

[King Uzziah's] fame spread afar, for he was marvelously helped until he *was* strong. But when he became strong, his heart was so proud that he acted corruptly, and he was unfaithful to the Lord his God, for he entered the temple of the Lord to burn incense on the altar of incense.

2 Chronicles 26:15b-16

PRIDE

Faith's Natural Enemy

Pride is built into man from the factory. It is part of his original equipment. It is, perhaps, that part of man requiring the most intensive retraining by the Spirit of God, for it is the root of his rebellion, and the comfortable home base of his cognitive sin.

Pride is that part of us that keeps God at arm's length—even in a Christian's life. We stiff-arm the Creator of the universe, because we are of the opinion that our inbred resources are superior to His. Pride in the unbeliever keeps him from knowing Christ at all; pride in the believer keeps him isolated from the benefits, the blessings, the power of that relationship.

Thus it is faith's natural enemy.



He continued to seek God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding through the vision of God; and as long as he sought the Lord, God prospered him.

2 Chronicles 26:5

King Uzziah began strong, because in the beginning he let Jehovah be his strength. The Lord gave him success in war, in civic construction, in wealth. But, in the way of all flesh, when Uzziah became strong in his own eyes—self-sufficient, self-sustaining, all wise—he then was weakened by his own arrogance, and the Lord punished him with leprosy. His reign ended in ignominy, isolated from people, cut off from temple worship, his throne relinquished

to his son—all because he had placed his trust in himself, rather than the Lord.

“Behold, a son will be born to you, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies on every side; for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quiet to Israel in his days. He shall build a house for My name, and he shall be My son and I will be his father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever.”

1 Chronicles 22:9-10

And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

2 Corinthians 12:9

King Solomon began strong. When Jehovah gave him the opportunity to ask for anything he wished, he asked for “an understanding heart to judge Your people to discern between good and evil.” This pleased the Lord, and for placing his trust in Him, the Lord granted him that and far more. But then Solomon began placing his trust more in himself than in the Lord. He let his many wives lead him astray, into the arms of pagan gods, and he came to trust his wealth, his women, his other gods and himself more than he trusted the Lord God. Solomon's pride was the cata-

clysmic turning point that tore asunder a unified Israel, splitting it into two warring kingdoms and setting up the time when *all* of Israel, because of their rebellion against Him, would be removed from the land of God's promise.



The remedy for pride is lordship. Both the curative regimen and the ultimate end is to daily submit oneself to the supremacy, the sufficiency, the *sovereignty* of God. This, in the beginning, can be a challenge, for it is unnatural. What is natural is our pride, *our* self-sufficiency over the sufficiency of Christ. But that nature is the author of our doom.

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter.”

“Why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?”

Matthew 7:21; Luke 6:46

Faith equals trust. Faith is the believer's acknowledgement—his affirmation—that only in Christ can he be saved, and, beyond that, the realization and acceptance that Jesus Christ is fully and completely his sovereign Lord.

Only then does natural pride begin to die. By embracing His lordship and living it out day by day, natural pride will wither and fade until it is no more.

