

**Welcome to the
Common Ground Café!**



Sunday, February 4, 2018

**Worshipping at the Shrine of Your Own Image
A Study of Daniel 4**

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When parents tell their children to “take some pride in your appearance,” what does that mean? When parents tell children, “Don’t be prideful,” what does that mean? Is it contradictory for pride to be seen as good in the first bit of advice, and then to be seen as bad in the second bit of advice?

Today we’ll look at Daniel 4 to see *pride’s characteristics*, *pride’s consequences*, and *pride’s cure*.

Pride’s Characteristics

The king had a disturbing dream, which he described in Daniel 4:10-18. Read these verses.

Daniel interpreted the dream in Daniel 4:20-26. Read these verses.

According to Daniel 4:28-30, the warning came true. Read these verses.

We assume that if we knew our future, we would act with greater wisdom.

- ❖ Did the king act with greater wisdom when he was told about his future?
- ❖ Why doesn’t a warning about the future consequences of our behavior change our behavior?

One thing this story shows is how powerful the sin of pride is. Even though the king was warned in a divinely-given dream, he still gave in to pride. Why does pride have such a powerful pull?

Don’t assume you’re above the powerful pull of pride. We’re good at masking it. What does the term “humblebrag” mean? (Look it up on your mobile device if you have to.) Give an example of a humblebrag.

One evidence that we're in the grip of pride is when we see ourselves as the source of our accomplishments. How do the following contribute toward our success?

- ❖ Parents who are present and engaged
- ❖ The financial resources of the family we're born into
- ❖ Government decisions on things like tax breaks on school fees, regulations on equitable hiring, deregulation that accelerates hiring, investment in infrastructure like roads and bridges, and so on
- ❖ Other: _____

How can you appreciate your accomplishments without bragging or putting yourself down?

Pride's Consequences

Read Daniel 4:31-33.

Read Proverbs 16:18. How is the humiliation of the king a good example of that proverb?

From your life or from the life of someone you know, give an example of how pride leads to humiliation.

Choose the best explanation for why God humiliates prideful people and explain your answer:

- Schadenfreude* is always fun. (Look it up.)
- Just a little old fashioned karma coming down.
- God is insecure and doesn't want anyone to steal his limelight.
- God loves us, and he knows that pride is so dangerous to us that he will do anything it takes to get us to wake up and change our ways.

Pride's Cure

Read Daniel 4:34-37.

Read Proverbs 11:2. How does the king's experience in Daniel 4 illustrate this proverb?

In verses 34, 35, and 37, he praises God and talks about his commitment to praise God. What does he say about God in these verses?

Why is praise a cure for pride?

There's another cure for pride in this story. After Daniel gave the interpretation of the dream in Daniel 4:20-26, he gave some advice to the king in Daniel 4:27. Read that verse and answer these questions:

- ❖ Daniel obviously thought that "being kind to the oppressed" prevented pride. How?
- ❖ When we're insensitive to those in need, how might that be a sign of pride?

Conclusion

Read Luke 18:9-14. In light of this story, how does pride keep us from God's salvation?



Close with praise reports and prayer requests