



Gage D'Orlando



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B E W A R E O F P R I D E

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PRESIDENT OF THE CHURCH

My beloved brethren and sisters, I rejoice to be with you in a rather glorious general conference of the Church. How grateful I am for the love, prayers, and service of the devoted members of the Church throughout the world. May I commend you faithful Saints who are striving to heed the earth and your lives with the Book of Mormon. Not only must we move forward in a monumental manner these copies of the Book of Mormon, but we must move boldly forward in our own lives and through out the earth more of its marvelous messages. This sacred volume was written for us—for our day. Its scriptures are to be blessed with ourselves.

The Doctrine and Covenants tells us that the Book of Mormon is the "word of a fallen people."¹ Why did they fall? This is one of the major messages of the Book of Mormon. Mormon gives the answer in the closing chapters of the book in these words: "Behold, the pride of this nation, or the people of the Nephites, hath greater than destruction."² And then, tell me this: that momentous Book of Mormon message from that fallen people, the Lord says to us in the Doctrine and Covenants, "Beware of

pride, lest ye become as the Nephites of old."³ I earnestly seek an interest in your faith and prayers as I strive to bring forth light on this Book of Mormon message—the sin of pride. This message has been weighing heavily on my soul for some time. I know the Lord warns this message delivered now.

In the presidential council, it was pride that led to the fall of the Nephites.⁴ At the end of this world, when God cleanses the earth by fire, the proud will be burned as stubble and the meek shall inherit the earth.⁵

Three times in the Doctrine and Covenants the Lord uses the phrase "measure of pride,"⁶ including a warning to the sacred altar of the Church, Oliver Cowdery, and to Emma Smith, the wife of the Prophet:⁷

Pride is a very misunderstood sin,⁸ and many are viewing its significance.⁹ In the scriptures there is no such thing as righteous pride—it is always considered a sin. Therefore, no matter how

the world uses the term, we must understand how God uses the term so we can understand the language of holy writ and profit thereby.¹⁰ Most of us think of pride as self-confidence, conceit, selfishness, arrogance, or haughtiness. All of these are elements of the sin, but the heart, or core, is still missing.

The central feature of pride is envy—envy toward God and envy toward our fellowmen. Envy means "to stand toward, hostility to, or a state of opposition."¹¹ It is the power by which Satan wishes to reign over us.

Pride is essentially competitive in nature. We pit our will against God's. When we direct our pride toward God, it is in the name of "my will and not mine be done."¹² As Paul said, they "saw their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's."¹³

Our will in competition to God's will allows desires, appetites, and passions to go unchecked.¹⁴ The proud cannot accept the authority of God giving direction to their lives.¹⁵ They put their perceptions of such against God's great knowledge, their abilities versus God's great power, their accomplishments against His



mighty works.

Our envy toward God takes on many forms, such as rebellion, hard-headedness, self-righteousness, self-importance, puffed up, easily offended, and sign seekers. The proud wish God would agree with them. They aren't interested in changing their opinions to agree with God's.

Another major portion of this very prevalent sin of pride is envy toward our fellowmen. We are tempted daily to elevate ourselves above others and diminish them.¹⁶ The proud reject every man their adversary by pitting their beliefs, opinions, works, wealth, talents, or any other worldly measuring device against others.

In the words of E. S. Lewis, "Pride gets no pleasure out of having something, only out of having more of it than the next man. . . . It is the comparison that makes you proud: the pleasure of being above the next. Hence the element of competition has gone, pride has gone."¹⁷

In the pre-earthly council, Lucifer placed his proposal in competition with the Father's plan as advocated by Jesus Christ.¹⁸ He wished to be honored above all others.¹⁹ In short, his

prideful desire was to deface God's.²⁰

***** CONSEQUENCES

The scriptures abound with evidences of the severe consequences of the sin of pride to individuals, groups, cities, and nations. "Pride goeth before destruction."²¹ It destroyed the Nephite nation and the city of Sodom.²²

It was through pride that Christ was crucified. The Pharisees were wrath because Jesus claimed to be the Son of God, which was a threat to their position, and so they plotted his death.²³

God became an enemy to David through pride. He was jealous because the crowds of traitor women were saying that "David hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands."²⁴

The proud stand more in fear of man's judgment than of God's judgment.²⁵ "What will men think of me?"²⁶ weigh a heavier than "What will

God think of me?"

King Neph was about to free the prophet Abinadi, but an accusation to his pride by his wife and priests sent Abinadi to the flames.²⁷ Moses sorrowed at the request of his wife to behead John the Baptist. But his prideful desire to look good to "them which sat with him at meat" caused him to kill John.²⁸

Fear of man's judgment manifests itself in competition for man's approval. The proud love "the praise of man more than the praise of God."²⁹ Our motives for the things we do are where the sin is manifest. Jesus said he did "all ways these things" that pleased God.³⁰ Would we not do well to have the pleasing of God as our motive rather than to try to please ourselves above our brother and sister another?

Some pitiful people are not so concerned as to whether their wages are more than theirs as they are that their wages are more than their neighbor's. Their reward is being a lot above the rest. This is the envy of pride.

When pride has a hold on our hearts, we lose our independence of the world and deliver our freedom to the bondage of man's judgment. The world pleases better than the will of God.

1. Doctrine and Covenants 1:23.
2. Doctrine and Covenants 1:23.
3. Doctrine and Covenants 1:23.
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