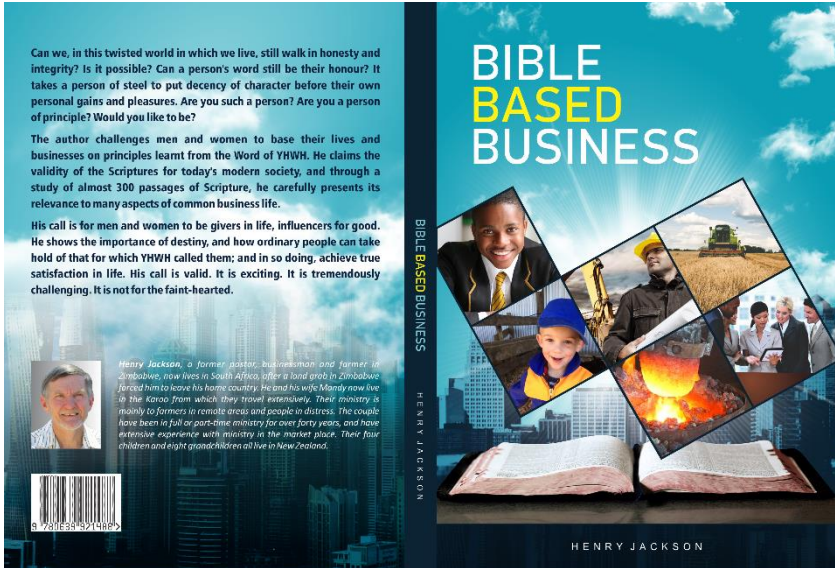


Herewith **chapters 5** of my book

Bible based business



This article (chapters 5) is sent out free of charge, with the prayer that it will be a blessing and encouragement to all who read it. It may be freely copied in its entirety and sent to family and friends as far as it will go.

Should you, however, wish to acquire the book itself, it may be ordered from Magda Du Plessis. She can be contacted at the following address:

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Chapter 5

HUMILITY

Jam 4:10 *“Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.”*

Prov 29:23 *“A man’s pride will bring him low, but a humble spirit will obtain honour.”*

There are so many Scriptures which encourage a walk in humility, and conversely many warnings against pride, that this principle cannot be ignored. Pride is a destroyer! A proud man is definitely steering towards disaster. All other principles might be heeded, and a person can be a great ‘*man of faith*’, but that will not help him if he is a proud man. His pride will trip him up, and all his achievements will be brought to nought. So let us then firstly study the warnings against pride.

Where did pride begin? Isaiah spoke about the king of Babylon as a man of great pride, and behind him, Satan as his spiritual ‘*master*’ was the source of pride. It was Satan who said the following:

Isa 14:13 *“... I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north.*

14 *“I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.”*

Satan wanted to rise to a position of equality with YHWH. YHWH immediately spoke and said, “Nevertheless you will

be thrust down to Sheol, to the recesses of the pit.” So we see that Satan’s pride led to his own destruction.

Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, having the spirit and character of Satan, rose up in great pride himself. His problem was that he could not believe that his kingdom (or empire), as powerful as it was, would ever end.

Nebuchadnezzar had a dream, and Daniel the prophet interpreted Nebuchadnezzar’s own dream in a most remarkable way. The dream was of a great statue with a head of gold, arms and breast of silver, thighs of bronze, legs of iron, and feet of an iron-clay mixture. (Dan 2:1-49)

In interpreting this dream, Daniel said that he, Nebuchadnezzar, represented the head of gold; but after him would come another kingdom, represented by the arms and breast of silver, and then another, and another, each part of the image representing a subsequent kingdom or empire. (The exact details of the meaning of these different kingdoms or empires are explained in my *End times* series of books.)

Little people against a powerful king

Thus Daniel effectively told Nebuchadnezzar that his empire would not last forever and that another kingdom would arise in its place. Well, Nebuchadnezzar did not like this very much. What did he do? In the next chapter we read,

Dan 3:1 *“Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, the height of which was sixty cubits (about thirty metres high), and its width six cubits; he set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon.”*

Nebuchadnezzar proceeded to assemble all the governors and leaders of all the provinces over which Babylon ruled, and forced them to bow in worship before this massive golden image.

Have you ever thought why Nebuchadnezzar would do this, and what this image must have looked like? Well just consider; the entire image was of gold - not just the head. I would say that he was challenging YHWH by saying,

“There will not be any other kingdoms of silver and bronze and iron. My kingdom will never come to an end!”

The Bible does not tell us, but I can just imagine that the image was of him.

However, his pride and glory were short-lived. Three humble Hebrew youths, at great risk of losing their own lives, refused to bow their knee to the image. Nebuchadnezzar had them thrown into an extremely hot furnace, which they miraculously survived. Now it was Nebuchadnezzar's turn to be put down. His great pride and fury had no effect whatsoever on the Hebrew youths, and he was forced to bow to a Superior Being.

Nevertheless, Nebuchadnezzar had still not learnt his lesson. Is it not amazing how we humans find it so difficult to bow

that proud kneel? In the next chapter of Daniel we find Nebuchadnezzar, (after having been distinctly warned by Daniel twelve months previously against pride) standing on a high place looking over the great city of Babylon. In haughty tones he declares,

Dan 4:30 *"... Is this not Babylon the great which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?"*

What pride! What an exaltation of himself and his own achievements! A voice came immediately out of heaven telling him that his sovereignty was removed, and straight away he lost his mind for a period of seven years. After this, his mind was restored and he, in a new-found humility, declares,

Dan 4:37 *"Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise, exalt, and honour the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride."*

This story, like many other true stories in the Scriptures, was written for our instruction (1Cor 10:11). We should be particularly careful of the subtle temptation of pride when we start to taste success. Many great men have fallen heavily as they have succumbed to this evil vice, just at the time when success had begun to taste so sweet. James gives us clear guidance in regard to this proud attitude of mankind.

What are you planning for tomorrow?

Jam 4:13 *“Come now you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow, we shall go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit.’*

14 *“Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapour that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.*

15 *“Instead, you ought to say, ‘If the Lord wills, we shall live and also do this or that.’*

16 *“But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil.”*

This sounds so much like the pride in the business world today. We are often so full of ourselves and our own achievements, that we forget that whatever we might have achieved, was only by the grace of YHWH Who gave us the skills and mental ability to do it in the first place. YHWH will not share His glory with any other. Rebel against that if you will, but the sooner we learn this principle, and bow our knees to Him, giving Him the glory, the sooner we will find His blessing on our lives.

A baby King

I find the gospel story so beautiful. Notice that Jesus did not come as a great king, born in a palace amid pomp and ceremony. Rather, He came as a humble little baby, born to a poor and seemingly insignificant family. He associated with the dropouts of society, and for this He was highly criticised by the religious leaders of His day. His triumphal entry into Jerusalem was on the back of a donkey's foal, and His greatest victory was found in the shedding of His own blood on a cruel cross – the death reserved for the vilest of criminals. His last bit of clothing was gambled for by the Roman soldiers, and He was buried in a borrowed tomb.

The following passage then becomes so appropriate.

Phil 2:3 *“Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves;*

4 *“Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.*

5 ***“Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,***

6 *“Who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,*

7 *“But emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.*

8 *“Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*

9 *“For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,*

10 *“That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow ...”*

His exaltation came as a direct result of His humility. Even **He** subjected Himself to this universal law.

In His teaching, Jesus often pointed to the virtues of humility. When the disciples argued about who would be the greatest among them, Jesus brought a little child and stood him in their midst, and proceeded to make the profound statement that,

Mat 18:4 *“Whoever then humbles himself as this little child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”*

To the mother of James and John, who had asked for her two sons to receive the prominent places of authority next to Jesus in the Kingdom, Jesus said,

Mat 20:26 *“... Whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant,*

27 *“And whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave;*

28 *“Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”*

It is significant then that the Scriptures often speak about orphans and widows.

Jam 1:27 *“This is pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father, to **visit orphans and widows in their distress**, and to keep oneself unstained by the world”*

Why the concern for such lowly people? I believe that the most important reason for this is that YHWH wants us to have tender hearts. Men, by the world’s standards, are not supposed to cry easily. However, I believe that our hearts should be soft. We should be able to **feel easily**, to shed a silent tear when we hear of the plight of an underprivileged person, not for a beggar who is only begging because he is too lazy to work, but for a genuine orphan or widow.

A widow's prayers

My mother was a widow and I learned from her fervent prayers and from the wonderful way in which YHWH answered her prayers – even twenty years after her death and from her close personal relationship with YHWH, that YHWH has a special tender eye for widows. He cares for them. They are the apple of His eye. Do not dare to hurt one of them, for it will be to your own detriment. Care for them, and you will experience YHWH's blessing on your life.

As we humble ourselves to bow low enough to care for the lowliest among mankind, we will be pleasing to YHWH. You see, it is what we do in the secret places, in the times when no one sees us – that hand extended in friendship and generosity even in the little things – that draws the attention of YHWH. Jesus Himself said,

Mat 6:3 *“When you give alms, (gifts to the poor), do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,*

4 *“That your alms may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.”*

Be quick to say sorry. Do not harbour resentment or unforgiveness in your heart. Surely the root of these things is pride. Husbands, have you not been called to be the leaders of your home? Then lead in humility. You are the strong one in your home. Be strong enough to say sorry first, even if you are sure you were right. Do not make it an apology with conditions attached. Humble yourself.

Will YHWH not exalt you even in your home, and will your family not gain a respect for you as you humbly walk in YHWH's way? If you have made an error in business, be quick to apologise and be prepared to cover the costs of rectifying matters. Those who deal with you will gain a respect for you that is worth far more than the cost of rectifying your error.

Prov 22:1 *"A good name is to be more desired than great riches ..."*

Humility is not weakness, it is incredible strength! It is character! Do not be afraid to walk down the road of humility. It is a difficult road, but one with a fruitful destination.

Chapter 5 will follow next week – *"Diligence & quality of workmanship" ...*