11

Christ's self-humbling obedience and exaltation.

TRANSFORMATION

John 13:12-17

Jesus forms servants who wash feet.

S.O.A.P. passage: [Philippians 2:3-8](#)

S — Scripture: Write the key verse(s) or phrases in your own study notes. What is the immediate context?

O — Observation: What do you notice about God, motives, commands, warnings, promises, relationships, and repeated ideas?

A — Application: What concrete change would faithfulness require this week?

P — Prayer: Respond with worship, confession, gratitude, dependence, and specific request.

Knowledge Check

1. Which passage most directly presents Christ's humility as the model for believers?

- ☐ Daniel 4
 - ☐ Philippians 2:1-11
 - ☐ Proverbs 31
-

2. Biblical humility is best described as...

- ☐ Pretending you have no gifts
 - ☐ Thinking truthfully about yourself under God and serving others
 - ☐ Never speaking with confidence
-

3. A common hidden form of pride is...

- ☐ Receiving correction carefully
 - ☐ Quiet resentment when another is praised
 - ☐ Thanking God for a gift
-

4. Romans 12:3 calls believers to...

- ☐ Think more highly of themselves
 - ☐ Think with sober judgment
 - ☐ Avoid evaluating anything
-

5. The opposite virtue emphasized in this study is...

- ☐ Passivity
 - ☐ Humility
 - ☐ Indecision
-

6. Why is self-reliance spiritually significant?

- ☐ Competence is always sinful
 - ☐ It can functionally deny dependence on God
 - ☐ Planning is forbidden
-

7. What does confession do to pride?

- ☐ Protects reputation
 - ☐ Brings truth into the light and relinquishes image management
 - ☐ Guarantees people will approve
-

8. What is a good response to being overlooked?

- ☐ Pretend it never hurts
- ☐ Use the moment to examine desire for recognition and choose faithful love
- ☐ Withdraw from all service

Check Answers

Use the quiz to retrieve key ideas, then review explanations and passages.

Personal Action Plan

What must I stop feeding or making easy?

What truth must be ready before temptation?

What practice of Humility will I begin?

What boundary changes timing, access, environment, or secrecy?

Who can pray, ask direct questions, or help me stay in the light?

If this sin has harmed someone, what truthful repair or restitution may be needed?

Prayer & Confession Journal

Confession — What do I need to name before God without euphemism?

Grace — What does Christ’s finished work mean for my guilt, fear, and identity?

Desire — What good or distorted desire has been driving this pattern?

Neighbor — How has this pattern affected other people, even when hidden?

Prayer — Write your response to God.

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7-Day Practice

Practice one focused response each day. The goal is not a flawless streak but intentional formation.

☐ **Day 1**

Pray Psalm 139:23-24 and ask God to reveal pride without defensiveness.

☐ **Day 2**

Practice receiving one piece of correction: listen, summarize, pray, then respond.

☐ **Day 3**

Honor someone else specifically without mentioning your own contribution.

☐ **Day 4**

Do one useful act of service that is unlikely to be noticed.

☐ **Day 5**

Confess one area of self-reliance and intentionally ask God and a trusted person for help.

☐ **Day 6**

Read Philippians 2:1-11 slowly; note every movement away from selfish ambition.

☐ **Day 7**

Review the week: where did humility produce freedom, peace, or clearer love?

After seven days: where did you notice the pattern earlier, what helped, and what practice should continue?

In-Depth Conclusion

Pride is not defeated by becoming preoccupied with how humble we are. It is displaced as Christ becomes weightier, grace becomes more astonishing, and other people cease to be competitors for significance. The gospel gives believers a secure identity from which they can admit wrong, receive help, celebrate others, and take the lower place without fear.

Carry forward: The goal of this chapter is not to become fascinated with pride, but to become quicker at recognizing it, more confident in the sufficiency of Christ, and more practiced in humility.

Write your one-sentence summary: What is God calling you to believe and practice now?
