



Living for God in an Ungodly Culture

Lessons About Pride from King Nebuchadnezzar

Ice Breaker: If you could choose one metaphor to describe your life, what would it be?

Read together: Proverbs 16:18 and Daniel 4:4-12; 18-33 (MSG)

1. Pride causes us to return to what we know doesn't work.

"This is what I, King Nebuchadnezzar, dreamed. It's your turn, Belteshazzar—interpret it for me. None of the wise men of Babylon could make heads or tails of it, but I'm sure you can do it. You're full of the divine Holy Spirit."

How interesting that Nebuchadnezzar went to the Babylonian ways of interpretation first and then remembered Daniel.

Discuss:

- What things do you tend to return to and then realize later there was a better way?
- If your heart has been indoctrinated by the beliefs of the world, who are you serving?
- Why do you think that Christians are so easily seduced to celebrate what God calls sin? How can that happen?
- Pastor Jason said that the ultimate act of pride is calling what God calls sin... not sin. In other words, PRIDE is us determining something is right despite God determining it as wrong. How does this sit with you?
- When we put our words in God's mouth and replace His words with our own, that is the also an act of pride. Are you prone to do that like I am?
- What areas of your life have you put your words in the mouth of God to justify your behavior?

2. Pride inflicts pain on our relationships and to those we are in relationship with.

"At first Daniel, who had been renamed Belteshazzar in Babylon, was upset. The thoughts that came swarming into his mind terrified him. 'Belteshazzar,' the king said, 'stay calm. Don't let the dream and its interpretation scare you.'"

Read together: Proverbs 8:13, Proverbs 11:2, Proverbs 13:10, James 3:16

Discuss:

- What pains has your pride caused in the lives of others?
- Have you had someone express their pain to you when your pride has hurt them?
- What was your response to them?
- How are your family and children affected by pride?
- How are your friendships and workplace affected by pride?
- Is your pride deconstructing the relationships that are in your life, the very ones that you need because they give you life and peace?

3. Pride hinders spiritual growth.

Read together: 1 Peter 5:5-6, Psalm 138:6, Isaiah 57:15

Consider and Reflect:

- As Christians in the current culture, we must understand what is going on!
- If our spiritual growth is being hindered by our pride, we could miss the signs of the times and not interpret things correctly.
- We may be complicit with the enemy without even knowing it.
- Sometimes we affirm sin to be ok by the way we live, the actions we take and the things that we do not address.
- Ask God for the wisdom to discern if you or your actions are blocking what He wants to do in your life.

4. Pride attracts the loving discipline of your Heavenly Father.

Read together: Hebrews 12:6

Discuss:

- The verdict came swiftly on Nebuchadnezzar. He lost his mind and acted as an animal (in fulfillment of what the dream had warned.) What does God's discipline of Nebuchadnezzar show you?
- Discipline is a mark that you belong to God. He disciplines the ones He loves. How have you experienced the discipline of God?
- What was your response to God's discipline in your life?
- What ways are you experiencing the discipline of God and you don't see it?

5. God will honor your humility in His discipline with restoration and intimacy.

We need humility so that we can know God. Nebuchadnezzar comes out of his crazy season a different man who puts God in the proper place.

Read together: Daniel 4:34-37 (MSG)

Discuss:

- In what ways do you want to know God more deeply?
- When is the last time that you admitted you were wrong?
- When was the last time that you did something that you knew was not right and you said you were sorry?
- Do you need to repent?
- What area of your marriage needs to be healed because there is a lack of humility?
- What things might God release to you if you humble yourself?
- How can you make life all about showing God to those around you?

REMEMBER, this is not about perfection, it's about progress. **Pray together:**

*Father, we confess that we have pride and think we know better than You sometimes. We tend to doubt and fear rather than turning to You. We let pride rule when we are embarrassed or feel shame. We recognize that we need You for change. We need Your perspective on the culture around us. We need Your courage to stand for what is right. We ask for Your forgiveness for the times that we have been complicit with sin by committing it, turning a blind eye to it, and celebrating it in order to please people. We recognize that people pleasing is often a slap in the face of what you say is godly. Help us to recognize our areas of compromise. Help us to recognize when we are being prideful. Please forgive us for our pride, arrogance and self-deprecation. Help us to walk more in step with Your Spirit and Your Will. We want to do what You created us to do. Help us not to miss it. Please fulfill Your best dreams in us. Help us to be effective in reaching our sphere of influence for You, and to walk in victory while doing so!
In the name of Jesus, Amen.*