

THE WAY UP IS DOWN



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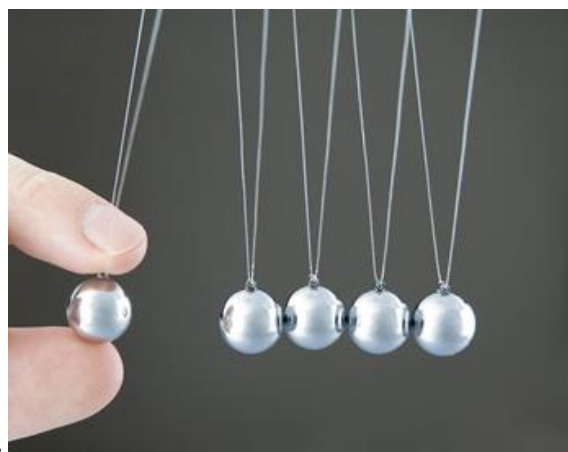
And so in this study I’m going to be unfolding to you a spiritual law which I believe operates throughout the entire universe. I believe it operated before the universe was created and I believe it will go on operating after time is no more. I believe it’s a law that affects every one of us, it has a definite bearing on the course of our lives. In fact, to a large extent it will determine whether we’re successful or whether we fail.

The spiritual law that I’m going to speak about is stated three times in the New Testament, each time it comes from the lips of Jesus Himself. The first time and the only time we’ll actually look at is in Matthew 23:12,

“For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.” (NIV)

This is an audio study by International Bible Derek Prince, this text study is compiled by Albert Chipps

Part 1: NATURAL LAWS AND SPIRITUAL LAWS



I'm going to speak to you, God helping me, about a spiritual law. All of us here, I'm sure are familiar with what are called natural laws or physical laws or scientific laws. To take a very simple and obvious example, we're familiar with the law of gravity. And none of us expects to operate in a way that's contrary to the law of gravity. No one here, I think, this evening would step out of a fourth floor window and expect to do anything but fall downwards. And there are, of course, other physical laws that we're familiar with; the laws that govern crops and harvests and the fruit that's gathered from the earth. And there's a science called agriculture which studies those laws in detail.

Many people who are familiar with natural law have no vision or concept of spiritual law. But I believe that there are spiritual laws which are every bit as definite, as precise, as certain and as impossible to break as natural laws. People talk about "breaking God's laws," but that's really a mistake. You don't break the law of gravity, the law of gravity breaks you. And I believe the same is true of spiritual laws. People talk about "breaking God's laws," but that's not the way it really is.

And so I'm going to be unfolding to you tonight a spiritual law which I believe operates throughout the entire universe. I believe it operated before the universe was created and I believe it will go on operating after time is no more. I believe it's a law that affects every one of us here tonight; it has a definite bearing on the course of our lives. In fact, to a large extent it will determine whether we're successful or whether we fail.

The spiritual law that I'm going to speak about is stated three times in the New Testament, each time it comes from the lips of Jesus Himself. The first time and the only time we'll actually look at is in Matthew 23 verse 12—Matthew 23:12, ***"For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted."*** (NIV) You'll see that that is an entirely universal law. Anybody anywhere at anytime who exalts himself will be humbled. And equally universal, "anyone who humbles himself will be exalted." As I said, there are two other passages in the New Testament where that law is stated, but we don't need to turn to them tonight. There are a number of other passages in Scripture which say the same thing with different words. Just look for a moment at two passages in Proverbs. Proverbs 16:18 which says, and this is probably one of the most familiar verses in Scripture. A lot of people who don't know any other verses of Scripture know this, ***"Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall."***

As a matter of fact, most people say that “pride goes before a fall.” Well, that’s true in principle but it’s not exactly what the Scripture says. In fact, it says something much worse. It says *“pride goes before destruction.”*

And then in the 18th chapter, the 12th verse, ***“Before his downfall a man’s heart is proud, but humility comes before honor.”*** So, before a downfall there is pride, and before honor there is humility. I believe that’s universal. I don’t believe there ever was a downfall in the experience of a living creature that was not caused by pride, ultimately.

Now, I’m going to take the first and probably the greatest example of this principle, which is found in a created being but not a human being. And I’m going to look with you tonight at a picture of what happened to this created being.

Let me just make a few statements which are perhaps surprising to some of you. First of all, the first sin in the universe was what? Pride, that’s right. It wasn’t drunkenness, it wasn’t immorality, it wasn’t murder. It was pride. And yet, many people who would be horrified by something like drunkenness or murder or immorality tolerate pride and scarcely see it as a sin. This sin of pride led to rebellion and here we have a principle: the inner always precedes and produces the outer. So, the inner condition was pride which was expressed in the outer action of rebellion. This sin took place not on earth but in heaven. It was committed not by a human being but by an angel. And the cause of the pride was beauty and wisdom that had been imparted by the Creator. And yet, these things given by the Creator produced, ultimately, rebellion against the very Creator who produced them.

Now many of you, I’m sure, are aware that I have in mind primarily a passage in the prophet Ezekiel chapter 28. This is one of those Old Testament prophetic Scriptures that reveal not merely the future but also the past. Sometimes I think we forget that prophetic insight and ministry not merely is related to the future, things we cannot know because they have not yet happened, but it also reveals the past, things we did not know because we were not there and we have no means of knowing except by prophetic revelation. In this twenty-eighth chapter of Ezekiel verses 1–19, the prophet speaks of two different persons—each is related to the city of Tyre. But the first person is called—in the version I’m using, the New International Version—the “ruler of Tyre.” In the King James Version it says the “prince of Tyre,” the second person is called “the king of Tyre.” The first person was a human being; the second person very definitely was not a human being. Just to see the identity of the first person, we’ll look at Ezekiel 28 verse 2 and following, ***“Son of man, say to the ruler of Tyre, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: In the pride of your heart you say, ‘I am a god; I sit on the throne of a god in the heart of the seas.’ But you are a man and not a god, though you think you are as wise as a god. . . . [And verse 9:] Will you then say, ‘I am a god,’ in the presence of those who kill you? You will be but a man, not a god, in the hands of those who slay you.’”*** (NIV) So here is a person who is a man but lays claim to being god. That’s the ruler or the prince of Tyre.

Now we’ll look at the king of Tyre. The king of Tyre is not a human being. We’ll read from verse 11, about five or six verses, ***“The word of the LORD came to me: ‘Son of man, take up a lament concerning the king of Tyre and say to him: ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: ruby, topaz and emerald, chrysolite, onyx and jasper, sapphire, turquoise and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared. You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you. Through your widespread trade you were filled with***

violence, and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, O guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones. Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor.” (NIV)

That’s really a very clear and vivid description and I’m sure that it became clear to you that it’s no human being that is referred to there. Let me just point out certain features. In verse 12 it says that this creature excelled in wisdom and in beauty. In verse 13 we’re told that this creature had been in Eden, the garden of God. That takes us right back to Genesis. Verse 14, we’re told that this creature was anointed as a guardian cherub. The King James Version says *“a covering cherub.”* And that takes our minds to the picture of the ark in the tabernacle which had a cherub at either end of the seat, its wings stretching out over the place of God’s presence. It says also *“You were on the holy mount of God.”* Verse 15, it says *“You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created.”* So it’s a created being we’re talking about, but not a man, a cherub. Then verse 16, it says *“Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence and you sinned.”* I’ll go back to that word in a moment, it’s a key word. And verse 17, again, the root problem is diagnosed: *“Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth”* (and so on).

Two things: First of all, let’s get a picture. Now I have to say this is my imagination, it’s speculation; it isn’t stated plainly in Scripture. I do think there’s a great many different things that confirm what I’m saying but I see a condition in heaven before sin had ever happened with myriads of glorious created angels. And one of the chief angels was the one who was known in Hebrew as ‘Eilat Ha-sha-ha’ I wonder how many of you who have been to Israel remember a kibbutz with that name? And it’s usually translated in English for the kibbutz, “the hind of the dawn.” But in the Bible it’s translated “the morning star.” And in the King James Version it’s translated Lucifer which means the “light bringer.” And that is, of course, the morning star, the one who introduces the dawn. The Hebrew phrase Eilat Hashaha means “the hind or the deer that brings the dawn.” It speaks of something swift and beautiful and delicate and graceful. So amongst the created angels there was this one who was what I believe we would call an archangel or a ruling angel. The Bible reveals three archangels: Gabriel, Michael and Lucifer.

PART 2 – THE HEART OF THE MATTER



It's theory, and I want to emphasize that, but it seems to me possible that each angel was answerable to one of the persons of the Godhead: the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit. And that each of them commanded a third of the created angels. And if that be so, then my opinion is that Lucifer was responsible to the second person of the Godhead, the Son of God. The eternal Son of God, the one who is called 'the Word', the one who was in the Father's bosom, and so on.

Now because of his outstanding and perhaps unique wisdom and beauty, Lucifer felt that he was worthy of a higher position. In fact, he felt that he was as good as his Lord. And if it be the Son of God, I think that adds a great deal of meaning to the rest of history. And so, he went about promoting rebellion and spreading slander amongst the angels. And let me say if that worked in heaven, it's almost bound to work on earth. And let me also add he's never changed his tactics. The person who goes about spreading false reports is probably as near to doing the will of Satan as any person on earth. And unfortunately, let's be honest, churches are full of such people.

So, what did he say? Well, again this is speculation. But I think he said something like this: *"You know, you people, I want you to understand, you angels, that Lord [and he said it with rather a cynical tone of voice] doesn't really appreciate you. I mean, you have capabilities. You're capable of more than is being given to you. Now, if you were to follow me, I would really see that your full potential was developed."* And so on. *"Why don't we set up our own kingdom? Why should we serve this God? I believe I could make as good a god as the God we serve."* And apparently, the amazing thing is, in the full light of heaven's glory, in a perfect universe that had never been marred by sin, these tactics succeeded! It really causes me to tremble in a way because if they worked in heaven, where sin had never been heard, where God was revealed in His glory and beauty, how much better are they going to work on earth? And how much better they have worked for thousands of years.

One of the things I am trying to do is reveal to you the identity of the enemy and the way he operates because he's still operating in the same way. And so, the result was a rebellion in which one-third of the created angels turned against God following Lucifer. The figure one-third is taken probably, you know, from the book of Revelation which says that the dragon swept one-third of the angels out of heaven with his tail. And it's very generally believed that that was what happened in the beginning.

Another frightening thing is the tremendous scope of authority. God committed authority to Lucifer. He gave him authority over one-third of the created angels. And when Lucifer fell in rebellion, the whole of that area of God's kingdom was swept away with him. I believe irrevocably. I don't believe there's any way back for fallen angels. It really is a frightening thought. For those of us who are in authority in whatever small measure it may be, I think it should continually warn us that the effects of our

disobedience or disloyalty can be irretrievable for those who are under us. And for those who are under authority, I think it's a warning to examine whose authority you're following. One of the things that we have been saying is it's very dangerous to be submitted to a man who's submitted to no one. I think it's an almost sure road to ultimate disaster.

There's a parallel passage which is familiar to many, I'm sure, in Isaiah the fourteenth chapter, reading from verse 12–15. Here the name Lucifer (or Eilat Hashaha) is actually used. Beginning in verse 12, ***"How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn [Eilat Hashaha]! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations!"*** (NIV)

Now the marvelous thing about prophecy is it always reveals not just the outward acts but the inner motivations, the essential inner facts. And here we're given the motivation that caused Lucifer to rebel, ***"You said in your heart,"*** and I have to pause and say I marvel that God knew what Lucifer was saying in his heart all the time and He let him get away with it. For who knows how long? I don't know how time was measured. Who knows how long this process took? Friend, you may think you're getting away with something but I want to tell you that God knows what you're doing. And He may let you get away with it for months or years but one day you'll discover God knew. ***"You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.' But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit."*** (NIV)

Notice two little words that occur five times. The motivating words of all action—the set of the will: ***I will, I will, I will, I will, I will.*** What is the root problem of the universe? The will of the creature in opposition to the will of the Creator. Notice the climax. The first I will: ***"ascend to heaven."*** The second, ***"I will raise my throne above the stars of God."*** The third, ***"I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly."*** The fourth, ***"I will ascend to the tops of the clouds."*** The fifth, and this is the climax, ***"I will make myself like [or equal to] God Himself."*** I like the translation here that says, ***"I will make myself equal."*** The King James says ***"I will be like."*** But in the Hebrew there are five main verbal forms and one of them is something that's done repetitively or with special intention and this is the one. It's not ***"I will be"*** but ***"I will make myself. It's my aim, it's my purpose, it's my ongoing intention and endeavor to make myself equal to the Most High."*** The result was fall. You remember what we said? ***"Whoever exalts himself will be humbled."*** It ever fails.

Now, God's response to this rebellion was something that only God would have thought of, as I see it. And I'm giving you some of my insights or intuitions or opinions, whatever you want to call them. Notice the root problem was pride. And I believe God saw that once and for all this issue of pride had got to be dealt with in such a way that when it was finished, that problem would never occur again. And so God decided to make a new kind of creature: his name, Adam [or man]. And as I understand Scripture, this creature was made in a way that no other creature was made. Of all the other creatures it says "God spoke" and it was done. With the word of His mouth and His Spirit He created the heavens and their host, all that was in them. But this one was different and I'm going to read just one verse in Genesis chapter 2 verse 7. This is one of my favorite verses. I could preach on this for a long while but I'll try not to.

Genesis 2:7, ***"And the LORD God formed man . . ."***

And in Hebrew it's a proper name, 'Adam'. And 'Adam' is directly related to the Hebrew word for 'earth' which is 'adama'. It's also related to the Hebrew word for 'red' which is 'adon' and it's also related to the

Hebrew word for 'blood' which is 'dam'. So that word immediately evokes a whole context of associations.

"And the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being." (NIV)

I prefer the version "a living soul."

So how do we picture this happening? I'll tell you what I believe. I believe it happened the way it's recorded. I believe that the second person of the Godhead, the one, in a sense, who had been the focus of the rebellion, came down to earth, stooped down, took some dust, mingled it with water, formed clay and molded the greatest piece of pottery or sculpture that the universe has ever seen. A perfect body. Beautiful, but lifeless. And then, this eternal being, God in person, stooped still lower down, put His divine lips against the lips of clay and breathed into that body of clay the spirit of life. And the inbreathed Spirit turned that clay figure into a living, human personality.

As you probably have gathered, I am interested in the Hebrew language. I'm interested in it because in many ways it contains keys to understanding Scripture. There are two words there that are very interesting. The word for "to breathe." I won't go into why it's this way but it's 'vie-ye-pach'. And it contains a 'P' sound and then the sound that English-speaking people normally do not make, the letter 'ch-eck' which is produced in the throat by a continuing, outgoing breath. Scottish people can say it, like loch, but the ordinary English-speaking people can't say it. Semitic languages have it and you can't speak Semitic languages correctly until you can make that sound.

Now, for some years I taught phonetics in Africa to African students. And I taught them various different kinds of letters. And the letter 'P' is a distinctive letter. It's called a "plosive." In other words, it has a little 'explosion'. And I used to demonstrate this to my students. I don't know whether I can do it here because of the fans, but by holding a piece of paper in front of my mouth and saying a word like 'pepper'. I'll try and do it, I'm not sure if it'll work. But if it works, if there's not too much wind around, you'll see that each time I make a 'P' sound there's an explosion of my breath. Pepper. Pepper. Can you see that? There's no other letter that will do that except 'P'. Why do I say that? Because I think when the Lord breathed into that body of clay, it was 'vi-ye-pach'. He didn't just gently breath, but there was a tremendous force and authority that impelled the breath into the clay. And then there was that ongoing 'pach': 'vi-ye-pach'. See, the sound of the word describes the action, which is one of the characteristics of Hebrew.

And that inbreathed breath of Almighty God changed that clay body into a living person. And man became a living soul. Now the word for soul is 'nephesh'. And in all Hebrew words there are three root consonants, 'ne', 'phe' and 'sh' in that word, nephesh. Now the word for spirit is 'ruach'. So "spirit" is a kind of ongoing, irresistible, unceasing, outgoing breath. Ruach—that's "spirit"—spirit produced soul. Soul is nephesh. Soul is created, soul is dependent. Spirit is uncreated and not dependent. And so the inbreathed spirit, the 'ruach', produced the 'nephesh'.

Now, if you take those three sounds and you picture a person sleeping, you get a sound like this [breathing sounds]. Can you hear the [breathing sounds]? What does that tell you? It tells you that soul is dependent. It has to breathe in before it can breathe out. See that? Spirit is eternal, ongoing.

So the out-breathed spirit produced the created, dependent soul, which was a person.

PART 3 - THE PURPOSE OF MAN



Now, it's the first time in the Bible, in this passage, that the word Jehovah (or Yahweh) is used. All through the first chapter of Genesis the word is simply 'Elohim', the word for "God." But Jehovah or Yahweh or whatever way we choose to pronounce the word, is a personal name identifying God as a person. Likewise, Adam is a personal name, not just a general noun. So at this point in the record of creation the emphasis is on personality. A personal God created a personal man for personal fellowship between them.

Then notice some other points out of this description. God had to stoop to create man. He went down, not up. God imparted Himself to man, He breathed His own Spirit into that body of clay. Man combines in himself the highest and the lowest. One element is from God, the other is from the earth. That perhaps will help you understand some of the struggles you go through, because there's two elements in you. One is from above; one is from beneath. And I'm sure I'm not the only person here in whom those elements sometimes come into conflict. And one part of me wants the thing that belongs to the above and the other part of me wants the thing that comes from below. You see, one of the features of the record of creation in the Bible is it explains what we're like, why the things happen that happen in our lives. It's got an answer. And I don't believe any other alternative version supplies the answers.

The other fact that I want to point out is that man relates to two worlds. Through his spirit he relates to God; through his body he relates to this world. Let me just recapitulate those features.

1. it was a personal God who created a personal man for personal fellowship between them.
2. God stooped to create man.
3. God imparted Himself to man.
4. man combines in himself both the highest and the lowest.
5. through his spirit man relates to God. Through his body man relates to the world.

Concerning the relationship that was brought into being between God and man through creation I would say there are two key thoughts. The one I've already mentioned is fellowship. The second is implied in what I've said, dependence. The very word 'nephesh' implies dependence, something that has to receive before it can give out. I believe it's true that when a baby is born into the world, the same thing still happens. In other words, somebody has to start the breathing operating. Because, in a sense, it takes us right back to the truth of creation.

What was God's purpose for man? It's stated very simply in Genesis 1:26. Before the actual description of creation takes place, the purpose is given.

“Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them [that’s the human race, not just one man] rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the earth.’”

So there are two features of man in God’s purpose. First of all, he was to visibly represent God in a way that no other creature did. He was to portray the likeness of the Creator. Secondly, he was to exercise God’s authority on His behalf. Authority over the whole earth.

So long as man remained dependent, he ruled. That’s a paradox. Today, in most people’s thinking, the concept of ruling is being independent. But in God’s eternal provision, to rule the man had to remain dependent. The moment he ceased to be dependent he ceased to rule.

Now Satan had special enmity—and remember that his name ‘Satan’ was not his original name. He was originally ‘Lucifer’, the “light bringer.” But when he transgressed, he lost that identity and he became Satan. The word Satan means “the adversary, the resistor, the opposer.” Understand, he’s the one who unfailingly opposes God’s purposes and God’s people. That’s why he’s our enemy as well.

Now he had enmity against man for two special reasons. Out of all the creatures that God had created, man was number one target for his enmity for two reasons. First of all, man carried in himself the image of God. Satan couldn’t attack God, but he could attack the image of God in man. I saw a very vivid thing happen many years ago. I was with a young lady who was a Christian but not perhaps as spiritual as she ought to be. And she had been engaged to a young man who jilted her. And she carried around with her a photograph of this young man. But when she got the news that he had jilted her she took his photograph and tore it up. She vented her ill feeling against the man on his image. And that’s a little picture of one of the reasons why Satan hates us. Because we carry the image of God. He can’t attack God, but he can take that image of God in man, defile it, stamp upon it and shake his fist at God. And when you see somebody that’s marred and deformed by the results of sin—an alcoholic or somebody that’s somehow lost human dignity—bear in mind that’s Satan’s work. He’s wreaking his enmity against God on that creature.

The second reason, I believe, for Satan’s enmity against man was that man is destined to take the place from which Satan fell. So he’s, in a sense, his rival.

Now, Satan, as we know, produced man’s downfall through his cunning. We’ll just look briefly at the record, I’m not going to dwell on it, in Genesis 3 verses 1–5, ***“Now the serpent [and we discover that the serpent was the embodiment of Satan] was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made.”*** Bear in mind the main feature of Satan’s character, which is always emphasized in the Bible, is his craftiness. And his primary activity is to deceive. ***“He said to the woman, [and notice he went to the weaker vessel and bypassed God’s chain of authority. He said to the woman,] ‘Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’” The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat from the trees in the garden, but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’” “You will not surely die,” the serpent said to the woman. “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate it.”*** (NIV)

We don’t need to read the rest. I want you to see three features of Satan’s approach against man, primarily against the woman, Eve. The first thing he did was to question God’s word. He said, ***“Did God really say?”*** And I believe Eve lost the battle the moment she entertained that question. And I want to

warn you that his tactics have not changed. And in many, many sections of the church you will be confronted by people who say, *"Did God really say?"* And if you entertain that, you're in the same dangerous position that Eve was. You cannot afford to entertain the questioning of God's Word.

Secondly, he questioned God's goodness. He said, *"God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you'll be like God knowing good and evil."* What's the implication? The implication is that God is an unjust, arbitrary despot who is keeping His creatures in subjection, which was lower than what they should have been. So Satan's first aim was to discredit God's word. His second was to discredit God's goodness. And he's still the same.

What was his temptation? What was the bait he offered? Exactly the same motivation that caused his own fall. He said, *"You will be like God; you will be equal with God."* He had said, who knows how long or how short a while previously, *"I will be like the Most High."* Now he says, *"You will be like God."* In other words, it's the same motivation—and it worked – ALAS! So man fell through the temptation of Satan. The same deception, the same motivation that caused Satan's downfall caused man's downfall.

LET ME POINT OUT TO YOU SEVEN RESULTS OF ADAM'S FALL.

1. Adam's direct fellowship with God was broken.
2. Adam's life source was cut off. He was like a battery that would never be recharged. There was a tremendous amount of divine life in him, but it had to run down ultimately.
3. Adam became subject to corruption—that is, sickness, old age, wrinkles, stiff joints, a lot of other things we don't like to think about.
4. Adam became subject to satanic harassment. I believe from then on he was the object of demon activity.
5. Adam became a slave instead of a king. He could have been a king if he had remained dependent. He chose independence and became a slave.

Isn't that so true of so many people that we meet today? Especially I think people in their teens. The attitude is, *"I don't want to have to obey anybody. Nobody's going to tell me what to do. I'll be independent."* And what do you become? A slave. That's right. Some of you awakened to that fact and repented. I'm sure you're glad you did.

6. Adam's realm became "subject to vanity"—that's the King James Version. Other versions say "futility."

This is again another example of the frightening effects of the misuse of authority. Exactly as when Lucifer rebelled, a third of the angels fell with him and were involved in his guilt. In exactly the same principle, when Adam fell, the entire earth felt the consequences of his disobedience. Thorns and thistles appeared where they'd never been before. And everything that's hard and unpleasant and causes strain and demands labor and produces frustration came into this earth through the disobedience of its head, Adam.

7. Adam became identified with Satan in the guilt of rebellion. He became a rebel like Satan.
This is a vital fact because it took the wisdom of God to find the solution.

Part 4 – GODS ANSWER



Maybe we could look in Job chapter 1 for a moment. You know, if I'd been writing a Bible I'd have never written one like this. There's a lot of things in this Bible that would have never occurred to me. I could never have believed that Satan would ever have access to the presence of God again. But the Bible very clearly indicates that he does. Verse 6, ***"One day the angels came to present themselves before the LORD [the King James says "the sons of God," but there's no doubt it means the angels], and Satan also came with them."*** Isn't that remarkable? Furthermore, to me, the implication of the text is that the only person who could pick Satan out was the Lord. Because Paul says he's transformed as *"an angel of light."* The fellow angels apparently didn't know he was amongst them. ***"The LORD said to Satan, "Where have you come from?" Satan answered the LORD, "From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it."***

Remember, that's how he started, wandering to and fro. And so on, we don't need to go into the rest of it. You say, "Well, how could God continue to tolerate Satan?" I'm sure there are many reasons I don't know. When I was in Africa teaching African young people, that was the number one question that they always asked. And I, of course, tried to give them some answers but it was a real thorny problem for them. Why did God create the devil? I said, "He didn't create the devil, He created Lucifer. And Lucifer turned himself into Satan."

"WELL, WHY DOESN'T GOD DEAL WITH THE DEVIL?"

I'll offer you one reason. God's mercy toward the human race. You see, Satan in his cunning had got man, the human race, involved in the same guilt that he was in. And so, I can picture Satan saying something like this (this is just my version of the possible way it happened)

"All right, God, I'm a rebel. I know it, You know it. There's no arguing about that. And that lake of burning fire over there, that's where I'm headed. I know it and You know it. You can send me there anytime. But listen, God, You're a just God. You cannot compromise Your justice. You see these human beings? They're rebels like me. The day You send me there, you've got to send them there."

So that was the problem that Satan posed God. He didn't know God had an answer. God had an answer before Satan posed the problem.

All right. Now, to redeem that fallen race, God stooped still lower. And I want you to see the principle that I'm unfolding is every time: the lower you go, the higher you get. But every time you go higher, you end up lower. In the person of Jesus Christ, God identified Himself with the fallen race and expiated its guilt. And once its guilt was expiated, He did not need to compromise His justice to consign Satan to the place he belonged and offer man a way out. The Scripture says in Romans: *"that He might be just and the justifier of him who believes in Jesus."* That was the problem. How could He forgive without compromising His justice? How could He spare man and still consign Satan to his well-deserved end? The answer is: through Jesus.

Look quickly at just a few Scriptures. Hebrews chapter 2 verses 14–15. This is speaking about Jesus and the incarnation, ***"Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death."*** (NIV)

The point I want to bring out is that Jesus not merely created Adam, but in redemption He identified Himself in His own person with that fallen race. And doing so, He became the expiation for our sins.

First Peter 2:24, a beautiful verse, ***"He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed"***

And the same epistle, chapter 3, verse 18, ***"For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God."*** (NIV)

That, in essence, is the meaning of the cross. The sinless Son of God became identified with the fallen sinful race. As our representative He took our guilt upon Him, paid our full penalty, was raised again from the dead and made it possible for God, without compromising His justice, to forgive us and to judge Satan.

NOW, THE PLAN OF REDEMPTION GOES ONE AMAZING STEP FURTHER.

Not merely did Jesus identify Himself with us, but through our faith we become identified with Him. And the lowest are raised to the highest. Bear in mind that's the principle I'm illustrating all the way. If you want to go up, go down. And the amazing thing is not merely that God took a creature formed of dust, but God took that creature; depraved, corrupted and fallen and offered him the highest place in the universe.

Look in Ephesians chapter 2 for a moment, verses 4–6, ***"But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive [in] Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus"***

Now you see there, that's our identification with Jesus. Everything that Jesus went through, we're invited to join Him in. First of all, we have to identify ourselves with Him in His death. We reckon ourselves dead. We're identified with Him in burial by what? By baptism. And having been identified with Him in death and burial, we are identified with Him in three further phases. We're made alive with Him, we're resurrected with Him—and, never stop there. We're *enthroned* with Him.

So God absolutely, specifically and literally took the lowest and, in Christ, raised it to the highest—to seat us with Him on the throne of the universe.

AND FURTHERMORE, JUST ONE STEP FURTHER.

Not merely did God do that or is He doing it [because it's not really yet complete], but God is going to make these fallen creatures redeemed, the demonstration of this principle to the universe for all eternity.

See, my purpose in saying this is to show you that this law is so important that God has made a way that the whole universe will forever be reminded of it. In other words, God says, "Remember, don't you ever exalt yourself. You know what happens. But, if you humble yourself, I'll exalt you."

I'll tell you frankly, brothers and sisters, if we would bear this in mind we'd save ourselves a lot of unnecessary problems. I believe the root cause behind all problems is pride. And God does a lot in our lives to deliver us from pride. But sometimes we don't recognize the hand of the Almighty because God puts us in a situation where the only way out is to humble us. And sometimes we take a long time to realize that.

All right. Let's look at the principle that God will use these fallen but redeemed creatures to demonstrate this law to the universe forever. We go to three passages in Ephesians. In some ways Ephesians is a unique epistle. I think, in a way, it reveals the eternal purposes of God, both past and future, with a clarity and a completeness that no other passage in the Bible does.

It's interesting about this epistle, most of Paul's epistles were written by him in conjunction with others. But this epistle is written by Paul alone. And, in a certain sense, it contains the unique revelation which God granted to Paul. Notice the opening verse, ***"Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God . . ."*** In other words, he has sole responsibility for this letter.

I'll read the opening half of that chapter. I really appreciate this translation because it takes the liberty of breaking up Paul's very lengthy sentences and making several sentences out of one long sentence which makes it that much easier for the average English reader to apprehend. Beginning in verse 2, ***"Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. [Another emphasis of Ephesians is the fatherhood of God in relationship to Jesus.] Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ."*** Bear in mind this epistle was written in a prison, too. That's another example of the same truth. When you go to the lowest, God reveals to you the highest ***"For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will"*** Another emphasis is God does everything the way He wants, ***"... to the praise of his glorious grace [that's another emphasis that it's all to the praise of the grace of God], which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding"*** God's grace is free, it's bounteous, but it's always with wisdom and understanding, ***"and he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment [what is "his good pleasure"?] "to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ."***

Now, here's where we come in. Think of that glorious plan that's unfolded from eternity to eternity. And then it says, ***"In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will"***

That's a good truth if you can lay hold of that - GOD DOES THINGS THE WAY HE INTENDS TO DO THEM.

You know, I've discovered in my life I get very excited and concerned about some things and they don't work out. But the things that God considered important get worked out. And really, we need to worry less because He'll get them worked one way or the other. I'm going to read that again. ***"In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will."***

Now, why were we chosen? Verse 12, ***"in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory"*** So, we're the number one exhibit of this principle that if you exalt yourself you'll be humbled. But if you humble yourself you'll be exalted.

And then in chapter 2, verse 7, which follows on from the verses that I've already quoted. I'll go back to verse 6, ***"And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus"*** (NIV) We're the number one demonstration piece of God's grace!

And then one other Scripture, Ephesians 3:10, ***"His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms"***

Isn't that remarkable! We're to be the supreme demonstration of God's wisdom to the whole universe for all eternity. God took us from the scrap heap and made us His masterpiece.

Praise God.

Amen.

PART 5 – SEVEN STEPS UP, SEVEN STEPS DOWN



The example that we took last night was the created archangel whose name originally was Lucifer who was, perhaps, the most wise and the most beautiful of all the created angels. And as I understand, he was in charge of one-third of God's angels. But the Scripture reveals in Ezekiel 28 and elsewhere that because of his beauty and his wisdom, his heart became proud, pride led to rebellion, he not merely rebelled individually but he incited rebellion against God among all the angels over whom he had charge. And he led one-third of the created angels in rebellion against God. And for that was banished from the presence of God.

Now, tonight I want to focus on the positive aspect of that truth. Lucifer's name was changed to 'Satan'. Instead of being "the son of the dawn"—the one who brings light, the one who heralds the dawn—he became Satan, the *resistor*, the *adversary*, the one who *opposes* God's purposes and God's people.

He's an example of the negative aspect of that truth. *Whoever exalts himself will be humbled.*

Today, I want to look at the positive aspect, *whoever humbles himself will be exalted.* And there is the most perfect contrast in this respect between Lucifer, who became Satan, and Jesus, who was and is by nature the Son of God, God Himself.

Satan reached up, slipped and fell. Jesus stooped down and was lifted up. If you can focus your mind on those two beings, you'll see the most perfect illustration of this truth. But the truth applies in every area of every life in every time and situation. Let me say it again. The way up is down.

To look now at the positive aspect as illustrated by Jesus, I want to turn to Philippians chapter 2 to a very well known and very beautiful passage. A passage that I can never read without being personally challenged by its truth. I'm going to read, first of all, from Philippians 2, beginning at verse 5. I'm reading from the New International Version. I may make a few suggestions about alternative translations. In some respects I think the New American Standard is closer to the original in this passage. When I prepare my radio broadcasts I have both versions in front of me as well as the King James and I choose the one that suits me best. In preaching it's difficult to carry a lot of different Bibles around so I stick to one version. Philippians 2:5, **"Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus..."** And then in the verses that follow, Paul explains what he means by "the attitude of Christ Jesus." The King James says "let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." **"Who, being in very nature [or form] God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped..."** There He's in direct opposition to Satan who did consider equality with God something to be grasped, reached up, grasped for it, slipped and fell—irretrievably. [He] **did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing..."** The New American Standard says He "emptied Himself," which is a more literal translation.

One of the great hymns of Charles Wesley says, “He emptied Himself of all but love.” ***“He emptied himself and took the nature [or the form] of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on the earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”***

Bear in mind that this letter of Paul was written in a prison. I don’t think he had a concordance. I don’t suppose he had any particular comforts or conveniences and one of the things that causes me to marvel about the inspiration of Scripture is the perfect balance of this passage which I’m sure Paul didn’t premeditate. He may not even have been conscious of what he wrote. But in this passage we see the seven steps down and the seven steps up. I want to pause for a moment and point them out to you.

LOOK FIRST AT THE SEVEN STEPS DOWN.

Seven, as you know, is often in Scripture the number of completion, of perfection. It’s also associated with the Holy Spirit.

In verse 7 the first step down, *He emptied himself*. He laid aside all the attributes of divinity.

The second step down, *He took the form of a servant*. He who was the Lord became the servant. However, there are various kinds of servants in the universe. He could have become equal with the angels and been a servant. The Scripture says in Hebrews “He was made a little lower than the angels.” So the next step down, *He was made in human likeness*; He became a man, not an angel.

The fourth step down, *He was found in appearance as a man*. He could have taken on what I would call “the Adamic perfection.” He could have appeared as Adam appeared in majesty and beauty and glory before the fall. But He didn’t appear like that. Because when He walked the streets of His hometown, Nazareth, there was nothing special externally to distinguish Him from all the other people of the town. And when Peter ultimately identified Him as the Messiah and the Son of God, Jesus said, “*Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you.*” There was nothing in His external appearance to make Him different from the other men of His day. So He was not merely a human, but He was a man like the men of His time.

The fifth step down, *He humbled Himself*. Not merely was He a man of His time but He was a humble man of His time. He was not a prince, He was not a wealthy man, He was not a political leader, He was not a military commander. He had none of those aspects or functions which impress people in the natural.

I heard years ago of a brother in the Lord in Britain upon whose heart the Lord laid the prayer which he raised in response to the Lord: “Lord, show me Your hand.” And he kept praying this. He didn’t know why but he prayed, “Lord, show me Your hand.” And one day the Lord answered the prayer and showed him His hands. But it was a surprise because he anticipated that he would see the nail prints in the hands. But the way the Lord showed him His hands was the hands of a working man: rough with the use of the hammer and the saw, the other instruments. Just a plain working man. He was a humble man.

The sixth step down, *He became obedient to death*. Not merely lived as a man but died as a man.

And the seventh and the final step down, *death on a cross*. The ultimate of humiliation, shame, rejection and agony.

So those are the seven great steps down to the lowest place of all, the place of the criminal, the reject. Rejected by men and even rejected by God the Father on our account.

Now, in verse 9, look at the first word. What is it? 'Therefore'. You see, this is the outworking of a divine law. This is not an accident. Jesus was not exalted because He was God's Son. He was exalted because He earned it. You see that? There's two 'therefore's' in this passage. I'll show you another one in a moment. See, even Jesus was subject to this law. There is no one in the universe who is not subject to this law. ***Whoever humbles himself will be exalted.***

NOW LET'S LOOK AT THE EXALTATION WHICH ALSO HAS SEVEN ASPECTS TO IT.

Therefore God *exalted Him to the highest place*, number one.

Number two, *gave Him the name that is above every name*. The King James says "a name" but the correct translation is "the name." There's only one name that's above every name. And that's the name of Jesus.

The third aspect, that *at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow*.

And then four, five and six are the different areas of the universe in which knees will bow.

Fourth, *in heaven*. Fifth, *on earth*. Sixth, *under the earth*.

The three great areas of the universe are all going to acknowledge the exaltation of Jesus by bowing their knees.

And seventhly, finally, *every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father*.

Seven steps down and seven steps up. But He could not take the steps up until He'd taken the steps down. I invite you to meditate on that 'therefore'.

Therefore, God gave Him the highest place in the universe.

For many years I thought it was all worked out in advance. Jesus was just going to do certain things and then God would automatically exalt Him. But I saw that it wasn't so. Jesus had to meet the conditions to be exalted. And if He had to meet them, believe me, you and I have to meet them, too.

PART 6 – PRIDE AND HUMILITY



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Now, what I want to say this evening really in essence is that this principle, this attitude, has got to be worked out in our lives. Paul introduces that passage by saying, ***“Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.”*** And then he describes the attitude. What is the attitude? Being willing to go down and down and down.

Now, if you have a translation similar to mine, the 12th verse, which is the application to our lives, begins with what word? *Therefore*. You notice the second therefore? Therefore, it’s going to work for you and me. That’s what it says. It worked in Jesus, it’s got to work in us. The same attitude that was in Jesus has to be in us, ***“Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed...”*** Humility leads to obedience. And pride leads to disobedience. Pride was the source of rebellion in Satan, ***“not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose”***

So the working out of our salvation with fear and trembling is the working out of this principle. That we have to humble ourselves to be exalted.

And then Paul shows what kind of conduct and nature it will produce. Verse 14, ***“Do everything without complaining or arguing”*** The spiritual man praises, the carnal man complains. You never can be right with God when you’re complaining. Just bear that in mind. ***“Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure...”*** We’re not blameless and pure but we can become blameless and pure. ***“...children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation”*** I suppose most of us don’t have any problem about seeing that we live in a crooked and depraved generation. But the responsibility on us is to be the children of God without fault in such a generation. ***“...in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life”*** And I was deeply impressed when I began my radio broadcast by that truth; that if we’re going to shine, one of the things we have to do is hold out the Word of life. We cannot live self-contained, self-pleasing, self-sufficient lives and ignore the needs of the world and shine. Shining involves holding out the Word of life to those that don’t receive it. ***“...in order that I may boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor for nothing.”***

That’s a very solemn thought which comes to any minister, I’m sure, at times, who’s sincere. *Is what I am doing worthwhile?* And many times almost any person in ministry here would acknowledge that he’s

tempted to believe it isn't worthwhile. And it's possible that it might not be worthwhile. That's a real fact. It depends on what we're producing. Paul said, *"If I don't produce this in you, then all my labor that I bestowed on you is in vain."* It's a very solemn thought. It's possible, I believe, for a man to spend his whole life in ministry to people, but if he doesn't produce the right kind of people, his life's work has been in vain.

As a younger preacher I used to be more concerned with what I preached. Now I'm more concerned with what I produce. Because the tree is known by the fruit. It's no good producing good sermons and having good programs if we don't produce good people.

Now the essence of what I want to say in following this up is that humility is not an emotion. It's not a pious feeling. It's a decision of the will. And it has to be worked out in action. A lot of people have got the wrong idea about humility. They kind of walk into church on Sunday morning, feel themselves over and say, "Am I feeling humble?" Don't bother about feeling humble. Just decide to be humble. Make the decision. You hear people pray from time to time, "God, make me humble." I question whether God can do that. I think there's only one person who can make you humble and that's you. And if you don't decide to do it, it won't happen.

Look at two passages in the epistles of James and Peter that are very parallel. James chapter 4:10, ***"Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up."***

That's the same principle again. But notice it says *"humble yourselves,"* You do it. And in 1 Peter 5: 5–6, ***"Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older."*** That's only the beginning of that verse. There is a certain obligation on the younger to show respect and submission toward the older. But that's not the whole application. Then that principle is applied to all of us, young or old, ***"Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."*** There's the same principle again. God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. You want grace? Humble yourself. But if you come to God with pride, the Bible says *"God knows the proud from afar."* (Psalm 138:6) And that's where He keeps them. Pride never has access to the presence of God.

So Peter goes on, verse 6, ***"Humble yourselves, therefore [notice the therefore], under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time."*** And bear in mind it's God who determines the time when you'll be lifted up. Jesus didn't raise Himself from the tomb, He waited for the Father to do it. One of the biggest tests in our lives is humbling ourselves and waiting for God to respond. And He usually doesn't respond just when we think He ought to. The version I read there says, *"Clothe yourselves with humility."* Phillip's translation says, *"Wear the overalls of humility,"* which is an excellent translation because the Greek word that's translated "clothe yourselves" means put on precisely a certain type of apron. And it was an apron that was only worn by slaves. So any person wearing that apron immediately indicated to everybody: "I'm a slave." And Peter says "Put on the apron of slavery. Let it be apparent that you're a servant. Wear that clothing that marks you out as a servant." And he says, *"Humble yourselves."* In other words, become a servant. Seek to serve.

Now there is one passage in the Bible where God speaks about humbling His people. It's in Deuteronomy chapter 8. But I think if you look there with me you'll see that what God did was to create the circumstances in which Israel were given the opportunity to humble themselves. And I also believe the record of the Scripture indicates that most of them never did it. Deuteronomy 8 verses 2–3, ***"Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his***

commands. [Notice, humility always leads to obedience.] ***He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.***

So God put them in the wilderness in a very special set of circumstances where most of the things that they were used to were no longer available. Why did He put them in that set of circumstances? To humble them, to give them the opportunity to humble themselves before God and submit to His dealings. But as I've said, it's my impression that most of them never did humble themselves although the circumstances were there.

So my conclusion is that God can humble us in the sense of making the situation in which we need to humble ourselves. But the ultimate decision rests with each one of us. Humble yourself. And let me tell you, for sure, that if you pray, "God, make me humble," He'll arrange a situation in which you have to humble yourself. And then don't complain because that's the answer to your prayer. "Lord, make me humble." It sounds so good in church on Sunday morning but on Monday morning when your boss bawls you out for nothing that's any fault of yours, that's the answer to your prayer. And what are you going to do then?

That's there in 1 Peter 2:19, ***"For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God."*** That's a beautiful translation. Why should you endure that? It wasn't fair. You'll endure it if you're conscious of God. ***"But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called..."*** I've heard Don Basham say, "A lot of Christians never realize that's part of their calling." ***"To this you were called..."*** To what? Suffer unjustly. Why? To cultivate humility. God will arrange the circumstances, you better be open when God does to see what He's doing. ***"To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps."***

So humility ultimately must come through a decision of our will and that decision has to be worked out in action, not in words, not in emotions. Jesus said, and it's one of the passages where He quotes this principle, He said: *If you're invited to a wedding feast, don't sit at the top table, sit at the lowest table.* Then there's only one way you can go and that's up.

I love the words of John Bunyan, I've quoted them many times. "He that is down need fear no fall. He that is low, no pride. He that is humble ever shall have God to be his guide."

PART 7 – THE RIGHT WAY TO COME TO GOD



So humility ultimately must come through a decision of our will. And that decision has to be worked out in action, not in words, not in emotions. Jesus said, and it's one of the passages where He quotes this principle, He said: *If you're invited to a wedding feast, don't sit at the top table, sit at the lowest table.* Then there's only one way you can go and that's up. I love the words of John Bunyan, I've quoted them many times. "He that is down need fear no fall. He that is low, no pride. He that is humble ever shall have God to be his guide."

You can't go lower than the floor. If you're there already, there's only one way you can go and that's up. And where it says, "Humble yourselves before the Lord," this is a matter of personal relationship with the Lord. But I find that one of the best things I ever do is get on the floor before the Lord and lie there on my face. And say to the Lord, "Lord, I want You to know that I know that this is where I belong." And wait there until you feel a release in your spirit from the Lord.

Now, I want to speak in a practical way about two ways that this principle has to be applied in our lives, the principle of humbling ourselves. The first is when we come to God initially. The second is as we progress in the spiritual life. I want to begin by speaking about how we come to God.

Matthew 18: 1–4, ***"At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, 'Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?' What do you think their motivation was? 'Could I qualify?' He called a little child and had him stand among them. And he said: 'I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.' What did He mean? Well, the next verse is His explanation. And there's another 'therefore'. 'Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.'"***

What is there about a child that's humble? Children are not always very sweet in their behavior, they can be quite ornery, quite quarrelsome, but they're teachable. They don't have a lot of hang-ups and preconceptions and prejudices. They're open. They're not ready-made. And I believe that's what Jesus meant when He said, "If you come to God and you want to come into the kingdom of heaven, you've got to come like a little child, there is no other way."

Look in 1 Corinthians 1. Paul describes the kind of people that belong to the Corinthian church. Let me emphasize the Corinthian church was charismatic. First Corinthians 1:26–29, ***"Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth."***

Is there anything wrong with being wise or influential or of noble birth? Nothing whatever. What's the problem? Those things normally produce pride. It's not the wisdom but it's the pride that comes from

the wisdom. It's not the noble birth but it's the pride that comes from noble birth. That's why the proportion of such people amongst the total company of God's people is very small. Not that God has got anything against wisdom or influence or noble birth, but those things tend to create in the people that have them the barrier of pride.

So Paul goes on, ***"But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; [He] chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things— and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, [Why? Very simply stated in the next verse.] so that no one may boast before him."*** All pride must be excluded. And God made His choice on that basis. You see, the principle is universal.

Let me turn again to the gospel of Luke. There's a lot in Luke about this principle. Perhaps more than in any of the other gospels. Luke 18, the story of the rich ruler that came to Jesus. Luke 18, beginning at verse 18, ***"A certain ruler asked him, 'Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' 'Why do you call me good?' Jesus answered. 'No one is good—except God alone. You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honor your father and mother.''" "All these I have kept since I was a boy," he said. [And I believe he was speaking the truth.] When Jesus heard this, he said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was a man of great wealth."*** It always impresses me that that's not the way people usually respond to being wealthy. But in the presence of Jesus His values suddenly changed. Jesus looked at him and said, ***"How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God! Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."***

Now there's a lot of speculation about what Jesus means about a camel going through the eye of a needle but I believe there is a simple, plain, correct answer. When I lived in Israel in 1946 and around that time, I had friends, a married couple. He was an Anglican priest. His wife was a Jewish believer and the daughter of a Jewish believer who had lived in Israel. And she told me that her father said he could remember the time when the Jaffa Gate was not open. It was open, strangely enough, to let the Kaiser in sometime in the early years of this century. And there was a great iron door that was closed, the Jaffa Gate to the Old City. The great iron door was closed every night when the sun set. And, of course, that continued for years. It's only comparatively recently that people have gone out after dark in Jerusalem. And if a traveler came on a camel after dark, they would not open that great iron door. But in that iron door was a much smaller, little door, just about maybe four feet high and two feet wide. And they would reluctantly open that door and the man would dismount from his camel and enter, strip the camel of all its baggage and everything that it had on it, get the camel down on its knees and on its knees without anything on it, it could just barely squeeze through that door. Now that door was called "the needle's eye." So when Jesus spoke about a camel going through the eye of a needle He wasn't using some extravagant and unreasonable expression. He was speaking about something very vivid. And Jesus said a rich man who comes to God has got to come like that camel. He's got to be stripped of everything, he's got to get down on his knees and he can just squeeze in because there's no room for pride in that doorway.

I'd like to turn to the Old Testament to 2 Kings chapter 5 and look for a moment at the story of a man who thought he could come to God in a big way. Now this is about the third sermon I ever heard when I got in touch with Pentecostal people. And it was a tremendous anointed message on Naaman. I've always remembered the picture. We'll just look at certain aspects of the story, beginning at the 1st verse

of 2 Kings chapter 5, ***“Now Naaman was commander of the army of the king of Aram [of Syria]. He was a great man in the sight of his master and highly regarded, because through him the LORD had given victory to Aram. He was a valiant soldier, but he had leprosy”***

How many people there are in whose lives there’s a ‘but’. He had everything, ‘but’. He was a commander of the army, he was highly regarded, a valiant soldier—‘but’. He had this horrible, unclean, incurable disease: leprosy. He had in his home a little Jewish girl that had been taken captive by the Syrian bands and this Jewish girl was really a model of the grace of God. Instead of being resentful against those who had taken her captive, she was concerned about them. [And] ***“she said to her mistress, “If only my master would see the prophet who is in Samaria [that’s Elisha] He would cure him of his leprosy.” Naaman went to his master and told him what the girl from Israel had said. “By all means, go,” the king of Aram replied. [He didn’t want to lose one of his best officers.] “I will send a letter to the king of Israel.” So Naaman left [I love this], taking with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold and ten sets of clothing.*** He came to God in a big way. My Bible here says that ten talents of silver is about seven hundred and fifty pounds. And six thousand shekels of gold is about a hundred and fifty pounds of gold. At \$400 dollars an ounce, it’s more than I can do in my head to work out how much that is. But it was a vast sum of wealth. All right. He went with the letter to the king of Israel and the letter read, ***“With this letter I’m sending my servant Naaman to you so that you may cure him of his leprosy.”*** There’s really an element of humor in this story. The king of Israel was appalled. “What can I do?” He tore his clothes. He said, “He’s just seeking a quarrel with me, that’s all.” But verse 8, ***“When Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his robes, he sent him this message: “Why have you torn your robes? Have the man come to me and he will know that there is a prophet in Israel.”*** Oh, I would to God that God’s people could say that today! And thank God when they can. ***“So Naaman went with his horses and chariots [He didn’t mention the horses and chariots—but there’s more than one chariot and more than one horse] and stopped at the door of Elisha’s house.”***

What do you think Elisha did? Come in, you’re welcome! Take a seat. Elisha didn’t even go to the door. What was Elisha doing? What was he dealing with? Pride, that’s right. There’s a real art in dealing with pride. ***“Elisha sent a messenger to say to him . . . [What an insult! The most important client who had come in five years! What modern physician would do that?] Elisha sent a messenger to say to him, “Go, wash yourself seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will be restored and you will be cleansed.” But Naaman went away angry and said, “I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, wave his hand over the spot and cure me of my leprosy.”***

See, Naaman was like so many of us. He had God all pre-programmed, just how it was going to happen. I’m sure you’ve never done that. Never! You know, “God, I know the way it’s going to be.” Nothing happened. You’re not even aware whether God is on the scene at all. ***“Are not [the] Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than any of the waters of Israel?”***

How many of you have seen the Jordan River? It is not beautiful. It is very, very muddy. I was baptized in the River Jordan in 1942. And when I stood there in the water I sunk up to my ankles in this liquid mud on the bottom. I can really understand Naaman’s reaction. ***“That muddy stream—when we’ve got beautiful, crystal clear streams in Syria that flow down from the mountains? What a ridiculous suggestion!” “Couldn’t I wash in them and be cleansed?” So he turned and went off in a rage.”*** This is an excellent translation. When it comes to the historical events I think there’s nothing to equal the ‘New International Version.’ ***“So he turned and went off in a rage. Naaman’s servants went to him and said, “My father, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it?”*** Of

course he would! If he had had to come up with a fee of all that gold and silver he wouldn't have hesitated. The trouble was it was too easy, too simple. And it still is for many, many people today. ***"How much more, then, when he tells you, 'Wash and be cleansed'!"*** Thank God Naaman had the sense to listen to his servants. He was beginning to learn what? Humility, that's right. So he went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, as the man of God had told him, and his flesh was restored and became clean like that of a young boy.

PART 8 – A KEY TO GOOD RELATIONSHIPS



Think what's involved. Here he is in all his military uniform with his four stars, epaulets, medals . . . and he has to take them all off. And what's below the surface? Leprosy. He had to reveal it to his servants, to the people standing on the bank, everybody. What was he learning? Humility, that's right.

And then another lesson here for me is this: That there's no such thing as *partial* obedience. How many times was he told to dip? Seven. What do you think would have happened if he said after five times, "Well, nothing is happening. This thing doesn't work; I can just as well stop."

My personal conviction is nothing changed before the seventh time and then everything changed. And remember when God says *seven* times, He doesn't mean six and He doesn't mean eight. He's very precise and He requires precise obedience. So, he was like a little young boy again. He thought he could come to God in a big way. But thank God he was willing to learn. How many are not!

All right. Now let's look at this principle as we progress in the spiritual life. We don't learn it all the first time—or do we? I certainly had to humble myself. God created the situation, if anything could have been designed to humble a professor of philosophy from Eton and Cambridge, believe me, God had the situation prepared. When I think back I really did humble myself. I went just as low as anybody could go. But you know what I thought afterwards? I thought, "God was pretty lucky to get me." It took me quite a long while to learn that God had taken on a lot of responsibilities when He took on me. When I look back now, if I'd been God I would never have started on that project. So we don't learn it all just when we come to God. There's an ongoing process of humbling ourselves. This applies particularly in the matter of leadership.

THE GREAT QUALIFICATION FOR LEADERSHIP IN THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST IS WILLINGNESS TO HUMBLE YOURSELF.

Let's look in Matthew chapter 20—Matthew 20, beginning at verse 20, ***"Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favor of him."*** She was kneeling down, but she wasn't very humble. There's a lot of outward acts that might suggest humility but it's an inward condition. ***"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."*** [That's a pretty simple request.] ***"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.*** [And they didn't know what they were saying.] ***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."***

Why do you think they were indignant? That's right. So there was nobody that came out of this with an 'A' rating. ***"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. [No, 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.'"***

So you see, the rule of the kingdom is: if you want to go up, you go down. The further down you go the higher up you come. And it's progressive. You come into the kingdom by humbling yourself. But when you're in the kingdom, if you want to be promoted, you go down. You become the servant of all. So that rule goes on applying in the Christian life all the way through.

I have noticed in my experience that there are subtle differences in the way people approach me. For instance, I remember a lady that came to Lydia and me once and said, "I want to help you." I'm not saying she wasn't sincere, but I have to say she proved to be a disaster. Lydia afterwards said, "What she really wanted was me." I think of somebody else who said to me, "I want to work with you." And something in me said, "Be careful." But I think of others who said to me, "Brother Prince, I want to serve you." And you know, I've discovered that those are the people who are a blessing. There's a tremendous difference in the words with which a person approaches. I'm afraid of people that want to 'help' me, because although they may be sincere, they're usually out for something for themselves.

Now this could be misunderstood. I mean, it's just a matter of how the person comes. But the way to be a blessing to somebody is to humble yourself. And I doubt whether you can really be a blessing as long as you're not willing to humble yourself because I think that pride stands in the way of the blessing that God wants to make you.

I want to look at the example also of Paul in 2 Corinthians 12: 7–10, ***"To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me."*** Of course, there's been a lot said about that, but I don't intend to add to it. I simply want to point out that God loves His people so much that He'll do everything He possibly can to keep them from becoming proud. And sometimes the thing that you might object to and complain to God about is the evidence of His love and concern for you. Paul says, ***"Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me."*** Some people's attitude is that any spiritual person always gets his prayers answered. By that standard, Paul wasn't a spiritual person, was he? Because he prayed three times. Well, he got an answer. Do you know what it was? No! Some people don't realize that 'no' is also an answer. ***"But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.'"*** That's the revelation. You want God's power? It'll be manifested in your weakness. Paul then comes to a 'therefore'. And notice all the 'therefores' we're finding this evening, ***"Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong."***

Why should he delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions? What did they do? They humbled him. They brought him lower. He said, "Every time I go down, I get more of God. When I'm weak, then I'm strong. When I boast of my infirmities, God's glory rests on me. But when I rely on my own ability and cleverness and experience and strength, then God withdraws."

You've probably heard Charles Simpson's story, it's a good one. He was preaching in New Zealand and he had a fantastically successful meeting. Everything went right. The anointing flowed, the people

responded. And as he was on his way home where he was staying, he said to himself, “Now that was the real me.” And he goes on to relate the story that the Lord said to the Holy Spirit, “Just show him who the real ‘he’ is.” And he said the next night there was no anointing, there was no blessing, the words dribbled down his chin and he went home but he realized that God had shown him who the real he was. So, when we rely on ourselves, our strength, our wisdom, God says, *“Okay. Carry on. But without Me. See what you can do!”*

The principle is summed up in John chapter 3 verse 30 in a simple sentence by John the Baptist, a man who learned and applied this principle. John 3: 30, speaking about his relationship with Jesus, the Messiah, for whom he had come to prepare the way, he says, ***“He must become greater; I must become less.”*** That’s progress. It’s always becoming less that Jesus may become greater.

I was impressed by a sentence that I read once from Moody, the evangelist, Dwight L. Moody. He said: “As a young man in the service of the Lord, I used to imagine that God had His gifts stored on shelves and that the best gifts were on the top shelves and I would have to reach up for them. But,” he said, “later on I came to realize that the best gifts are on the lowest shelves and I have to stoop down for them.” That’s a very beautiful way of expressing it.

Finally in my message I want to take this principle of humbling ourselves one step further. And I want to show you that we have to apply the principle not only in our relationship to God but also in our relationship to other people. See, for a long while in various sections of the church, we had all the right words toward God. But we failed to see that it didn’t work with God if it didn’t work with people. That the test of what we are in our relationship to God is how we relate to other people. And this applies to humility as much as any other aspect of Christian life. I’ll just give you two Scriptures about that from the New Testament. Go back to Philippians 2 for a moment and just read the 3rd verse which leads on to the passage we looked at together. Philippians 2: 3, ***“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourself.”*** That’s how we relate to other people.

And in Ephesians 5: 21, a short verse, ***“Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.”*** Or fear. Either word is legitimate. So the proof of our reverence for Christ is what? That we submit to one another. If we will say we are submitted to God and we will not submit to other people, we are deceiving ourselves. Because the proof of our submission to God is our attitude and relationship to other people.

PART 9 – FAITH, A KEY TO HUMILITY



I want to give you two beautiful examples to close with, each from the book of Genesis. The first is in Genesis 13 and we'll begin at verse 5. This speaks about the relationship between Abraham and Lot, his nephew. Abraham's name had not yet been changed at this time so he's still referred to as Abram. Beginning at verse 5, ***"Now Lot, who was moving about with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents. But the land could not support them while they stayed together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to stay together."*** There was no pasture that could provide food for all their flocks and herds. And there weren't enough water supplies in any one area to meet the needs of all their livestock. ***"And quarreling arose between Abram's herdsmen and the herdsmen of Lot. The Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land at that time."***

Why do you think that's put in? It's really not part of the narrative, is it? What's the point of saying *'the Canaanites and Perizzites were also in the land?'* What does it mean? It means it's very dangerous for God's people to quarrel when the enemy's just around the corner. And if it was ever true, it's true today. We cannot afford the luxury of quarreling because, believe me, the Canaanites and Perizzites and a lot of other "ites" are just around the corner. And they will exploit any division or disharmony amongst the people of God.

"So Abram said to Lot, 'Let's not have any quarreling between you and me, or between your herdsmen and mine, for we are brothers. Is not the whole land before you? Let's part company. If you go to the left, I'll go to the right; if you go to the right, I'll go to the left.'"

Now, bear in mind, Lot was Abram's nephew; he was junior. Also, Abram was the man whom God had called; Lot had simply followed along with Abram without any real calling. Abram was the man whom God had chosen to be the father of His special nation, to bring forth the people who would bring forth the Messiah. He was God's elect. What humility to say to his nephew: You have first choice. Whichever way you go, I'll go the other way. Do you think he was taking a risk? Do you think he could have lost his inheritance? Suppose Lot had chosen the land that God had ordained for Abram? What would have happened?

See, the essence of humility is you don't make those calculations. What will happen if I submit to so and so? If God requires you to submit to so and so, what happens is not your business. It's God's business. But only your submitting can release the grace of God into that situation. It's always a risk. Doing anything God tells you is a risk. God's always telling us to do the risky things. But it's a much greater risk not to do them. You're caught between two risks.

I remember a lady who said to me once about something she felt the Lord was speaking to her about. She said, "If only I knew absolutely for certain, I'd do it." I said, "If you knew absolutely for certain, there'd be no faith. You've got to take a risk."

Shall I tell you a risk that most of you have taken? Getting married! Believe me, that's a risk! You might not be honest enough to say so, but it's a risk. It's also a commitment. You say, "Well it's risky to commit myself to a man." It *is* - very. But it's much more risky to enter a marriage without being committed. In fact, I would say that's a sure way to problems.

God has not arranged our lives so that we're risk free. And frankly, for myself, I don't want to live risk free. I appreciate a little excitement. Sometimes I think I get more than I want at a given moment.

What was the result? Abram said, "You choose. If you go to the left, I'll go to the right." And vice versa. Verse 10, ***"Lot looked up and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan was well watered, like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, toward Zoar. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan and set out toward the east. The two men parted company: Abram lived in the land of Canaan, while Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents near Sodom. Now the men of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the LORD. [Now notice the next verse:] The LORD said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, 'Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west. All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever.'***

Do you see? When he humbled himself, when he left the decision to God, God said, "Now I can show you what I have for you." But until he made that decisive step, he could never see his inheritance. God has got it beautifully worked out. God says, "You humble yourself; I'll take care of the consequences. Don't try and work it out for Me." Don't make up your mind in advance you'll humble yourself if—that's not humility. "God, I'll do what my pastor asks if I get my way." Sure you will. That's not what God wants. God wants you to say, "I'll do what my pastor asks—period." It's a commitment, it's a risk. There is no other way. It really blesses me to see how Abram trusted God with the result of his humbling himself. We have to do that, there's no other way.

Jesus trusted God. He died, the Father raised Him up. If the Father had never raised Him up, He would have never come back from the tomb. He humbled himself, God exalted Him.

You humble yourself, God will exalt you.

Don't try to exalt yourself.

Don't work it out for God. When you get your hands on it, God takes His off.

PART 10 – JACOB, AND EXAMPLE OF HUMILITY



Let's look at one other example - Jacob.

Genesis 33. You really need to know a little bit about the background of Jacob's career to appreciate this. Earlier in his life, Jacob, whose name means "cheat" or "supplanter," had cheated his brother Esau. He got the birthright, by, I wouldn't say cheating. He simply bought it for a bowl of soup. It was pretty smart practice. But he'd actually cheated him out of his father's blessing by pretending to be Esau. You know the story, I'm sure. He got nothing for it except to be in exile. And for twenty years he had to run from the land that God had promised him. Then after twenty years serving his uncle Laban, having acquired wives and children and flocks and herds, the Lord told him, "Now is the time to go back." So he started back toward the Promised Land and when he got to the border he came to a place where he sent everything he had ahead of him. His wives, his children, his flocks and his herds. And it says, "Jacob was left alone." Perhaps we could read that. It's in Genesis 32 verse 24, ***"So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man."***

This man, I believe, was God. Jacob believed that, too, because the next day he said, "I've seen God face to face." It was the second person of the Godhead, the one who was manifested in human history as Jesus of Nazareth. And notice the combination of gentleness and power. Jacob wouldn't give way so eventually the man touched the socket of his hip and put him out of joint. See, just a little touch but it put him out of joint. Now Jacob was helpless. There was nothing he could do but plead for mercy.

Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak." But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." The man asked him, "What is your name?" "Jacob," he answered [supplanter, cheat]. Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome." Jacob said, "Please tell me your name." But he replied, "Why do you ask my name?" [It was a mystery.] Then he blessed him there." Now Jacob had the blessing not merely of the father, but of God. ***"So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, "It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared." The sun rose above him as he passed Peniel, and he was limping because of his hip."*** And for the rest of his life Jacob walked with a limp.

I've heard it said that God never puts sickness on anyone. And I understand that in a certain sense that's true, but we have to face the fact that God made Jacob lame. For life. Why? Because there was no other way to do what? Humble him, that's right. I tell you, if God really loves you and you're not willing to humble yourself, God may have to do some very drastic things in your life.

I remember Charles Simpson and I and another brother were talking about a young man whom we all highly esteemed in the Lord. He's a young man with a tremendous potential in ministry. But there's a

certain kind of brashness and self-confidence about him. He's very successful. But I remember Charles said briefly, "He doesn't walk with a limp." What a pithy way to say it: He doesn't walk with a limp.

Now, Jacob had met the angel who was God and received that blessing. Was that sufficient? No. Jacob had one more encounter. Guess who? His brother Esau. He heard that Esau was coming to meet him with four hundred armed men and the last time he saw Esau, Esau was out after his life. So I suppose Jacob felt nervous. Going on in chapter 33, ***"Jacob looked up and there was Esau, coming with his four hundred men; so he divided the children among Leah, Rachel and the two maidservants. He put the maidservants and their children in front, Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph in the rear."*** [Why were Rachel and her children in the rear? Because they were the ones he cared about the most.] ***He himself went on ahead and bowed down to the ground seven times as he approached his brother."*** What was that? Humility. Why was it seven times? Many reasons, but to me the number seven always has a hint the Holy Spirit is there. The Holy Spirit had worked something in Jacob. The man whom God had chosen, the man who had the birthright, the man who had the blessing of his father, the man who had the blessing of the angel. When he met his carnal brother, bowed seven times. You know what I regard that as? The proof he had the blessing. I believe that's the outworking of what happened between Jacob and the angel. Until he met the angel he would never have bowed himself. But he bowed seven times.

WHAT HAPPENED?

"But Esau ran to meet Jacob and embraced him; he threw his arms around his neck and kissed him. And they wept." We don't need to read any further. But you see, you may be God's elect, you may be the one that God has blessed, you may be the spiritual one in your family, in your fellowship, some place. You know what will prove you're the spiritual one? When you can bow down to the carnal one. And then, the problems and the barriers that could not be solved in any other way can be resolved by humility. God resists the proud but he gives grace to the humble. Do you want God's grace? What do you have to do? Humble yourself. Before God and who else? Men! The people around you, your husband, your wife, your children.

I remember years back, early 1950s, when I was about 36 years old and Lydia and I were still bringing up our eight girls. I got very angry with one of our daughters who was about 13 years old at the time and I just was not prepared to change my attitude. You know what happened? I got a strange feeling in my chest just about here like a sort of lump or a pressure. You know what it says in the book of Ecclesiastes, you may not know it, but it says, "Anger rests in the bosom of fools." And I went around like this for 48 hours and I knew there was only one way I could ever get rid of that. You know what it was? To go to my 14-year-old daughter and ask her forgiveness. And I did, and I'm glad I did. I think if I hadn't done that the blessing of God would have been withdrawn from my ministry. There are situations where the only solution is to humble yourself. And you can walk around it and do it from every angle and pray as much as you like. You can pray up a storm. But at the end God says, "Humble yourself. If you're the spiritual one, prove it. Don't expect the carnal person to do what the spiritual person should do. That's *your* responsibility."

So, what's the principle? Let's say it together:

**Whoever exalts himself will be humbled.
But whoever humbles himself will be exalted.**

Which are you going to do?

All right. Praise the Lord!