

## **Stronghold: Pride**

### **Introduction:**

Pride is an effective and destructive tool that the devil uses to form a stronghold in our lives. We see the first example of this in Genesis 3. The devil used pride to construct a division between God and man when he seduced Eve into believing God was untrustworthy. The devil built a wall of lies shaped by pride and deceived our first parents into believing that they could be like God by eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In that act, the division known as sin originated between God and all of humanity. Pride is a universal problem among humans. The only way through this sin of pride is humility. Unfortunately, humility and being humble are not popular positions in our current culture. Rather than self-sacrifice, the human tendency is to self-preserve and self-promote reinforcing this stronghold of pride. But God, in His great mercy, doesn't leave us disconnected from Him by this stronghold. Instead, He sent Jesus to not only give us an example of what humility looks like, but also to dismantle the strongholds in our lives brick by brick. Jesus demonstrates the opposite of pride from humbling himself as a baby, in a life of service, even to death on a cross. There will be times when we are prideful and place ourselves above God. We can still have hope and encouragement that when we recognize that sin in ourselves and turn to God in humility, He is faithful to forgive us, restore us, and lift us up.

### **Read Your Bible**

- 1 Peter 5:1-11
- Luke 14: 7-14

### **Apply God's Word to Your Life:**

1. Talk about a time when you bragged about yourself.
2. Have you ever been invited to dinner? How did you choose where to sit?
3. Where does the Luke text say we should sit if invited to dinner?
4. What does 1 Peter 5:8 say we should be alert of? What does that have to do with pride?
5. How does pride cloud your judgement?
6. Talk about a time when you did something without expecting something in return.
7. Would you rather be paid or blessed? Why?

### **Reflecting on the text:**

1. What have you learned about God?
2. What have you learned about the world?
3. What have you learned about yourself?

### **Pray**

Heavenly Father, I'm sorry for the times when I let pride come between us. Please help me to see the places in my life where pride has a stronghold so that I can turn away from it and turn toward You in humility. Thank You, Lord, for your faithfulness and mercy even when I am prideful. Please forgive my sin and arrogance and restore my heart for You and for others. In Jesus' Name, Amen