The Way Up is Down
Proverbs 29:23

Many theologians believe that pride is the “sin of all sins”, for it was pride that changed an angel into the devil. (Isa. 14:12-15). The rallying cry of proud, godless humanity is “Glory to man in the highest.”

Because of our corrupt hearts, we tend to be prideful and we shy away from humility. Yet, God hates the proud and honors the humble. God says that pride will bring you low, while humility will raise your honor level.

Most of us are not complimentary of people who are humble. We equate humility with being timid, retiring, or soft. A humble person is regarded as being easy to persuade or push around. But what about the biblical view of humility? Humility is a grace; it cannot be achieved in our own strength. Humility is given to us by God. It is an outgrowth of our relationship with Him. Because of our sinful, corrupt nature, we learn a basic principle of the Christian life: The way to succeed in this life is to do the opposite of what comes naturally ...to act contrary to our natural inclinations.

Examples:
1. Instead of holding to our lives, we should give up our lives.
2. Instead of hating our enemies, we should love them.
3. Instead of retaliating against an offender, we should forgive our offender.

Matt. 20:26-27 “Whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave.”

1. The world says, “Look out for number one.” Jesus says, “Look out for others.”
2. The world says, “Destroy your opposition.” Jesus says, “Love your opposition.”
3. The world says, “Hold on to your rights.” Jesus says, “Give up your rights.”
4. The world says, “Promote yourself.” Jesus says, “Humble yourselves.”

As Solomon deals with Pride and Humility in the book of Proverbs, one theme is found: Pride is a prerequisite for failure; humility is the prerequisite for success. God promises that the person who is infected with pride will ultimately fail, while the person who demonstrates humility will ultimately succeed.

The Book of Proverbs gives warnings against pride:

- **Pro 8:13** The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.
- **Pro 11:2** When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom.
- **Pro 15:25** The LORD will destroy the house of the proud: but he will establish the border of the widow.
- **Pro 16:18** Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.
- **Pro 16:19** Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.
- **Pro 18:12** Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honour is humility.
- **Pro 29:23** A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.

I. The Expressions of Pride

What is pride? Pride is the attitude that credits ourselves with our successes and blames others...
A prideful person believes that every good thing in his life is the result of his own hard work. He believes that in any conflict he is right and the other person is wrong. He has a large estimation of himself. Years ago when Muhammad Ali was the heavyweight boxing champion, he had just been seated in the first-class section of a jumbo jetliner that was preparing for takeoff. The flight attendant came by and politely asked Ali to fasten his seat belt. Ali looked at the woman and said, “Superman don't need no seat belt.” That's pride! Without hesitation, the flight attendant replied, “Superman don't need no plane!”

There are four Hebrew words that are translated by the English word “pride”; each of them giving a little different shade of meaning.

A.”Gaah” - represents that which is lofty and that which is high. The individual who, for example, takes a high seat at a public gathering is exercising pride if he takes that by choice. Proverbs 27: Refuse to honk your own horn. Refuse to be your own press agent. Let other people handle that for you. We tend to think that if we don't tell others about our accomplishments, they will go unacknowledged. The truth is that when we try to shine the spotlight on ourselves, we only set ourselves up for humiliation.

Luk 14:8 When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him;
Luk 14:9 And he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room.
Mat 23:12 And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

B.”Gavah” - Speaks of arrogance. This conveys the idea of posture more than it does of action. The very way a person walks and the way he holds his head is indicative of the condition of his heart when this word is used. Some folks can strut sitting down! How does God feel about a person of arrogance?

Pro 6:16 These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him:
Pro 6:17 A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,
Pro 6:18 An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief,
Pro 6:19 A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.
The very first one on God’s list of hate is a proud look – the person filled with arrogance. He hates it. There is something utterly repulsive to Him about it. Why?
1.Because this kind of pride produces in us ingratitude. We assume that every good thing in our life is the result of OUR giftedness and OUR hard work, and OUR luck, and we fail to express to God our proper gratitude.
2.Such ingratitude naturally leads to independence. We deceive ourselves into thinking that we are responsible for our successes, then we come to the conclusion that we really don't need God.

Rom 12:3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.
1Co 4:7 For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?

C.”Zadown” means “presumptuous” The suggestion is that if a person presumes to do something which God has expressly forbidden in the Word of God, then he is acting in pride and not in humility.

Pro 25:5 Take away the wicked from before the king, and his throne shall be established in righteousness.
Pro 25:6  Put not forth thyself in the presence of the king, and stand not in the place of great men:

Pro 25:7  For better it is that it be said unto thee, Come up hither; than that thou shouldest be put lower in the presence of the prince whom thine eyes have seen.

Rather than assuming a place of honor for oneself, it is better to take a position of humility. Those whom the king delights to honor will be brought forward openly. Those who have thought too highly of themselves will be publicly degraded by being asked to move to a lower position.

D."Rachab” Pictures one who thinks that he is higher and better than others and his opinion of himself is such that he can ignore the rules and regulations by which other people operate. He may say, in so many words, “You poor, ignorant folk probably need those laws, but I'm in a class by myself and don't need any such rules and regulations.”

Chuck Swindoll retells a story about a young man named Walter who was hired by the largest corporation in the world. The director of personnel told Walter that he must begin at the bottom and work his way up the corporate ladder, so Walter began working in the company mail room. Although Walter enjoyed his job, he could not help but fantasize about what it would be like to become president or even the chairman of the board of the world's greatest corporation.

One day while Walter was sorting the mail, he spotted a cockroach in the corner. Instinctively, he went over to step on it, but before he delivered the death blow, he heard a voice crying out, “Don't kill me. I'm Milton the cockroach, and if you will spare my life, I'll grant you all your wishes.” Walter correctly surmised that this was a good deal so he allowed Milton to live.

Walter's first wish was to become vice president of the company, and as he had promised, Milton the cockroach granted him his wish. In fact, Milton kept granting all of Walter's wishes until Walter became the chairman of the board of the largest company in the whole world. Walter often gazed out of his office on the top floor of the world's tallest building and mused to himself, “I'm Walter, and I am on top of the world. No one is more important than me.”

One day Walter heard footsteps on the roof of the office building, and he went up to investigate who it might be. He discovered a little boy on his knees, praying. “Are you praying to Walter?” he asked. “Oh no, mister, I'm praying to God.”

This greatly disturbed Walter, so he returned to his office and summoned Milton the cockroach. “I have one other wish. I want to be like God.” Milton granted Walter's wish. The next day Walter was back in the mail room.

II. The Evidences of Humility

Humility doesn't mean having a low opinion of your self, or to put yourself down, or to look at yourself as unimportant or insignificant.

1. The humble person is happy, and is not threatened by other people.

Pro 22:4  By humility and the fear of the LORD are riches, and honour, and life.

“True humility and respect for the Lord leads a man to riches, honor and long life.”

2. Fulness of life comes through humility. Fulness of life comes when we give up our rights and
turn them over to God.  
**Mat 16:25** For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

3. True humility leads to a disciplined life.  
**Mat 25:27** Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.  
**Mat 25:28** Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents.  
Gorging one's self on excess sweets makes them sick. If you have too high an opinion of yourself, it will make others sick! Humble men have a disciplined spirit.

4. Humility brings obedience to God.  
**Pro 10:8** The wise in heart will receive commandments: but a prating fool shall fall.

5. A humble man shows wisdom by listening to counsel.  
**Pro 12:15** The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.

**How to Achieve Humility**

1. Admit your mistakes  Proverbs 28:13

2. Share credit with others I Cor. 4:7  
John Wooden, who served as coach of the UCLA Bruins basketball team, offers good advice:  
   Talent is God-given, be humble  
   Fame is man-given, be thankful  
   Conceit is self-given, be careful

3. Refuse to honk your own horn  Prov.27:2  
Man is a strange creature. When you pat him on the back, it often causes his head to swell.

4. Be willing to give up your rights. Matt. 20:28  
The perfect example of humility is found in our Lord Jesus.  Phil. 2:3-11