CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS
SEPTEMBER252021

you first

Scripture Story: Matthew 17:22-27; Matthew 18:1-20; Matthew 20:20-28.
Commentary: *The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*), chapters 48, 60.



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keytext

"We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."

(2 Corinthians 10:5, NIV)

flashlight

"The simplicity, the self-forgetfulness, and the confiding love of a little child are the attributes that Heaven values. These are the characteristics of real greatness. . . . [Jesus'] kingdom is not characterized by earthly dignity and display. At the feet of Jesus all these distinctions are forgotten. The rich and the poor, the learned and the ignorant, meet together, with no thought of caste or worldly preeminence [but] as blood-bought souls, alike dependent upon One who has redeemed them to God" (*The Desire of Ages,* p. 437).

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what do you think?

True or False

_____ Before honor and wealth comes humility. (true/false)
_____ Corruption, pride, and arrogance lead to worldly wealth. (true/false)
_____ Humility leads to worldly poverty. (true/false)
_____ A humble person is a servant to all. (true/false)
_____ All humble people are great people. (true/false)

Explain the reasons for your answers.

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did you know?

The following are definitions of pride, ambition, and humility, according to the *New Choice English Dictionary* (Peter Haddock Publishing, UK [1999], Geddes & Grosset, David Dale House, New Lanark ML11 9DJ, Scotland).

- Pride—A feeling of self-worth or esteem; excessive self-esteem; conceit; a sense of one's own importance
- Ambition—Desire for power, wealth, and success
- Humility—The state of having a low estimation of one's abilities; modest; unpretentious; service

INTO THE STORY

"After Jesus and his disciples arrived in Capernaum, the collectors of the two-drachma tax came to Peter and asked, 'Doesn't your teacher pay the temple tax?'

"'Yes, he does,' he replied. When Peter came into the house, Jesus was the first to speak.

"'What do you think, Simon?' he asked. 'From whom do the kings of the earth collect duty and taxes—from their own children or from others?'

"'From others,' Peter answered.

"'Then the children are exempt,' Jesus said to him."

(Matthew 17:24-26, NIV)

"At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, 'Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?'

"He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. And he said: 'Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.'"

(Matthew 18:1-4, NIV)

"Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favor of him.

"'What is it you want?' he asked.

"She said, 'Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom.'

"'You don't know what you are asking,' Jesus said to them. 'Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?'

"'We can,' they answered.

"Jesus said to them, 'You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father.'

"When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers. Jesus called them together and said, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.'"

(Matthew 20:20-28, NIV)

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OUT OF THE STORY

What does the story of James and John (Zebedee's sons) teach us about ambitions?

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Based on Christ's reaction toward their mother's request, what is the best antidote for ambition?

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How would you define the following in your own words?

1. Indignant _____

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2. Slave _____

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3. Ransom _____

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If you were to pick between pride, ambition, and humility, which one would you choose and why?

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"Pride goes before a fall." How would you justify this statement on the basis of Christ's teaching in Matthew 17:24-27?

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punch lines

"Pride leads to destruction, and arrogance to downfall. It is better to be humble and stay poor than to be one of the arrogant and get a share of their loot" **(Proverbs 16:18, 19, GNT).**

"My heart is not proud, Lord, my eyes are not haughty; I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me" **(Psalm 131:1, NIV).**

"Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight" **(Isaiah 5:21, NIV).**

"He said to them, 'You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of others, but God knows your hearts. What people value is detestable in God's sight' " **(Luke 16:15, NIV).**

"For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you" **(Romans 12:3, NIV).**

further insight

"Jesus had told them that He was to die for their sake, and their selfish ambition was in painful contrast to His unselfish love."

—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages,* p. 435.

"Christ was establishing a kingdom on different principles. He called men, not to authority, but to service, the strong to bear the infirmities of the weak. Power, position, talent, education, placed their possessor under the greater obligation to serve his fellows."

—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages,* p. 550.

connectingtolife

Sabbath

Read Proverbs 16:18, 19.

In the *What Do You Think?* section you were challenged to discuss whether the written statements are true or false. From your own understanding of pride, ambition, and humility, which statements do you find most applicable in your case? In the wider circle of your community, is there one individual with whom you can share what you have learned from the discussion based on these statements?

Sunday

Read 1 John 3:11, 16.

Read the commentary on *The Desire of Ages*, chapter 48, and think about how Ellen White shares deep insights on humility and selfish ambition. Reflect on these questions:

Is there a situation in which I have shown selfish ambition against the will of my parents, peers, workmates, or teachers? What must I do to help those who are bound by the chains of pride and ambition?

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The following is a quote from *The Desire of Ages*, chapter 60: "The plan and ground of salvation is love. In the kingdom of Christ those are greatest who follow the example He has given, and act as shepherds of His flock" (p. 550).

Read 1 John 3:11, 16 and connect it to this quote. Then reflect on the qualities of a good shepherd, asking God to help you to be one.

Monday

Read 2 Corinthians 10:5.

In this week's *Key Text* Paul defends his ministry by arresting every proud obstacle that is raised "against the knowledge of God" (NIV). Write this verse in your own words. Think about how you, as a young person, can help perpetuate Paul's statement in the present society, keeping in mind that humility is the best antidote for pride and ambition.

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Tuesday

Read Luke 16:15.

The *Flashlight* passage from *The Desire of Ages* contains guidelines and deep insights on how to achieve greatness in this life and beyond.

Review chapters 48 and 60 and list the virtues and vices that are cited therein. From your list, identify the virtues and vices that speak to you personally—and think of the steps you can take to improve the development of the virtues and to suppress the growth of the vices in you as a person.

Wednesday

The *Punch Lines* for this week are a wide array of selected Bible texts that punctuate the key concepts of the lesson. Apply the following selected verses into your own life by filling in the blank spaces.

"Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes" (Isaiah 5:21, NIV). How can I avoid being wise in my own eyes?

"It is better to be humble and stay poor than to be one of the arrogant and get a share of their loot" (Proverbs 16:19, GNT). How can I balance humility and being poor at the same time?

Think of people in your community who appear to be arrogant and have selfish ambition. Consider praying for these people.

Thursday

Read Jeremiah 31:33.

Speaking of any bad habit that may lead to sin, Ellen White writes: "Our Lord is put to shame by those who claim to serve Him, but who misrepresent His character; and multitudes are deceived, and led into false paths" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 439).

Based on the context of the lesson this week, how can you as a young Christian in the Advent ist faith help in combating pride and arrogance in your society? What does God require of you when you go about this exercise? When you misrepresent Christ in any way, what is the impact on the larger picture of your society?

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Friday

Read Romans 12:3.

"It is pride that changed angels into devils; it is humility that makes men into angels." Consider this statement and ask yourself:

How often have I been proud this week? How can I humble myself before God and allow Him to change my heart into that of an angel in my society?

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this week's reading*

The Desire of Ages (or *Humble Hero*), chapters 48, 60.

A special adaptation of *The Desire of Ages,* entitled *Humble Hero,* has been created just for you by the White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: www.cornerstoneconnections.net. By following this plan you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.