

Humble Yourself



A Weekly Prayer Practice
for the Season of Lent

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Lent is a time to take stock of our spiritual lives, to recognize where sin has taken root and is wreaking havoc in our hearts. This is a season of repentance, when we turn from our prideful ways, and enter new life. Pursue new ways of thinking, doing, and living daily.

Pride is perhaps the root of all sin. After all, it leads us to live daily-life according to our own will and way as if we know better than the One Who Knows Best. The most difficult part is the deceitful way it creeps into our thoughts and takes root in our hearts.

In the Humble Yourself prayer practice you will find a word, reflection questions, and space to journal for each day of the week. All focused on opening your eyes to the pride you need to uproot to make more room for Jesus.

Wisdom says: "Pride goes before the fall..." (Proverbs 16:18). It is far better to choose to lower yourself before God than to have Him do it for you.

*Humble yourselves before the Lord,
and he will lift you up in honor.*

James 4:10 NLT

Monday

*Satisfy us each morning with your unfailing love,
so we may sing for joy to the end of our lives.*

Psalm 90:14 NLT

Praise God as your source of complete satisfaction, for the steadfast love He pours out over you.

Insatiable

incapable of being satisfied

Pride fuels our desire for more. More power. More money. More _____. And it seems when we get more that's not enough either. The savings account goal gets higher... the dreamhouse gets bigger... the _____. The more we have the more we want. When we finally get what we want, we're not satisfied with that either.

It's a never-ending cycle. We're like hamsters running on little wheels getting nowhere fast.

We ask... we receive... we complain about what we've received. This is our broken human nature. It's been this way since the Israelite slaves left Egypt. Oh, how they wanted to be free, but freedom has a price. When trouble surfaced, slavery looked better than freedom. Before we realize it, the things we desire and receive become something we believe we are entitled to. As if God owes us something.

Consider for a moment your own insatiable desires... that thing you want more of. What is it?

What would getting more of it mean to you? To others? To your relationship with God?

When was the last time you thought, "I deserve this."? What did you feel entitled to?

Look around you, what seems to be piling up? Why?

Pride tells us the more we have and do, the better we are. Pride screams you're nothing, no one, if you don't have "it". Pride says you need more. More money, more education, more friends. You need MORE. You deserve MORE!

What comes to mind when you consider your own insatiable bent?

Confess your pride to the only One who truly satisfies.

Give thanks. Create a list below of all that you have received from God.

Humility in Action: As you go about your day pay attention to the moments you find yourself dreaming of more. Ask yourself this question:

Does this have eternal value?

Ask God:

Does this have any eternal value?

If the answer is no, quickly let it go.

If the answer is yes... by all means... desire more of that!

Tuesday

Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? ... No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us.

Romans 8:35 & 37 NLT

Praise God as the community (Father, Son, and Spirit) where you belong.

Insulated

*to place in a detached situation;
isolate*

Pride encourages us to seek admiration from others, to want someone's approval. All to feel worthy. It teaches us "to do unto others before they do unto us." We take offense at any questions that might reveal our lack of knowledge, education or wisdom. We strive to hold onto

the rule and reign of our tiny kingdoms praying no one sees through us. The best way to protect ourselves from exposure is to isolate. To push anyone away who gets too close and threatens the mask we use to present ourselves to the world.

No matter the circumstance pride never allows us to accept defeat or failure because of our own wrongdoing. There is no way we can take responsibility for hurting others. There's always a reason or excuse for our behavior. Pride's fear of being found out has us running into darkness, detached from others, and isolated from the world.

Consider your own tendency to insulate yourself from the world. Are there times you've taken offense lately, and spent the hours reliving the conversation defending yourself silently?

How were you feeling? Why?

What was the result?

Do you ever get frustrated or angry when someone asks a question about something you are doing or a decision you're making? Why?

When was the last time you felt disrespected? Why did you feel this way?

When was the last time you took full responsibility for a circumstance or situation? A time when you said, "I'm sorry. I shouldn't have..." and left it right there. No buts or let me tell you whys following your apology.

Where do you look for approval? or from whom?

Be honest with yourself... Is your pride causing you to detach and insulate yourself?

Confess the pride that keeps you isolated.

Give thanks. Create a list of the moments you've felt you truly belonged or were accepted, then express your gratitude to God.

Humility in Action: Notice when you feel your pulse rising in defense or frustration. Examine the situation and ask yourself,

Is pride fueling my emotions right now?

Ask God:

Is pride fueling my emotions right now?

If the answer is yes... get moving in a way that allows the emotion to pass. (Take a walk, garden, journal...)

Wednesday

*So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do,
do it all for the glory of God.*

1 Corinthians 10:31 NLT

Praise God as perfect in every way. The best at everything. The giver of everything.

Inglorious

shameful
not glorious
lacking fame or honor

Pride seeks its own glory, takes credit when no credit is due. It fuels our desire to be the best, number one, at the top of the game. It created the mantra, "If you're not first, you're last," and "Second place is just the first-place loser." In pride's world, number one is the only number, and it causes us to do whatever it takes to get there.

With each win, each compliment, each time we make it to our self-defined number one status we build a monument to ourselves.

In our boasting and haughty banter, the inglorious-ness of it all shows through. All of it to cover up our shame and the fact that there's nothing famous or honorable about us. Pride wants all the admiration and glory it can get or steal. It causes us to feel competitive and jealous. We find ourselves wanting what someone else has, doing what someone else does, or being who someone else is. And if we are really honest, we don't want to do the work it took to get them there. We simply want the glory. Their glory. Even God's glory.

Consider the things you feel confident in, the accomplishments you've experienced, the successes in your life. How did it make you feel to be successful? How about when others compliment your achievements?

What do you attempt to be the "best" at? Where or when do you notice your competitive nature revealing itself?

Do you find yourself celebrating when others succeed? Are there moments when you think or even ask, "Why can't I have _____?"

When do you take credit without thinking about how it was God's glory shining through your gift? talent? wisdom?

The truth is anything we have or do, accomplish, or succeed at... everything we own... is a gift from God. Even the intelligence or wisdom to make a good decision, earn a college degree, or create a beautiful work of art is all due to God's glory. Nothing apart from God is glorious. Without Him there is no glory in us. We are inglorious. Nothing we do alone is worthy of honor or fame apart from Jesus.

Confess your tendency to steal God's glory. The moments when you forget the power behind all that you do and achieve.

Create a list of things you are good at... your talents and gifts. **Give thanks.**

Humility in Action: Notice today when you are trying to be the best at something. Consider why. Why do you desire to be the best? What is causing you to be competitive in places where competition is not necessary.

Thursday

For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:21 NLT

Praise God as right and righteous. Never veering from the path that leads to good.

Intoxicated

*affected by alcohol or drugs
especially to the point
where physical and mental control is
markedly diminished*

Pride is the drug of choice for many of us. A sin so intoxicating our physical and mental control are markedly diminished. Blinded with our own glory, position, and possessions. So we fumble around ignoring anything that might reveal the truth of who we are.

It reveals itself in the moments when we claim, "There's no way I'm wrong about this!" When we refuse to see from

another's perspective. When our goal is to live independently as if we really can.

Pride causes us to see what we want to see whether it's true or not. Instead of accepting truth, we create our own truth based on our own understanding. Perspectives become how we see things. And the lines between right and wrong begin to blur.

Our ability to let go of the desire to be right at all costs becomes diminished. And we can be right in our own minds, but that doesn't mean we are.

Reflect on a moment when you wanted to have it all your way. Even though there was an inkling you might be wrong. Did you blindly keep at it until you got your way? What was the result?

Are there moments you will hold onto the notion of being right at the expense of a relationship?

Think of a struggle you have within a relationship, maybe a friend, spouse, or family member. Take a few minutes to consider life from their perspective. What do you see?

In what ways do you find yourself judging others? Even those you love dearly. What does your judgment fuel in you?

Demanding our own way. Proving we are right at the cost of a relationship. Judging others to make ourselves feel better. These are the signs that we are intoxicated by pride.

Confess the pride that intoxicates you and keeps you from embracing Truth.

Give thanks for the sacrifice of the one right, perfect person who gave Himself up for you.

Humility in Action: Pay attention to when you want to be right today. Consider letting go of being right as an act of sacrifice and love for another.

Friday

*And those who make idols are just like them,
as are all who trust in them.*

Psalm 115:8 NLT

Praise God as our comfort, security, and the One who makes us worthy.

Idolatry

the worship of a physical object as a god
immoderate attachment or devotion to
something

Pride always, from the beginning of time, influences us to serve and worship those things that are not and never will be God. From the golden calf made by Aaron in the wilderness to statues of stone and bronze, idols are our thing. We are constantly looking for something to revere and bow before.

Pride builds idol after idol, yet they cannot do one thing for us.

Perhaps we are far from bowing down to a pillar of silver, but we have our own gods. Money, fame, success. Power, beauty, health. You name it pride can make it into a god.

And the biggest God of all... ourselves.

Think about this week's schedule or take a look at your calendar. Besides work, who did you spend the most time with or what did you spend the most time doing?

How did you spend your money this week? Where did you invest your resources?

What did you spend your energy doing or thinking about?

What took priority over your own physical, emotional or mental needs this week?

Reflect on your answers above and notice any patterns. Did something surprise you? It may point to an idol you've not recognized.

Confess the idols God has revealed to you. As you do, imagine destroying each idol in some way.

Give Thanks for God's power to take down idols and uproot your pride.

Humility in Action: The things we invest our time, energy and resources in, other than Jesus, are often to meet our own needs of security, worth, and comfort. Notice when you feel insecure, unworthy, or uncomfortable. Where or who do you turn to in these times?

Choose to turn away from those things that you believe meet your needs and turn towards the only One who can meet your needs.



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