



Lent Day 11, March 3, 2012 Pride Goes Before A Fall

Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. Proverbs 16:18

A man's pride will bring him low, but the humble in spirit will retain honor. Proverbs 29:23

In these verses, *pride* is defined as “arrogance” or “exultation.” The first verse tells us that pride often comes before destruction. The meaning of *destruction* in Hebrew is interesting. It can mean “breaking, fracture, shattering, crushing, crashing, or the breaking (of a dream).” The second part of the verse has a very similar meaning to the first half, with the word *fall* even being defined as a “calamity.”

Just about 18 years ago, my husband and I moved from a smaller city to a larger city about 2 ½ hours south of where we were. So of course we had to start over with everything, including a new church. We finally settled on a church, and I set about getting plugged in and involved there. For me, getting settled in a church always had meant that I joined the music ministry. For years whatever church we were in, I had sung in the choir, in ensembles, and as a soloist. It was my identity, what I did, so, I thought I would do the same thing at this church.

God was about to put the brakes on my plans.

I went and tried out for the ensemble groups, but the audition didn't go very well. I had to sing a song with two other people and then I had to sing a solo. For some reason, I just couldn't get the tune of the song I had to sing with the ensemble, even though it was a song I knew well. Shaken from the experience, I could hardly get through my solo song, which I had sung several times before. I knew I didn't do well, but I wasn't sure what was going on. I left, upset and puzzled. A few days later, I got the news that I didn't make the ensemble group. Well, I figured I could at least still join the choir, knowing that I would feel at home there, so I did.

Not too long after that, I started experiencing some health problems that left me feeling sick enough that I knew I didn't want to be sitting up on stage with the choir, so I had to drop out. Now I was really feeling left out. I didn't know what to do. I felt like my identity had been stripped away. As I prayed about the whole situation, I started to see that maybe pride had something to do with it. I enjoyed my identity in the music ministry--perhaps too much. The other thing I started noticing is that I was beginning to feel a pull to learn more about prayer. I started seeking out opportunities and found two seasoned prayer warriors at church who offered to mentor me. We met on Wednesday evenings--the same time the choir met.

God taught me a valuable lesson through that experience: not to get too comfortable anywhere and to nip pride in the bud when it starts up. God had to take me out of what I thought was my place to put me in a new place where He wanted me so that He could teach me. It's been many years since that happened, and God has birthed a prayer ministry in my life. I haven't gone back to music. I still love music, but at least for now, prayer is my calling.

I've learned that as I am serving, it's important to cultivate a humble spirit. Proverbs 29 tells us that the humble in spirit will retain honor. When we let pride get in our way, we are no longer glorifying God--only ourselves.

Application: Prayerfully ask the Holy Spirit to show you if you have a spirit of pride over any of your serving opportunities. I think pride is something many of us struggle with, but the key is to confess it before it takes root in our lives and God has to dig deep to get it out. Where are you tempted to be prideful?

Prayer: Lord,
Forgive me for my prideful spirit about _____. Please help me to have a humble heart. It is not a bad thing to be good at something, but please help me to use my gifts for God's glory, not my own. Amen.