



The problem of

PRIDE!

‘There is perhaps not one of our natural passions so hard to subdue as pride. Beat it down, stifle it, mortify it as much as one pleases, it is still alive. Even if I could conceive that I had completely overcome it, I should probably be proud of my humility.’

(Benjamin Franklin)

Peacocks are stunningly beautiful birds. Their blue-green plumage is unmistakable, and as soon as you see one you hope it will display its gorgeous tail feathers so you can see it at its spectacular best. It's all part of the courting ritual, it seems, so you may not get your wish! When it does happen though, you immediately see how the expression 'proud as a peacock' came into being, as the bird stands proudly exhibiting its full glory!

We may not be quite so proud as a peacock, but there's a bit in all of us that wants people around to see us at our best and to think well of us. The trouble is that pride can be our downfall. Winston Churchill must have known this. He was once asked, 'Doesn't it thrill you to know that every time you make a speech, the hall is packed to overflowing?' 'It's quite flattering,' replied Sir Winston, 'But whenever I feel that way, I always remember that if instead of making a political speech I was being hanged, the crowd would be twice as big.'

The Bible has a great deal to say about pride, and perhaps the most well known verse is from Proverbs 16.18: *Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.* It's true in all kinds of ways.

Too proud to ask for help

When we hear that someone has been in trouble we may wonder why they didn't ask for help. But when we are in need ourselves, we too are likely to struggle on alone even if things do get worse, because we don't like to think we can't manage on our own.

Too proud to take the offer of help.

Again, if we are offered a helping hand when in difficulty we find ourselves thinking it would be sign of weakness to accept help. We would rather battle on alone, and even suffer for it, than admit we cannot cope.

Too proud to admit a mistake.

If we get something wrong we tend to cover it up, or find an excuse for it. It can be very hard to simply say 'I was wrong!'

Too proud to accept God's verdict on us

This is the biggest problem of all with pride. We are proud of ourselves and our achievements and believe we are good people, which is probably true as far as the world is concerned! So it's a great blow to our pride when we hear that actually we fall far short of God's standards and that our sins will keep us from heaven. Many people proudly turn away because they feel affronted, claiming that they deserve better, as though their protest will change God's verdict!

The astonishing humility of Jesus Christ

God has provided a way of salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus is fully God, the One by whom God created the heavens and earth, and He is worshipped by angels, yet He came into the world as a man, in the form of one of his own creatures. He endured humiliation, rejection, suffering and even a terrible death in order to save us from our sins.

Will we humble ourselves before God?

If we proudly reject God's salvation there is no doubt that we shall be lost. We must swallow our pride, admit that God is right about our sins and realise that there is nothing we can do for ourselves. We need to receive the salvation He freely offers! When we humbly and gratefully turn to Christ, trusting Him to save us, God will forgive our sins and we will begin to experience His wonderful love and goodness.

'Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God,
that he may exalt you in due time.'

(1 Peter 5.6)

