

Pride and Humility --- Romans 12:3  
May 16, 2020

*For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.*

## Introduction

Our text this morning focuses our attention on two important themes in Scripture—one positive and one negative. These themes are pride and humility.

I have always enjoyed the fictitious account of three passengers on a small plane: a pastor, a Boy Scout, and a computer expert. The pilot came back to the cabin and said that the plane was going down, but there were only three parachutes and four people.

The pilot said, “I should have one of the parachutes because I have a wife and three small children.” So he took one of parachutes and jumped. The computer expert said, “I should have one of the parachutes because I am the smartest man in the world and everyone needs me.” So he took one and jumped.

The pastor turned to the Boy Scout and, with a sad smile, said, “You are young. I have lived a rich life, so you take the remaining parachute, and I’ll go down with the plane.”

The Boy Scout said, “Relax preacher. The smartest man in the world just picked up my backpack and jumped out.”

Paul makes a vital statement concerning pride and humility in our text this morning. Read with me Romans 12:3, *“For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.”*

I want to begin this morning by giving you a systematic theology concerning pride and humility. The Scriptures have much to say about pride and humility. They are critical to the rest of what the book of Romans has to say to us as believers.

## Review

But first by way of review, we wrapped up our consideration of the first two verses in Romans 12. We saw that they form a watershed in the book of Romans. In our introduction of these verses, we considered the fundamental connection between what a person believes and how he lives his life. We considered that action is based on belief. What you believe and hold to be true determines what you do. Doctrine determines conduct.

Doctrine is exceedingly practical. Sanctification is the process of our becoming more like Christ, and it involves applying sound theology. Sound theology is applying to life what you know to be true; God's Word is truth.

We considered that we live in mindless times. One of the causes for this inability to think is the fast pace of modern life, which does not give people sufficient time to think. Our materialism points our thoughts to things rather than freeing our minds for ideas and thoughts. The permeating influence of the screen (whether the T.V. screen, the computer screen, the smart phone screen, the movie screen, whatever) is destructive to rational thought processes.

But we need to think, and we need to think biblically! This is why the last section of Paul's letter to the Romans begins with the need for the renewal of the mind. Since how we think will determine what we do, Paul knew that if we are to act as Christians we must first learn to think as Christians. In our day, people tend not to think deeply, and seldom do they think about the truths of Christianity.

Paul sets out the principles that must govern our relationship to God in verses 1 and 2. The great underlying attribute that undergirds all that follows is humility—death to self. We are living sacrifices unto God. We are dead, and Christ is preeminent in our lives. Paul reminds us that we are not our own and that we should therefore present ourselves to God as willing and living sacrifices.

Having established a person's relationship with God in terms of death to self through the Gospel of Christ, Paul then turns to the Christian's horizontal relationships. The emphasis in the rest of this letter is on relationships with those inside of the Church along with those outside of the Church. For example, verse 3 shows the right relationship of a Christian to himself. Believers are not to think of themselves more highly than they ought to think but rather they are to be humble. Then in verses 4-21, Paul shows how the believer is to relate to those within the Church and outside the Church.

In chapter 13, we find that the Christian does not have a relationship only to other individuals. He also has a relationship to institutions that God has

established, particularly the government. How does the Christian relate to the government in which he lives? Is he to oppose it as a secular and godless institution? Is he to try to escape from it? Should the Christian submit to it?

If we are to submit, is that submission to be without any qualification, regardless of what the government may do or ask us to do? Or are there limits? If there are limits, what are they? We know from history that these became very important matters for the early Christians, especially in the years when the emperors persecuted them, trying to eradicate Christianity. Paul answers many of these questions in the first half of chapter 13.

I would encourage you if you have not listened to our study of the first two verses of Romans 12, go back and listen to them. They set the stage for the rest of our study in Romans.

### Pride and Humility

We now push forward to a vital transitional thought in applying sound doctrine to our lives: the important role of humility. I have come to realize (in my walk with the Lord for decades now and the study of His Word) that there are no great Christian men and women. That may shock you at first, but I believe that there is only a great God who uses men and women. That thought should temper all of our thinking concerning ourselves and those who God uses mightily in His service.

If you stop and think for a moment, you will see the reasonableness of my statement. No man or woman would even begin the Christian life apart from God initiating the process. He draws, He convicts, He gives faith and repentance, He causes to be born again.

If there was ever a hero of the faith, it would be the apostle Paul, the preeminent Christian. But he says of himself in 1 Corinthians 15:10, *“But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.”*

We will see this attitude played out in our text. *“For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.”* (Romans 12:3) It is not the case that anyone in the Church can boast about his or her abilities. We must all realize that it is God who has placed each one in the body the way He wills. There are no great men or women. There is only a great God who uses men and women according to

His will.

So I want to point you to a systematic theology concerning pride and humility. We will break it down into two headings. The first heading: The Biblical Teaching Concerning Pride and Humility; and the second: The Application of Biblical Teaching on Pride and Humility.

We are instructed in Scripture to have an accurate, biblical, self-evaluation. In light of what Paul wrote in the first 11 chapters of Romans, believers should not, apart from Christ, have high thoughts of self. This obviously touches on the whole concept of self-esteem.

Christians find their identity in Christ. In Christ, I am a child of God; I am a part of the body of Christ; I am a citizen of heaven, and I am in the kingdom of Christ. The first three chapters of Romans describe in great detail the nature of every human being apart from Christ as utterly pagan, self righteous and/or religiously bankrupt.

Jesus said in Matthew 16:24-25, *“If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. 25For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.”* Again, to have sound judgment concerning self is to apply the Gospel to your person. Apart from Christ, you are a rank rebel. In Christ (and as you lose your life for His sake), you are a child of God, (a subject in His kingdom and a part of the body of Christ).

This mindset centers around humility. I believe Paul never lost sight of who he was before Christ intersected his life on the road to Damascus. He will even write to Timothy towards the end of his life 1 Timothy 1:15-16, *“It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all. 16Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life.”*

If you have not been humbled by the Gospel, you have not encountered the biblical gospel of Jesus Christ. Humility is a key characteristic of believers. It is not all about you. It is all about Christ.

### The Biblical Teaching concerning Pride and Humility

There are many characters in Scripture that we might consider concerning

humility. One such character for example is Moses, who was said to be the humblest man on the face of the earth in Numbers 12:3; or John the Baptist, who said of Christ, "He must increase and I must decrease"; or maybe Joseph or Daniel. But this morning, I want to focus your attention on Peter as a jumping off point for our study.

Peter understood humility. I believe Peter looked back at his denial of the Lord Jesus Christ on the night that He was betrayed and falsely tried as an event that forever humbled him. He would write later in 1 Peter 5, "GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE . . . ."

I want to take a moment and consider what Peter is saying here. Literally what Peter writes is, "God, against the haughty, arrays Himself." Those who display an attitude of haughtiness and arrogance toward others, and think they are a cut above everyone else, and have no patience with those who do not quite meet up to their own standard, God is against.

The picture here is God dressed in battle array. He has put on His battle armor in order to resist the proud. When you are haughty or when you are unforgiving and ostracize others; or when you are bitter against someone and act proudly against them, God is against you.

By contrast, God gives grace to the humble. The Scriptures consistently draw a great contrast between the proud and the humble. As an example, Proverbs 10:2 says, "*When pride comes, then comes dishonor, But with the humble is wisdom.*" Also Proverbs 25:23 succinctly reads, "*A man's pride will bring him low, But a humble spirit will obtain honor.*"

Furthermore, there are numerous passages that declare that God dwells with the humble and gives grace to the lowly. Notice Isaiah 66:2, "*For My hand made all these things, thus all these things came into being,' declares the LORD. 'But to this one I will look, to him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My Word.'*" Read with me Isaiah 57:15, "*For thus says the high and exalted One Who lives forever, whose name is Holy, 'I dwell on a high and holy place, and also with the contrite and lowly of spirit in order to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.'*"

God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. That is a basic doctrinal truism that Peter applies to the Church, even to those who are saved. God will oppose you in fatherly discipline when you make allowance to conduct your life in pride. He will oppose all who are proud, and He will give grace to those who humble themselves before Him.

Whether man likes that arrangement or not really means nothing. Man is not the Creator; man is not sovereign over all. You will find that God, who is a good and gracious God, is against you when you pridefully exalt yourself. But He is gracious towards you when you humble yourself before Him.

One book that effectively accentuates this truth is the book of Daniel. The book of Daniel provides some of the most basic prophetic building blocks in all of Scripture. Nonetheless, prophecy is not the primary theme of the book. The fundamental message of Daniel is that God is sovereign over all, and He resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.

That is exactly what King Nebuchadnezzar learned when he exalted himself as the greatest king ever. He did not acknowledge God as the source of his greatness. As a consequence, God made Nebuchadnezzar outwardly what he was inwardly and that is a brute beast. God made him live as an animal in the field for seven years until he understood that it is God who is sovereign.

The first seven chapters of the book of Daniel is written in the Jewish chiasmic format. In this format, the main message of a section is in the middle of the chiasm. For example, the first and last sections of the chiasm are parallel. The second and next to the last sections of the chiasm are parallel, and so on until you get to the middle section which is the primary teaching of the chiasm.

The structure of the chiasm in the first seven chapters of Daniel is as follows: the statue composed of metals (gold, silver, bronze, iron) in chapter two parallels the beasts in chapter seven; then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego in the fiery furnace recorded in chapter three parallels Daniel in the lions' den which is recorded in chapter six; finally chapter four tells of the judgment of Nebuchadnezzar as an animal in the field parallels chapter five which speaks of the judgment of his son, Belshazzar, with the prophetic handwriting on the wall. The middle of chapters 1-7 is where we find the main teaching. When Nebuchadnezzar humbles himself after being opposed by God for his pride, then he is exalted to his former kingship.

*Daniel 4:30-37 The king reflected and said, 'Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?' <sup>31</sup>While the word was in the king's mouth, a voice came from heaven, saying, 'King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared: sovereignty has been removed from you, <sup>32</sup>and you will be driven away from mankind, and your dwelling place will be with the beasts of the field. You will be given grass to eat like cattle, and seven periods of time will pass over you until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on*

*whomever He wishes.’ 33Immediately the word concerning Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled; and he was driven away from mankind and began eating grass like cattle, and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair had grown like eagles’ feathers and his nails like birds’ claws. 34But at the end of that period, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever;*

*For His dominion is an everlasting dominion,  
And His kingdom endures from generation to generation.  
35All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing,  
But He does according to His will in the host of heaven  
And among the inhabitants of earth;  
And no one can ward off His hand  
Or say to Him, ‘What have You done?’*

*36At that time my reason returned to me. And my majesty and splendor were restored to me for the glory of my kingdom, and my counselors and my nobles began seeking me out; so I was reestablished in my sovereignty, and surpassing greatness was added to me. 37Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride.”*

When Nebuchadnezzar demonstrated pride towards God, God humbled him. When Nebuchadnezzar humbled himself before God, he was exalted as king.

Read with me again 1 Peter 5:5b *“and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.”*

*All of you . . .* refers to the entire church. Peter emphasizes the attitude of all in the Church: younger towards those who are older; elders towards the flock, the elderly towards the younger . . . every individual towards others.

*Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another . . .* humility or lowly-mindedness is to characterize each person in the church towards others. The term used here does not involve an attitude of self-ridicule or self-criticism. Instead, it is the willingness to take a lowly position to serve others. It is the opposite of self-exaltation which is the foundation of all sin.

There are so many texts that command believers to exercise humility towards one another. The paramount text on humility is one we have recently studied in our fellowship groups—Philippians 2:1-11. The passage clearly speaks of not looking ought for our own personal interests, and this self-renunciation takes

humility and puts it into practice.

*Philippians 2:1-11 Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, 2make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. 3Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; 4do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. 5Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. 8Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, 10so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

God calls us to follow the example of Christ in humility. He humbled Himself to the point of death for others. We are to consider others as more important than ourselves, and not just look out for self. 1 Peter 3:8-9 beautifully summarizes this command. *“To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; 9not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead.”*

Godly humility is a distinctly Christian virtue. Humility was not an admired trait in the first-century pagan world. People saw it as a characteristic of weakness and cowardice. One commentator wrote, “Humility spoken of in the New Testament is itself a fruit of the Gospel. No Greek writer employed it before the Christian era. Apart from the influence of Christian writers no author spoke of it after Christ’s death and resurrection. Christ and His teachings were required to make lowly-mindedness a great Christian virtue.”

*Clothe yourselves with humility . . .* means to put or tie on any kind of garment. It is only used here in the New Testament. Some understand the picture as that of putting on a beautiful garment in the sense of, “adorn yourselves with humility as with a beautiful garment or robe.” But, the picture is more along the lines of a slave tying on the apron ready to serve. The wearing of that apron distinguished the slave from the freedman. I appreciate Edmond Hebert's thought: “The garment of humility must be put on, not as a matter of external show, but as a characteristic attitude, a willingness to serve.”

Peter possibly remembered Jesus in the Upper Room when He girded Himself with an actual apron and washed the disciples' feet, performing a slave's service; a task none of them would do. Peter says, ". . . *and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, . . .*" Humility is so rare because it is unnatural to man.

Jesus' perspective is very different from ours. In our culture, the first or the self-important one is greatest. But according to Jesus, the last is the greatest. The humblest person is the greatest person of all. God's perspective is exactly opposite of man's. For man, the one on top of the pyramid is greatest. With God, there is an inverted pyramid with the greatest being the servant of all.

So that is a brief systematic theology on the subjects of pride and humility. Next, I want to consider the application of biblical teaching concerning pride and humility.

### Application of Biblical teaching concerning Pride and Humility

I want to focus on some practical ways that Humility manifests itself on one hand, and on the other hand, how Pride demonstrates itself. I would ask that you humbly try to evaluate yourself. The question is not if you have pride, but how does your pride manifest itself. I want to consider how Humility and Pride relate to 4 broad areas. One area is humility/pride towards God. A second area is humility/pride concerning Sin and Grace; third is humility/pride concerning speech; and fourth is humility/pride towards others.

As I bring these things to your attention, I am in no way saying that I have it all together. I desire to simply point you to God's perfect standard. So I am going to give these to you kind of rapid fire. I want you to make mental notes where you need to lay aside pride and put on humility.

#### *Humility/Pride Towards God*

A humble person understands the central role that relationship with God through His Word plays in life. He spends time reading God's Word and commits himself to obeying God. A humble person strives to be diligent in prayer—seeking God's will and turning from sin. Because a humble person sees himself as needy, he prays often.

An example of humility before God in prayer is found in 2 Chronicles 7:14, ". . . *if My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will*

*forgive their sin and will heal their land.”*

Most proud people pray very little, if at all. Proud people who do pray usually center their prayers on themselves and their desires, rather than God and others. Prayer and Bible study are humbling disciplines. You do not find time to pray and interact with God through His Word. You must make time.

Furthermore, in his relationship with God, a humble person understands that he has no right to question or judge the Almighty, Perfect, Sovereign God. He thinks of God as his Creator. He does not see himself in anyway as qualified to pass judgment on God or what God does. He knows that this perfect and all-wise God can do whatever He pleases and whatever He allows is the best.

*In Deuteronomy 8:2-3, Moses wrote to the nation of Israel, "You shall remember all the way which the LORD your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. 3He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD."*

A humble person knows that God uses hardship, difficulties and trials to make us dependent upon Him for good. But a proud person complains against God and passes judgment upon Him. He thinks, "Look at what God has done to me after all I have done for Him."

God desires brokenness and contrition in the heart in our relationships with Him. Psalms 51:17 says, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise."

Humility expresses itself by dependence upon God. This impacts the next area of humility/pride concerning sin and grace.

### *Humility/Pride Concerning Sin and Grace*

A humble person is one who is growing in understanding of his own sin and the grace of God. He sees himself as truly deserving hell. He is immensely grateful to God for forgiving him of so much. As a result, a humble person tends to be a thankful person. He expects nothing, so anything he receives is greatly appreciated.

Furthermore, a humble person practices repentance before God. He is quick to confess sin and be restored to close fellowship with God. On the other hand, a proud person has a problem even detecting sin in his life much less confessing sin to God.

A humble person understands the sinfulness of his own heart; so he does not see himself as better than others. This is true no matter who the other person is. He understands that in-and-of-himself, he is capable of the worst sin.

But a proud person typically believes that his sin is no big deal. He thinks he has a little sin but others have a great deal of it. He believes that other people are the problem. Prideful people usually accentuate and bring attention to the sin of others while downplaying their own.

As a result, you rarely hear a proud person speak of amazing grace. It gets back to the parable of the servant who loves much because he is forgiven much. Humility expresses deep gratitude for the grace of God because of a great awareness of sin.

So we have considered pride and humility towards God, sin and grace. Next is humility/pride in our speech.

### *Humility/Pride Concerning Speech*

A humble person will speak well of others and not gossip about others. He may convey something negative about someone only if he must do so in order to help that person.

Humble people are good listeners and consider what other people say. Self is not their primary focus. Humble people do not constantly talk about themselves. They take an interest in others by asking questions about other people and listening. Humble people encourage others; they use words that build up and say what is necessary for the moment.

On the other hand, proud people are often angry people. Anger can show itself by way of outbursts of anger, withdrawing, pouting or frustration. A proud person can be very unkind and belittle others. Those who belittle other people usually want to elevate themselves above others.

Prideful people tend to be sarcastic. Sarcasm can be a clever way of demeaning and putting other people down. If you find yourself cutting others down and then saying, "I was just kidding," you may want to consider how often

you do that and whether your remarks are mostly cutting.

Proud people often talk too much. They talk too much because they think what they have to say is more important than what anyone else has to say. Furthermore, their conversation usually centers on themselves. They constantly share personal accomplishments and achievements.

I encourage you to try to evaluate your own speech. Ask yourself or someone close to you—someone who will tell you the truth—whether or not you talk too much or talk about yourself all the time. Also, consider whether or not you constantly talk about other people.

One of the foundational manifestations of Christian thinking and action in the New Testament is humility towards God and towards others.

*Ephesians 4:1-3 Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, <sup>2</sup>with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, <sup>3</sup>being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

*Colossians 3:12-14 So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; <sup>13</sup>bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. <sup>14</sup>Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.*

Even in the Old Testament, God desired humility in the heart of His people. One passage that represents God's desire is Micah 6:8. *“He has told you, O man, what is good and what the LORD requires of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.”*

Humility is good theology lived out. A right understanding of God and our relationship to Him will be evident through humility towards Him and others.

So we have considered humility and pride as it concerns relationship with God; concerning sin and grace; and concerning our speech. Lastly, we are going to consider humility/pride towards others.

Humility is characterized as being gentle and patient with people. A humble person wants to act like God and love others the way God loves. God is utterly patient with believers; so humble people are long-suffering and are not easily irritated.

Furthermore, a humble person views reproof and criticism as good for them and considers that God may be trying to teach them something through others. He has a teachable spirit. He realizes that he does not know everything, and even when he thinks he is right, he is willing to consider that he might be wrong.

Along these lines, proud people can be either devastated or angered by criticism. A prideful person usually struggles with criticism. They cannot bear that they are not perfect. Many proud individuals know it all. They are superior. They find it hard to learn from other people.

Moreover, proud people are consumed with what others think. They are too concerned about the opinion of others. Some are in a continual pursuit of gaining the approval of others. Focusing on what others think of you is being a man-pleaser instead of a God-pleaser.

A proud person wants control. Some proud people find it extremely difficult to work under someone else or to submit to an authority. They have to be their own boss. They are often rigid, stubborn, headstrong and intimidating. Many times they have the attitude, "It's my way or the highway."

When it comes to reconciling with other people, humble people have no problem with saying, "I was wrong. You are right. Thank you for telling me." Also, they are quick to grant forgiveness. Humble people are eager to forgive because they know how much they have been forgiven.

Conversely, a proud person has a hard time admitting when he is wrong. He will make excuses or he may become defensive or even blame shift. You will often hear a proud person say, "Well what about you?" Because they are slow to admit their sin, they rarely ask forgiveness of others.

One way that humility manifests itself is to minimize other people's sin and shortcomings. A humble person thinks about his own sin more than another's and wants to deal with it. But a proud person is easily offended by others and usually holds grudges for quite awhile.

As a result, proud people often have no use for close relationships. They calculate that the trouble outweighs the benefits. They may see themselves as so self-sufficient that they do not need other people. On the other hand, humble people have friends and loved ones because they are friendly and love others. Their focus is outwards. If you want a good short read, look at Stuart Scott's pamphlet on pride and humility.

## Conclusion

We could literally spend a few weeks delving into the minutiae concerning these two very important subjects. The bottom line is that you cannot have humility where pride exists. Pride is the opposite of humility, and it is one of the most hated sins in God's sight.

*Proverbs 16:5 Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD; Assuredly, he will not be unpunished.*

As hard as it is to admit it, we all have pride. The question is not "Do I have it?" but, "Where is it?" We all have tendencies to think too much about ourselves and too much of ourselves. Know that God is arrayed against us when we allow pride to dominate our thinking and actions. Know too, however, we find grace when we choose to be humble.

The story is told of two brothers who grew up on a farm. One went to college, earned a law degree, and became a partner in a prominent law firm. The other brother stayed on the family farm. One day the lawyer came and visited his brother.

He asked, "Why don't you go out and make a name for yourself and hold your head up high in the world, like me?" The brother pointed and said, "See that field of wheat over there? If you look closely, only the empty heads stand up high. Those that are heavy with grain always bow low."

*Romans 12:3 For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment . . . .*