

## Motivation to Surrender

By Jesse Larsen

Back when I was still new to the Scriptures, I had a hard time understanding why God did not want us to be proud. Verses such as Proverbs 16:5 were difficult for me to fathom: "*The LORD detests all the proud of heart. Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished*" (NIV). Part of the reason I had a hard time understanding this is because I had been insecure throughout most of my life. I did not realize this at the time, but pride was my problem even while I was insecure. That may sound absurd to some, but I believe that pride was my problem since it led me to what the Bible calls "*the sorrow of the world [which] produces death*" (2 Corinthians 7:10), rather than godly sorrow which leads to repentance. Even during times when I was suicidal, I believe that pride was my problem. Suicide is not God's will and is the result of pride producing worldly sorrow in someone rather than godly sorrow. Pride is the main thing that separates us from God (see James 4:6).

Many people today would call the insecurity that I had "low self-esteem," yet the very fact that anyone would want to build security in themselves rather than God just shows that they are already esteeming themselves too much. What we need is not self-esteem but God-esteem. These two positions are in stark contrast to each other. Once we have given up trying to build our confidence in ourselves for a life that holds God in high esteem, we learn that "*the LORD will be your confidence, and will keep your foot from being caught*" (Proverbs 3:26).

If we do come to the point of surrender, it is because God Himself has accomplished the surrender in us. Therefore, we have far more reason to esteem Him than ourselves. Paul clearly understood this when he wrote, "*By the grace of God I am what I am*" (1 Corinthians 15:10). Rather than focusing on ourselves, getting an accurate view of God will motivate us to surrender more than anything else. Although there was a time when I did not understand why the Bible took issue with pride, God had revealed enough to me about Himself during my early Christian life to let me know that He knew something about this issue that I did not. I trusted Him based on the fact that He is wiser than I am, which brings to mind the words of the following verse....

*"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean **not on your own understanding**; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. **Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and depart from evil**"* (Proverbs 3:5-7).

One of the problems with pride, or being wise in our own eyes, is that it is deceitful (see Obadiah 1:3 as an example). In fact, our pride can be so deceitful that it can blind us from seeing that it is our real motive rather than humility. David must have understood the deceitfulness of the human heart when he wrote, "*Search me, O God, and know my heart...see if there is any wicked way in me*" (Psalm 139:23-24). Paul wrote that "*now we see in a mirror dimly*" (1 Corinthians 13:12), which indicates that we will always need the Lord to search our hearts as long as we are on this earth.

My motivation to surrender (which I believe was accomplished by God Himself) came from the realization that God knows and wants what is best for me (see Jeremiah 29:11) even if it does not appeal to my deceitful human nature. Human pride is not only deceitful, but it is also vain (as revealed by Proverbs 25:27 and Proverbs 13:10). It is not as if God has given us rules that are hard to follow to ruin our joy. The point is that He wants to give us Himself and thereby give us an eternal joy far greater than the vain, temporary joy that we may have in our pride. Understanding that Christ could return at any moment is one more powerful motivation to surrender ourselves and our pride to Him, as revealed by this last passage: "*Beloved, now we are*

*children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure" (1 John 3:2-3).*