

Reframing Emotions

Reframing Pride

Episode 4

"I tend to worry that people think about me as much as I think about myself."

"I've been alive for 28 years, and I've been a believer for over two decades. It feels like pride is much bigger than I understand it to be. I've recently wanted to know and understand pride better."

"My pride makes me believe that I'm in control of my life in the areas that God really wants me to trust Him with. When I'm prideful, deep down, I don't think I need God in my life."

Lindsay: Welcome to another episode of *Reframing Emotions*, a podcast that seeks to help us understand what it means to engage emotions from a biblical foundation and through healthy habits. I'm Lindsay Funkhouser with The Austin Stone Institute, and joining me again are my friends and professional counselors Brittany Beltran, Shanda Anderson, and Andrew Dealy.

Today we're going to talk about pride. And Shanda, I'd love for you to start us off with a definition. How should we think about pride?

Shanda: Well, one of the most simple ways that I think we can frame up the idea of pride is a felt sense of self-sufficiency, where we are ultimately putting our confidence in self. Or we might call that self-righteousness. And at the core of what we want to do as



believers, who have the opportunity to put our confidence in Christ and His righteousness, we are going to experience on any given day—as we normalize every episode—these human conditions that we're all going to struggle with. That I, and anybody who's honest, is going to say, I have a temptation, I have a tendency toward putting confidence in myself, what we might call the flesh. And again, living out of that self-righteousness instead of the finished work of Christ, His perfect righteousness that would lead toward a more accurate sense of self, leading to humble confidence.

And that's what we're going to process here today. What's the difference in that? And how can we move toward it?

Lindsay: So where does pride come from? What's the foundation that makes us prideful?

Shanda: Well, we can look back at Genesis 3, where we see Eve in the garden. And the clear distinction of the confidence in self is, *I want to be like God*. That was her temptation. And we all feel that. The enemy has not had to come up with a new scheme. It worked for her, and it's caused a lot of difficulty for each of us.

The ultimate form of pride is going to manifest in abuse, and ultimately murder—that I want dominion over somebody else, when God, in His perfect wisdom, gave Adam and Eve dominion over the land and the earth to cultivate it and steward it. And we were meant to love God and love one another. But after the fall, and as sin has entered the world, and through that distortion of our worship, and everything went topsy-turvy, we will seek to control and dominate and have dominion over one another.

And therefore, we dehumanize one another. And pride—we can't talk about it without knowing the two sides of the coin. Where we can think too highly of ourselves and the superior attitude. Or we can think too lowly of ourselves and an inferior attitude. And all of that is way consumed, way too focused on self, rather than coming back to that orientation and the centrality of God and His glory, which helps us then know who we are, because of who He says we are, and then live out of that so that we can love Him and love others rightly.

Andrew: I love, Shanda, that you reference Genesis 3. And going back to the temptation—baked into Satan's temptation was the temptation toward pride. This pride



of, no, what God has told you is not sufficient. You can do better on your own. You can design a better path. You can design a better way forward.

And so, in Satan's temptation and the counsel that he gave Adam and Eve was this reaching for something more, and it's yours to take. If you'll just be willing to take it, you can grab on by your own strength, by your own perspective, and get more than you ever could have imagined. And so I'd say that core feeding right there. Pride started then. This belief that, no, you weren't designed to live under the counsel of God, under the counsel of somebody else. You're meant to live according to the counsel of your soul. That will say, no, I can do these things. I don't need anyone else.

What Shanda hit on a minute ago there, with the temptation to become like God, is so I can be utterly self-sufficient, so I can have utter control. Because at the core, I believe I know better. I believe I know best. I believe nobody else, apart from me, can really tell with expertise what is most beneficial and helpful for me. And so pride comes out, leads to a behavior of, okay, well, I'm going to reach for this to take control, because that control is actually me choosing what's best, because I know what's best for me. It turned out it wasn't, and it leads to some pretty dark places.

Shanda: And if we dial that back, even prior to what we see in Adam and Eve, Satan himself wanted to be like God. His whole being [is] cast out of heaven, and he is again, roaming the earth in pride, wanting to be like God, and accusing, deceiving, believing his way is better.

Although it's a deceptive, false offering of worth...as humans, we find it appealing, even though it is very damaging and destructive to our own souls, and especially to our ability to have relationships where we honor, respect, and give dignity to one another.

Lindsay: So it sounds like when we're trying to put ourselves in God's shoes, and we want to control, and we want to author our own lives, that there are things we're going to miss out on because we're not acknowledging God for who He is, and we're not submitting to Him and trusting Him. What are some of those things that we might miss out on when we lean into our pride instead of leaning into humility?

Andrew: I would say naturally, when we lean into pride, there's a severing of appropriate relationship, particularly yes, between us and God, but also between us and others. We look in the New Testament, and God has designed the body of Christ to work together in unity and community, each role playing a different part to facilitate and encourage each other to walk faithfully before the Lord. And pride moves us outside of that. It's us almost declaring, "No, I don't need the other gifts. I don't need the other people. I don't need community. I can do it on my own."

I think one of the also painful effects of that [is] as we start to take the things that are gifts, the things that God has given us, like, even with Adam and Eve, back in the garden of Eden, "Hey, I've given you this role to be under-shepherds, to be cultivators of creation, to be my image bearers among creation," and we lose sight of the gift and start to live and act as though we acquired it on our own, that the gift was not given to us, it's just something that is ours, that we can use however we want to use it. Of course, when we start to use a gift or a tool that's been given to us by God, according to our understanding, it doesn't work well over the long haul.

It might work well for a little bit, but eventually those tools, those gifts, those things that God has called us to do, when used inappropriately, bring great damage, bring relational damage, bring damage in creation, and across the board. So we lose sight of, no, these gifts were given. They're designed with a purpose. They're designed to be used in particular ways. We're designed to relate to people in particular ways, and we start to really cobble together our own kingdom, which will be a contrary kingdom to what God's actually purposed and designed us for. So we'll find ourselves fighting against the very design of purpose, and the good thing that God has given us, through our pride of believing, no, I know a better way.

And at the core, pride in its most insidious sense is us saying, "God, literally, I'm raising my hand in war against You." Saying, "I know better than You. I know better than You how to use the gifts that You've given me, the gifts that I made. Or I worked hard to get them. And so I can do with them what I want." Instead of this loving relationship of submission of, "God, You gave me these gifts. [I] actually need You to teach me, show me as a child, how to live in a way that would be honoring to You."



And that's where I think we get in humility. Humility lands us in this place of, "Lord, I don't have to fret about these things. You've designed them. You've given them." I can rest, knowing that You're going to shepherd me into how to live this life in a beneficial and loving way instead of having to reach and grasp for my own version of doing it.

Shanda: And I think what your question, Lindsay, was just hitting on—what will we miss out on if we continue to live in this self-sufficiency? And ultimately we miss out on Jesus. We miss out on the gift of His covering and the atonement that has come as a means of reconciling us to God. Which leads to what Andrew was talking about, reconciling us to each other. And I think if we continue to operate in pride, in this reliance on our humanistic capacity, ultimately, I think it's going to land in self-criticism, self-hatred, self-loathing, because we are going to be the arbiters of reality.

And in that we're going to come up short, because we're not going to be able to execute all the time, what we hope to accomplish. And putting our confidence in the Lord and in His finished work gives us a category to navigate the imperfections, the limitations, the inadequacies. He was humble even to the point of death, that He has modeled perfectly what it's like to consider the interests of others better than ourselves. And out of that, I think it invites us into being able to respond to our own mistakes, or be honest about our weaknesses, like we've talked about in the past where it invites us into needing the finished work of Christ, and actually being intimate and having communion with God and enjoying the fulfillment of what I lack, Christ provides perfectly.

Andrew: It's another way of maybe even looking at it, or perhaps you're saying it in a different way, pride at its core rejects dependence.

And the problem with that is even in, again, the garden of Eden in perfection, Adam and Eve were meant to, even then, live in utter dependence on the design and counsel of God's Word, meaning before sin ever happened, before the Fall happened, the natural state of humankind was to live within the parameters and boundaries that God has set.

Again, God put the tree of the knowledge of good and evil smack dab in the middle of the garden, as though their lives would orbit around the reality that, no, there are things that we were not made for. We're meant to live even in the garden of Eden with a sense of, I'm to be dependent on God, not to be independent, but to literally depend on Him to

lead guide and direct me, according to His purposes. Pride is a fundamental rejection of depending on other things and leaning into a self-sufficiency.

The problem is culturally, if we want to run down that track, it's a value that our culture lifts up pretty highly right now and has historically done. Our goal is to make you independent people who can live on your own, do your own thing, do whatever you want. You don't need other people. Might not phrase it that way, but the whole idea of independence is what we lean into as a culture makes it difficult at times for us to understand how unhelpful that way of living can be, how unhelpful full isolation of self-sufficiency can cut us off from the design that God's made us for to live in community, to live interdependently with other people, to bless other people in that burden sharing, Christian experience. If we move into full independence and isolation, if we become fully self-sufficient, we're not going to experience Christ in his fullness represented in the local body of believers.

Lindsay: Why do you think it is so difficult to lean into dependence and to trust that we need God, we need community? Why is it so attractive to be independent and to want to figure things out ourselves? Is it just for most of us who live in the U S, that's the culture we've been raised in, that's what we're familiar with, or is there something else that drives us toward independence and away from dependence?

Andrew: I think at least one piece of the puzzle that we've likely all experienced is the pain of relationships breaking, the pain of trusting somebody, trying to depend on somebody, and experiencing them betraying that trust, or just doing things that are unhelpful, which I think can engender in us a particular kind of pride that we might term self-righteousness that leads us to a place of believing, well, I would never do that. Therefore I know better. Therefore, I'm the best expert in terms of determining what I need. Because when I tried to reach out to somebody else, when I tried to engage in community, all it brought was more difficulty and pain. And so we withdraw and we start to feed into a self-righteous belief well nobody else can understand it. Nobody else can really help me. So I've just, I just have to do it on my own. I'm the only one who can truly and deeply understand me. I'm the only one who can make sure I don't hurt myself. So I kind of land in this self-righteous pride that's more oriented around self protection than, I'd say, most anything else.



That'd be one track that I think can lead us down that road of what makes dependence so difficult, as we've experienced, when we've depended on other people, they've proven to be not dependable. And so it feels easier to just, well, figure it out ourselves.

Lindsay: What is the difference between a healthy self protection that sometimes we actually need? If that exists, I guess I'm assuming that exists, and, an unhealthy pride filled self protection? Is there a nuance or a balance there for knowing when it might be a good decision to self protect and when it might be led by something like pride?

Brittany: So I think similar to what Shanda and Andrew already said, a lot of those things come from hurt. it feels initially good in the moment. I can do this one thing and create a sense of safety for myself. then I recognize that, oh, for a minute, I did feel secure. And then later on, like Shanda mentioned earlier, eventually that deteriorates, because it's too much. It's a burden I wasn't meant to bear. I wasn't meant to control my whole reality.

And so in terms of a healthy sense of self protection, I would hope that we would lean into, the One who's meant to be our protector. And so when we recognize our limitations, that is meant to drive us to the One who is all knowing and sovereign and in control, and also uses that power perfectly to bring about flourishing and my good, and has this meekness, power under control, for the purpose of love. and so the invitation, is to move into a trusting relationship, which is where we would find healing within the context of a healthy relationship. And so moving towards the Lord in those situations and trusting Him to be my protector, to be that One who provides refuge, then I can take risks with other relationships to see that not all relationships are the same, not every person is going to wound me in the exact same ways I've been wounded.

They may still wound me and they will wound. And we get to repair, which a lot of these situations where there's deep wounding, there's a lack of repair. So there's rupture without that. And so in newer healthier relationships, you would still have rupture, but you'd have repair. But that wisdom of seeking protection, is going to determine a few things.

One, hopefully press us into Lord, and then two, help us discern which relationships are going to be wise and best to share certain aspects of myself, that I can receive that healing. maybe not jumping in all at once, because it's overwhelming for the individual



who's been wounded and for the individual on the receiving end of like, oh, this is a lot of content. I don't really know how to handle that. And I'm definitely gonna probably mishandle it.

And so we want to help people understand wisdom and how to seek that safety and where we can seek it. First and foremost, with the Lord, and then with others.

Shanda: I think we want to slow down and just at least have a category of understanding that the majority of what we might even clinically diagnose as narcissism, That's the language that we might have heard before, when there's just this promoting of self, generally speaking, behind there is a deep wound that is resisting vulnerability and is essentially operating out of insecurity or a wrong view of self that is working really, really hard to do the things like Brittany just described of staying safe.

I think living out of that essential control. that I have to have in my life, which results in pride, it's exhausting. And it is very isolating. Even though it has this maybe appearance that there's this great confidence, we would believe that the other side of that is a deep sense of loss of self that is not being able to do the more intricate, mature work of relating to other people with vulnerability, with that sense of I'm opening myself up, and I could be hurt. and again, it's not thinking less of ourselves, it's not thinking more of ourselves.

Tim Keller would say it's thinking less often of ourselves and thinking more rightly with an accurate sense of self. That begins to be able to play out to where I don't have to do that armoring up and that defensive posture. But there is a great patience and gentleness and recognition that, hey, behind, it could be just self glory, where I want to promote myself for the sake of my name, but many, many times behind that is that deep wounding, that we're guarding against the vulnerability where somebody else could hurt us again.

Andrew: This is where I'd add on the most practical level, I think we can, in those moments, when we start to recognize I'm framing up the other person as dangerous. I'm framing up the other person as they feel threatening, and maybe they are. And so we find this self protection question coming up.

Do I withdraw? or do I stay in it? I think we've got plenty of room to engage with the Lord in those types of moments. Say, Lord, Hey, is this a time where you'd call me to lean in, even though it's uncomfortable? Or is there a sense in which actually, no, I need to go rest and restore.

My mind and heart are not ready to engage here. In other words, I think there is a path that is perhaps withdrawing, that is not a pride filled withdrawing. It's embracing my limitations in the moment. For instance, in the case, in which you've just had, let's say a heated conflict and you can feel that your anger is so heightened, so over the top, there is wisdom to ask in that moment, hey, is it good for me to stay in and lean in right now? Or am I likely to do and say things that would cause more damage or is it there's a withdrawal piece that actually better for me? If my wounding is so affecting the moment, Lord, am I going to be able to see this other person clearly, or is my wounding so framing them up that all I can hear from them is more danger, which means I can't really have a healthy conversation with them right now. I need to withdraw, do business with the Lord and then seek to, what Brittany was hitting on earlier, there's this repair component that we tend to fail at, which is, this is a bummer.

This is where relationships can really get deep, deep roots is when we realize now there's been a break. Breaks are going to happen. We're sinners, all of us. Breaks are going to happen. The repair of that rupture is what leads to deep relationship, deep connection, and can foster really deep trust. if I relate to you and I know that you are the type of person who will seek to repair the rupture, okay, then when the rupture happens, I don't freak out as much, but if you're the type of person where another rupture happens and you go AWOL for a long time, and we never talk about it again, you are not going to feel like a person that I really want to trust or engage with.

Now, the Lord might still call me to. And I think that's the hard part is leaning into, okay, Lord, this is what I feel. This is accurate to my experience. I don't want to get prideful and cut that person off and say, well, they're just immature or whatever. I want to hold open 2 Corinthians 5:16. I will not regard them according to the flesh. I'll see them as a new creation. I'll ask Lord, what would you have me do here? And that's the humility, the freedom to also lean in and go, Lord, I don't have to know, I'm going to try and let you direct me. Because I don't know the right answer in that moment. There's too many layers. There's too much complexity. I don't know. Lord, would you guide me?

Would you give me faith to do the hard thing of leaning in, would you give me faith to believe, that that's good. Or if you're calling me to withdraw, would you not let me fall into insecurity of gosh, I'm so weak and so faithless, I can't have this conversation. But embrace, no, that's the limit you set for me today.

Lindsay: So based on everything you've all shared, it sounds like pride is so deeply rooted in our identity and how we think about ourselves, how we think about others and how we think about God. And we started in Genesis talking about how Satan tempted Adam and Eve in their response. I want to fast forward to the gospels where we see Satan tempting Jesus, where he could have everything and have dominion over everything.

And Jesus has a different response. Can you talk a little bit about that scripture and how Jesus' response can help us navigate through the temptations of pride?

Shanda: Yeah Lindsay, there is a parallel there, right? For all the ways that we see, Eve tempted the lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, the pride of life. We see Jesus being tempted in the same way.

And in his perfect divine humanity, he responds on our behalf the way that Eve could not. The way that we probably would not have. And so in that moment where Jesus is facing all of the difficulties of life and invited to exalt his power, essentially make a name for himself in that moment, he quotes scripture. And he brings to mind the word of God, the wisdom of God, the truth of God. And he ultimately content's himself. He satisfies himself in the love of the father to resist that invitation to bring about his glory.

And we know in that moment it was because it wasn't time for him. It wasn't a lack of his power. He just delayed the expression of it out of obedient faith in that moment so that we could see what it would look like to be tempted in every way and walk by faith. And so we want to know the word of God so that we can have the wisdom and discernment to know how to navigate the opportunities that we will face in life where we can boast in our competencies and our abilities and our strength. And again, those things aren't wrong or bad ultimately, it's not to diminish our worth, but it is to boast in Christ and acknowledge that every good gift comes from the father,



and that what we have is his. And we get to glory in God and exalt in Christ when we get to manifest his glory rightly, which is what Jesus was doing, and in that passage is glorifying God and staying in a proper sense of his self, and orienting himself to the father's love and the father's wisdom and rejecting the Enemy's invitation to say, it's all about me right now in this, moment. Because that is not what God was asking Jesus to do.

Andrew: Each temptation that Satan offers is this choose what's the most Logical, sensible path forward, the easiest least restrictive. Jesus, you haven't eaten in 40 days, if you're the son of God, just make some bread, just tell the stones become bread. that's your need Jesus. you need to fill that and you have within you, the self-sufficient ability to actually do it. Why wouldn't you just do that?

The logic is all there. Jesus' has a response, which I think is so indicative for us. He doesn't lean in understanding in a sense, he leans on scripture. He says, no, this has already been written. I've already been told. The design is already laid. I'm supposed to follow this path. I'm not going to do that.

Okay, well, Jesus, How can you just show everybody by chucking yourself off a building that you are the son of God, that the angels will come and catch you. It's gonna be super cool. Be fun to watch. Let's just do that. Again, no, I'm not going to avoid the cross. I'm not going to choose the easier path.

Okay, well, Jesus, If you just bend the knee, all you have to do is bend the knee and you can avoid all the suffering, all the pain, all the hardship and I'll give you what you want anyway. So let's choose the shortcut. Again, Jesus responds to him, the path has already been laid. It's this ongoing humility to go, the design is I have faith in what God has said. I will keep leaning into that direction.

I think for us as the sweet little human beings that we are, we get off track because instead of just leaning on the simple design of what God has made clear, we start to reason with Satan.

we start to reason in those moments and go well, yeah, now that kind of makes sense. Well I take a part of this and I could choose a little bit of a different path and we'll be fine.

And that little bit of a different path ends up costing us far more than we ever imagined in the process.

And so I think it's a beautiful picture. I think Jesus models with all meekness, humility and power at the same time. No This is what it looks like to resist temptation. This is what it looks like not to lean on your intuitive understanding based on your current desires, but to lean on the word of God says this, therefore that's enough for me. And so I think It's a beautiful picture of what we're called to do.

Lindsay: I love what you said there, Andrew. We convince ourselves we can reason with Satan. It's almost like our pride leads us to think we can outsmart him, which leads us into further destruction.

You mentioned in that example that Satan offered the most logical next step to Jesus, what would make sense. You've been fasting for 40 days, make some bread and eat. You can do anything, why can't you just do that? And I do think that's so tempting to look at that logic and assume we can somehow maneuver our way through it. And so I want to go back a little bit to a conversation we started earlier about confidence and pride.

I think when we get in that place where we think we can outsmart satan or we can wheel and deal and we can, yeah, with the power of God, the help of God make our own way forward. we might convince ourselves that we are walking in confidence in faith when we're actually perhaps being led by pride.

So can you tease out a little bit more for us how might we be able to tell if we're actually walking in confidence that is healthy and God honoring and makes a way for other people to flourish, versus Where might we be led by pride, but have possibly convinced ourselves that it's actually confidence?

Brittany: The first thing that's coming to my mind, just based off the passage we've been exploring is that Jesus knew the word of God.

He knew it well, and he understood what he was being asked to do. So he understood the heart and purpose of what he was doing. And so I think part of it is starting with understanding who we are in Christ and what it is he's asked of us, that way we would

operate within the boundaries he's set for us both as people in general, and then also as individuals.

Andrew: That's a great question. And I think it can get a little bit dicey, to one degree or another, as we really dwell on it. Because there's no doubt scripture can call us to a certain confidence, even thinking about Hebrews 4:16, draw near to the throne of grace with confidence. And yet the location of our confidence is not in what we have done. It's not in our reputation. It's not in our intelligence or skills. The location of our confidence is because Christ who is on the throne has done it already. Christ is victorious. Christ granted us access to all of his riches. He's, declared and determined who we are. And so our confidence is not so much in ourself and definitely not in our own understanding. Our confidence is Christ.

And then I'd say in reality, where it starts to settle in for us and in the reality that he's promised not to leave in for sake us, our confidence is he goes with us wherever we go. In whatever situation we find ourselves.

And I think one of the indicators that could be at play when we think about, hey, am I leaning into pride here, or am I leading into confidence, is do we talk to God about whatever's in front of us? Do we even engage with God when we see this thing in front of us, they're like, oh, I should probably do that. Is there a pause in us that goes, Lord, this a work that you've called me to do?

I think we see in scripture with king David, a beautiful example of this, where a king name is like, Lord, I got a cool house and I want to build you one. And the Lord's response is, it's great that this is in your heart. he affirms his heart. That heart desire is good. then the followup is, but it's not for you to do, it's for your son. Solomon is the one who's going to build the house. In other words, David had a good idea, but there was enough of an engagement with God to clarify, this is a good idea, but it's not a good idea for you to do. It's for someone else to do. I think where prides at play we skip over that step. Where pride's at play we look at something in front of us and we say, oh, that's something that I could do and immediately assume, therefore I should do it. And then we just go about doing it. And we remove God from the equation and we believe in my own strength I can just get this thing done. That moves into pride. That moves into a self-sufficiency and a



building of my own reputation. And if we do that long enough, it just ultimately leads to burnout.

the more we just choose to do the thing in front of us and keep stacking our pile, eventually we find, no God has not called you to do every good work. you're called to do the good works he's prepared beforehand for you to walk in them. Not every good thing you see you're called to do. There are other people in the body of believers that are called to do those things. We gotta leave space for that.

And so that pivot in our heart, that goes, Lord, I can see this, but in all humility, I'm not gonna assume that I see it correctly. Or that it means I should do whatever's next.

I'm going to pause, go Lord, I see this, you see it. Of course you do, because you're omnipresent, all that. Would you have me do this? Or am I not supposed to? And then if we get that confirmation from the Lord. You think about what kind of confidence we get to step forward into it. Not a confidence again of, hey, I got to figure it out. A confidence of, okay God, you've called me to do this, which means you've promised you're going to equip me with what I need to do it. That doesn't mean it's going to go great. But it means even if it goes terrible, Lord, you prepared me for that already. And I can receive that as your good design for me in this. And so we can have confidence regardless the results of whatever that thing is moving forward. But that's what I would look for at heart level.

Shanda: One other thing that I might add to that is pride can cause us to look inward too much. a dangerous introspection or pride can cause us to trust in our external capacities too much. And I think, the wisdom is going to be in all of those things, Helping us look more to Christ in the midst of whatever my external abilities are, whatever my internal realities are of my emotions or my experiences, or my fear that I can get too insecure, looking inward, or I can get too confident looking outward.

And in all of those things, again, we're never going to have a hundred percent perfect motivation how we're living. So I think just being honest that we struggle with pride and knowing that we are tempted because that is the enemy's lead foot on how to deceive and get us moving away from the confidence of Christ in our right identity that is given by him.



And so I don't have to, again, worry about what you think of me. I don't have to worry about what I think of me. But my greatest concern, be what has God said is true about me and then help me orient to that over and over re arrange my heart and my mind, and then my actions, to line up with that and knowing that there's not just some straight line, that we're all gonna walk this balance beam, but when I veer towards overconfidence or when I veer towards insecurity, I want to be able to repent and believe and come back to the truth of who God is and what that means about me and how I get to live out in the midst of the relationships he's offered.

Andrew: For one last indicator, I would just say pay attention to where the praise lands Whenever whatever's happening has happened, check with your own soul. Does the praise land on you? do you find in your own heart, you think you are the most awesome person at the end of it? That means likely we dip somewhere into self-sufficiency. we've leaned into, oh man, I just got to show off my skills. I feel awesome about myself. I am the greatest of all time. I am the goat.

Or does the praise land in Lord, you've been faithful. You've shown up. You've by your grace have done what only you can do. You even use the gifts and the talents that you've given me and made them fruitful. Because apart from you doing that, the gifts are useless. Apart from you moving in it, then this accomplishes nothing.

So does the praise land with God, or does the praise land somewhere else? If it's landing somewhere else likely we're a little bit off. And as Shanda just said, we'll always be a little bit off. We're never going to get it 100% purely correct. But I think it's worth noting what happens in our heart? Is our heart led to worship the Lord, or is our heart led to go, man, I'm pretty cool.

I think it's a good indicator.

Lindsay: It makes me think of what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 12, where he talks about, in his weakness, Christ is made strong and he will boast all the more in his weakness and what is always so convicting and encouraging about that verse to me is it's not as if Paul tried everything in his own strength, and then God was his backup plan, so then he's boasting in his weakness cause he couldn't do it.

So now let's invite the holy spirit in, let's invite God in to do his work. I think rather it's from the get-go he recognizes his weakness. He has no other choice. God has made it clear. And he, from step one, sees that as a conduit through which God can do the things he wants to do through Paul.

Even though Paul is wrestling so much, he doesn't want that weakness, he prays for it go away. we see him finding, strength and joy and confidence in a healthy way by just knowing that the Lord working through him is so much better than he could ever be on his own.

Andrew: Yeah. I love what you're saying there, Lindsay, I think this is the gift of weakness. The gift of weaknesses is it brings us to a place of proper dependence. Even with whatever the thorn in the flesh was for Paul, our physical manifest weaknesses remind us of the actuality of our greater need spiritually for Christ. And so even the physical difficulties we have and the burden sharing we do are merely an echo of the deeper need of no I'm made to be a dependent creature in God's the one that I'm supposed to depend on.

This is where also I think you find in scripture it says that God opposes the proud. I think this is where that thread all ties together. Why does he oppose the proud? Because the proud reject dependence, which is the very thing they need if they're going to ever come to understand their need for Christ. A proud person is holding on to their independence in such a way that they've shut themselves off from the idea that I can need something greater than myself. So it's the anti-gospel. And so God will oppose them because they need to come to an awareness of, no, I don't have it all figured out. I'm not self-sufficient. That needs to be cracked open for the gospel to even have any room to make sense. And so a proud heart will shut someone off from the very thing that they need.

A recognition of no, I am weak. This is where you see Paul celebrating in his weakness. Lord, You gave me all these visions. You gave me all these gifts now you've given me this thorn in the side that I would not become proud. And he's thanking the Lord for that, because it's keeping him tight to Christ and tight to his dependence on who he knows he needs most.

Shanda: One of the examples in scripture we see in the book of Judges, is Samson where he has all of his capacity and physical strength and prowess, and he's got the the physical attributes that make him attractive and he is leaning into all of that. And, he's even warned about those things and he rejects them and leans into that self-sufficiency. And it is where the Bible is clear about how destructive pride is. And that pride comes before the fall, that there is a limit to our self-sufficiency. There is a demarcation where it will run its course, and we will be left with the reality where our strength will fail and all of that is meant to help us come back to our confidence in Christ. And we see in that story of Samson that he does submit himself to the glory of God, but through some hardships in life. And I think as we are offering this information about pride, it is a warning of sorts, it is a loving invitation to walk the better path of embracing our weakness, like Paul not boasting and my accolade and my resume, not boasting in my sin and weakness.

Paul says I'm the chief of sinners. But that's not what is most important about us. It is leaning into the finished work of Christ so that we can use the gifts he's given for his glory. And we can enjoy his grace for the places that our weakness remains. And it gives him the ability to be the strength in our weakness and be the one that is perfect in our imperfections.

So it's actually an invitation to freedom. It's an invitation to rest and enjoy the journey of maturing in faith and growing, and then see the glory of God in each other, even when I'm hoping other people see the glory of God in me when I am weak and I need grace. And that I get to see the glory of God and others when their weaknesses come to the table and I get to offer that grace.

And so it's the deep work of intimacy and true love that goes beyond just the superficial value of what's easy and what feels good. But we are moving into the depth of really where grace gets applied and pride would remove that.

Andrew: One of the very clear stories of what pride can look like in someone's life and how God interacts with it. the story of Nebuchadnezzar. this dude had conquered most of the surrounding areas, had been unbelievably effective in going about building his kingdom. And he was warned through Daniel warned, hey, if you keep going on those track, it's not going to go well for you. If you keep going down this track of pride and, not



recognizing it's not your hand, nebuchadnezzar. It's not by your will, by your strength, by your hand that these things happen. But it's because it was God's plan and God's design.

And so you get to this point in the book of Daniel where Nebuchadnezzar is looking over his kingdom and he says, essentially, my translation look how awesome I am and look at what I have done. And the voice of God then speaks. And this dude ends up, losing his mind, growing fingernails like Eagles talons, crazy dreadlocks, we'd assumed by the end of this, eating the grass of the field.

But the tail end of that after I can't remember if it's a time, time and a period of time or whatever it is, but some time he's out there just like a wild animal. And then he comes to his senses. and recorded and Daniel is his response. And what we find is his heart is humbled, and he praises the Lord.

But you talk about God opposing the proud; I think this is what it looks like. He will oppose the proud to such a degree, hey, I need you to understand. I hold in my hand, your sanity, I hold in my hand whether or not you can understand a thing. And he let Nebuchadnezzar feel that reality. And what it produced in him at the end was this, praise be to God.

He was right to have done that. A proper relationship, proper understanding of his relationship to God, that he is humbled, that he's dependent, that he does not have all the power. That's what it can look like. And I think that's a good version of it. the good version of it, he comes to repentance.

That's not always what happens. Oftentimes we'll see God opposes the proud and they just get stiff necked and things go very bad from there. But I think it's a great story that gives us a picture of God's engagement in it.

Lindsay: Yeah. It's hard sometimes to think about the humbling the Lord does in our lives as a good gift.

You talked earlier about the father giving us good gifts. But when he's kind in that way that leads us to repentance, what greater gift is there? that's such a good example of God

in his kindness, opposing the proud that we might be humble, and in our lives look more like Christ.

And I want to shift just a little bit into talking about our culture. Our culture places such a high value on self-esteem and building that for yourself as an antidote to so many things that are difficult in life. Can you talk about the relationship between self-esteem and pride, if there is one, and how those might be similar or different?

Brittany: Culturally we're encouraged to build up our sense of self worth through looking at the things that we can do and accomplish in the world. But ultimately that falls apart because eventually we'll hit something that we can't do or we can't accomplish, or we don't have the strength or ability or skillset or whatever it is that we would like to see happen.

And that path ultimately leads to disappointment and a pressure that we can't bear. And the freedom that we have in Christ as our identity and security and confidence has placed in him is that we can embrace our weakness, that we can embrace our limitations as good gifts, from the Lord, that our identity is not in what we can do or what we can provide or the services that we offer.

But our identity is hidden in Christ and who he declares us to be. And that can't be taken away. It can't be added to by the things I accomplished in life. It can't be diminished by the things I failed to do in life. But it's given to me bestowed upon me, divinely by the finished work of Christ that he did all the things I could not do on my behalf and covers me in that, that I don't have to seek to build up my sense of self.

But I receive my sense of self and wholeness from Christ first. And that gives me the freedom to not get caught up in the cultural drive to be better or do more or accomplish the impossible.

Andrew: I think even the terms like pride and self-esteem, we talked about pride being self-sufficiency and you got self right before esteem. I think that's where it tends to fall apart. If I'm building up myself, it's always a Jenga tower that could be kicked over at any moment. It's always a piece by piece unstable reality just as Brittany articulated there, where it's, I'm going to find things that I can't do.



Or in some cases I'm going to find people who can do it better than I can. So does that mean I'm less valuable? Does that mean I have less worth because I'm not as able as others to do these things? The confidence that scripture offers us is totally different. A confidence in Christ's design and purpose in us is Psalm 1:39, You've knit me together in my mother's womb. You set my days before me before any of them existed. you know me intimately. Our confidence or self-esteem is in that God has made us perfectly, exactly in the way that he intended for us to be. That can't be taken away.

That can't be poked at or prodded. If we stand in Christ and what he's declared over us, then that's unchanging for us. And so because of that, we can have confidence. I think confidence is maybe more helpful word than self-esteem. Although I can see where self-esteem can still be helpful. But a confidence in, God has made me, God knows. I'm in his hand, no one can snatch me out of his hand.

He's declared who I am and nobody can change that. I wear Christ's righteousness and no one can add to that. Therefore, I can live this life dependently on God with tremendous confidence, no matter what comes my way.

Shanda: We don't have to let our successes or our failures be what defines us. life is gonna throw some curve balls at times, and it doesn't mean that we can't celebrate the things that we work hard for. And we get to acknowledge that we've labored for an outcome that we're excited about and we get to encourage one another in those efforts that are put forth. But it is a right perspective, more than it is just the nuance and the semantics of being able to say, God helped me do that. Or my physical achievements, if I'm an athlete, is not because I gave myself all the abilities. It's like the air that we breathe is borrowed from God.

It's seeing this creation that we are built into in this grand story of redemption that's playing out. That we don't become center stage. we are part of, the story that God is writing that being able to give credit where credit's due, that I don't take credit for something that God has done.

When I celebrate the things that God has allowed me to do, I can feel good about that, but say thank you, praise Him and acknowledge His goodness that gave me the capacity to do whatever human effort was involved, but all of that dependent on Him, to some



degree in some way. Whether it's my intellect, whether it's my physical abilities, whether it's the gifts and the resources he's provided, which allows me to not look at what I have done as what determines my worth.

It's what Christ has done on my behalf that secures my worth. Then I can navigate the unpredictable uncertain realities of life, that can give and take away. And I can still say blessed be the name of the Lord.

Lindsay: So I'm going to end our conversation today by looking at ways we can help one another walk in the freedom of finding our worth and our value and our identity in Christ versus trying to build it ourselves. We're thinking about our communities, our families, how can we help one another walk in the freedom that comes from trusting in God and, living in that humility that the holy spirit freely gives to us versus the pride that so easily entangles us as we try to move forward. What are just some simple things we can do for one another?

Shanda: I think one of the ways that we can live out this humble confidence is weep with those weep; rejoice with those who rejoice. It's being able to reflect the glory of God to one another in the moments of what we might define as success, or the moments that are good, that we celebrate, that feel good at the time.

But also we moved towards one another and the difficulties, in the midst of failures, that we aren't critical of one another and we're not condemning each other. We're not mocking one another. I think which we can find a lot of in culture, that only promotes that self-sufficiency and that drive to be more.

We can offer one another grace and patience and dignity in the midst of whatever element of life circumstance that we're having to walk through.

And so I think bearing with each other patiently will be a statement we make in every episode. And maybe even at times when they don't believe that for themselves, that we believe their identity, their worth, because like we've said earlier, in that insecurity where maybe they've been criticized, maybe they've been ridiculed or rejected or bullied, and it's really hard for them to show up in humble confidence. And maybe one of those unhelpful methods of survival is overconfidence. And so just being really patient and

gracious and generous with one another, knowing that it is by grace that any of us get to see ourselves rightly that God is doing this work in us. And we want to offer one another the identity that is greater and more fulfilling.

Andrew: Practically, one piece of the puzzle, is, along with the apostle Paul, recognizing our weaknesses are as sovereignly ordained as our strengths, and that the church, and the community God has placed us in, needs both. It needs both our weaknesses and our strengths. particularly the weaknesses are, again, what teaches us to live in a burden sharing, burden-carrying environment, that we learned to live interdependently in the body of Christ.

If all we ever do is focus on our strengths, and that's all we ever operate out of, and that's all we ever give the group, more often than not, we're not being cared for. We're not actually putting on the table the things we needed help with. And so it creates an asymmetrical non-reciprocal relationship where it's like, no, my strengths mean I get to help everybody else, but I don't receive help.

That creates a part of the body that is separate from the body. That's not helpful. So we need to be burden sharers, and burden carriers together in community. The practical path of that is have a culture of sharing weakness, have a culture where it's safe to say, Hey, no, struggling massively over here in, I need help and learn to receive that help through the body of Christ that we could see the glory of God reflected in the way that he's organized the body. He's given people different strengths in different gifts for different seasons that we could grow together. And so I think that would be the main practical that can just sabotage the crud out of pride. Is if our constant refrain, when we gather together as here's where I'm weak and I here's what I need help.

There's not pride in that. it's a no, I humbly recognize God has given me these weaknesses, and I'm actually to receive from you, community, help and growth in those areas because that's the way God's designed it to work.

Brittany: I think cultivating that humble confidence is a communal effort. Like we talked about the beginning, pride has this way of pulling us out of relationship with one another. And when we cultivate that kind of humble confidence and security in Christ in the context of community, we get to reknit the body of Christ as it was meant to be.



It was not good for us to be alone. God gave us one another on purpose. when I think about what that looks like, being willing to share our weaknesses with one another and also being willing to encourage one another in that process of how that weakness actually blesses you.

I've seen people who've walked through really difficult things and the way that they've navigated their weaknesses and allowed the community to come around them encourages my soul to greater worship of the Lord. And we get to worship together in the midst of our difficulty and weakness.

And then for those who tend towards the other side, more the hubris side of, look at me, we get to gently remind one another that God is a giver of all good gifts and draw back to, the Lord has gifted you in this way that you might worship him more. Or helping each other see the glory of God in the midst of these things that we might not lean too far into our own abilities, our own ego, but get to lay that before the Lord together.

And so I think we need both and then we get to do that for one another and with one another, but both encouragement and correction, simultaneously.

Lindsay: Amen. That's such a beautiful picture.

Friends, thank you so much for helping us get our eyes off self and reorienting our eyes toward God and a right view of him as creator and worthy of all worship.

It's been so much fun talking about pride with you today.

Listeners, thank you so much for joining us. As always, we encourage you to process this in community. Brittany just laid out a beautiful picture of what it looks like to both encourage and correct. And that's what we want for you and your community.

And so on the episode webpage, we've provided a group's guide, including scripture and reflection questions, just to help you work through some of the things you learned today. Next week we'll be talking about anger and so we hope you join us for that episode.

Every week, we provide a liturgy for you as a worship response to what you've learned in this episode. So we invite you to sit and be still and let these words wash over you as you think about the truths in God's word and turn your heart toward him in thankfulness. We'll see you next week.

Alex: *A Liturgy for the Washing Away of Pride*

In my pride
I rage and bellow inside, a beast
offended by each dismissal and opinion
not my own, every instruction and rebuke
until I am left bereft, isolated
atop a self-built pinnacle

collapsing
beneath my feet,
everyone

hesitant to speak—

then, O Lord, plunge me beneath the still waters
that there I may die and live again

and again, reason restored,

I fall
at Your feet.

I

confess: Jesus, have mercy
on me, a sinner. And You—Jesus,
Master and Friend—return me to the waters.
You cleanse me of my pride,



tell me to rise, go
in Your peace.



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