

Do We See the Pattern?

Surely He scorns the scornful, But gives **grace to the humble.**

(Proverbs 3:34 NKJV)

But **he gives more grace.**

Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but **gives grace to the humble.**"

(James 4:6 ESV)

Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another,

for "God opposes the proud but gives **grace to the humble.**"

(1 Peter 5:5b ESV)

You **rescue the humble**, but your eyes watch the proud and humiliate them.

(2 Samuel 22:28 NLT)

Though the LORD is great, he **cares for the humble**,

but he keeps his distance from the proud.

(Psalm 138:6 NLT)

Pride leads to disgrace, but **with humility comes wisdom.**

(Proverbs 11:2 NLT)

Better to live humbly with the poor than to share plunder with the proud.

(Proverbs 16:19 NLT)

Pride ends in humiliation, while **humility brings honor.**

(Proverbs 29:23 NLT)

Kent Hughes comments ...

- **The soul-tingling truth here is**, if you go after God, he will go after you! This was the prodigal son's experience when he neared his home: "But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him" (Luke 15:20). The father smothered him with kisses. Inch toward God, and he will step toward you. Step toward God, and he will sprint toward you. Sprint toward God, and he will fly to you (Kent Hughes).
- It is important that we understand the precise wording of this command as the Greek has it, because it actually forbids more than slander. Literally the command is, "Do not speak down on one another, brothers," or "Do not speak against one another, brethren" (NASB). Slander is malicious speech that is untrue. But the command here forbids any speech (whether it is true or false) which runs down another person.
- **There are many sinful reasons why brothers and sisters in Christ talk down one another.** Revenge over some slight, real or imagined, may be the motivation for Christian slander. Gossip and criticism may be rooted in an overweening sense of self-righteousness. Our spirituality and sensitivity, we think, equips us to pull others from their pedestals and unmask their hypocrisies.
- This destructive speaking down against others can also manifest itself in **the subtle art of minimizing another's virtues and accomplishments.** After being with such people, your mental abilities, athletic accomplishments, musical skills, and domestic virtues seem not to be quite as good as they were a few minutes earlier. Some of this feeling came, perhaps, from their words about your Steinway—"what a nice little piano"—and surprised exclamations about what you didn't know. It was also the tone of the voice, the cast of the eye, and the surgical silences.
- Related to this, some reject running down another behind his or her back, but **believe it is OK if done face to face.** These persons are driven by a "moral" compulsion to make others aware of their own faults. Fault-finding is, to them, a spiritual gift. I once knew a young man who, after reading the list of the seven gifts mentioned in Romans 12, decided he had the gift of prophecy. The prophets, he observed, were confrontational, acerbic, and sharp-tongued, just as he was, so he must have the gift! **Thus he had a spiritual rationale for an abrasive, critical personality.** He was called to conduct spiritual search-and-destroy missions—or so he thought.