

"In the beginning
was the Word,
and the Word was
with God, and the
Word was God."
~John 1:1

The Lord's Flock
Growth
DIGEST
PASTORAL GROWTH SERIES



“ The Brothers of Goliath - Part 2 ”

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2. THE GIANT OF PRIDE

2 Chronicles 26:16-19

“But after he [Uzziah] had become strong, he became arrogant to his own destruction and acted treacherously with the Lord, his God. He entered the temple of the Lord to make an offering on the altar of incense. But Azariah the priest, and with him eighty other priests of the Lord, courageous men, followed him. They stood up to King Uzziah, saying to him: ‘It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the Lord, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron, who have been consecrated for this purpose. Leave the sanctuary, for you have acted treacherously and no longer have a part in the glory that comes from the Lord God.’ Uzziah, who was holding a censer for burning the incense, became angry. But at the very moment he showed his anger to the priests, while they were looking at him in the house of the Lord beside the altar of incense, leprosy broke out on his forehead.”

Uzziah’s pride led to his downfall. He was unfaithful to the Lord his God. Wealth and power made Uzziah lose his focus. Uzziah’s priorities shifted to personal successes and fame rather than for the community and for the Lord, rather than for the things that delighted the Lord.

It is not a sin to yearn for wealth and riches, but if it will take us away from the Lord, then it is a sin.

Thus, one of the greatest adversaries of us, “Davids” of the modern time, is the Giant of Pride. Wealth, money and power will make us proud. It is pride that makes us think of ourselves as better than others because of our skills, wealth, beauty, intelligence, or attainments.

It was pride that brought down Satan who was a guardian cherub. He was the most beautiful angel, thus the name Lucifer.

In 2 Corinthians 12:10, Paul was given the “thorn in the flesh” so that he may be saved from his pride.

In Numbers 12, pride caused Miriam to rise up and challenge her very own brother, Moses, who was chosen by the Lord.

Pride is so dangerous because it is not easily recognized. It takes another person to remind us that we are becoming proud. And sometimes, when told so, we refuse to listen to what other people say because we are so full of ourselves.

When pride enters one's spiritual life, it becomes dangerous, such as in the case of Uzziah. He gained respect as a warrior, as a builder in his kingdom, as an inventor of weapons, and as a king. His name was spread all over the nation. His name was spread abroad. He amassed considerable wealth because he became king. He also became known as a spiritual person.

How does the "Giant" of Pride affect Christians?

- a. When the Holy Spirit pricks our hearts because of some sins that we commit, we give excuses. We tend to justify because we think we are good Christians.
- b. When the Holy Spirit prompts us to respond to an altar call, we don't do it because we worry about what other people might think.
- c. When the Holy Spirit moves on us to do something that will make us look foolish for Christ, we won't do it because we are more concerned with what people will think of us rather than what God thinks of us.

Have we lost the Spirit of Pentecost? Have we lost the experience of being baptized in the Spirit? Have we become dry and scripted in our spiritual lives? Have we lost our enthusiasm? Our love for Jesus?

3. THE GIANT OF HYPOCRISY

God is not pleased with hypocrites.

There is the greatest danger of being hypocrites. This is evident in the New Testament wherein the Scribes and Pharisees saw themselves as holy because they knew the Law very well. Thus, when Jesus said that He is the "fulfillment" of the Law and the prophets, they didn't believe Him.

The dangerous thing about hypocrisy for Christians is living a double life.

We must choose to do the good thing rather than the right thing, such as the case of the Good Samaritan. The priest and the Levite were correct in choosing not to touch the bloodied victim according to the Law. But the Good Samaritan went beyond the written rule and showed compassion to a Jew.

It is good that we pray and we have faith that we receive the Body of Christ in the Holy Eucharist. But this is not enough if we refuse to have compassion for the poor people in the streets. When we were baptized as Christians, we became the mystical Body of Christ. Therefore, our marginalized brothers and sisters also belong to the real body of Christ. When we refuse to reach out to the real Church of Christ who is thirsty, hungry, and in need of compassion, we become hypocrites.

Our first vocation is our family: as spouses, as parents or as children. If our church duties make us neglect our duties to our first vocation, then we become hypocrites.

- Holier are the hands that care than the lips that pray.

To slay the Giant of Hypocrisy, we must start to become loving and compassionate.

4. THE GIANT OF PRAYERLESSNESS

Mark 14:37-38

Simon, are you asleep? Why can't you keep watch for one hour? Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.

Peter did not pray. This was the most critical hour of Jesus' life. The salvation of all mankind hanged in the balance. Jesus' arrest was one hour away. He was one hour away from torture and death.

Prayerlessness leaves the door open to fall. If we do not pray, temptations will come along our way and we become prone to backsliding.

Prayer shows God our need for Him. When we pray, we must talk to God the way we want to experience Him, as a Father, as a Friend. We must be open unto Him and tell Him exactly what our hearts contain.

Prayerfulness is not measured by the amount of time that we spend in prayer, but by how much we truly open ourselves unto Him.

What do we do with these "Giants"?

- Do not procrastinate.
Fight these giants now. To procrastinate means to postpone taking action. In our hands is the power to change our own lives. But because of procrastination, we fail to do so.
- Persevere.
The fight is not going to be easy. Therefore, we must persevere in prayer. We must persevere in our relationship with the Lord.
The first step towards victory is to acknowledge that we need to renew our renewed lives. We need to once again ask the Lord to send forth His Holy Spirit upon us so that, once again, we may experience a new Pentecost to renew our renewed lives.

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