

Exalting Not Ourselves

Matthew 23:11-12

February 3, 2023

THE 4H PRINCIPLE

Haughtiness leads to Humiliation: *“And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased.”*

- **Haughty:** to think highly of yourself and lift yourself up. To be proud (Proverbs 16:18).
- **Abased:** related to “base” or “foundation.” To be brought down to the bottom from outside sources.

Humility leads to Honor: *“and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.”*

- **Humility:** to lower yourself. You do not honor yourself. To humble yourself.
- **Exalted:** lifted up by God as a result of your humility (1 Peter 5:6).

The importance of humility: you can't be saved unless you humble yourself and admit that you need to receive Jesus Christ because your own way of “salvation” will fail you.

What the Bible says about your “way:” It is the way of death (Proverbs 14:12, 16:25)

Our way leads us astray, is a way of iniquity (Isaiah 53:6).

Examples of our own way: Trusting church attendance to get us to heaven.

Being a good person.

Saying the right prayer at the right time. Following church sacraments.

Getting baptized.

Denying the existence of God and heaven.

FOUR WAYS IN WHICH WE EXALT OURSELVES

I. **PRESUMPTION:** Supposing that you are good enough or that your way is *“probably right.”*

A. **Trusting in his Power to Stand (1Corinthians 10:12)**

Many people presume that they will stand, or that they will never give up on the Lord. That high opinion of yourself will bring you to shame.

- The example of Peter (Matthew 26:33-35, 27:75; Mark 14:29-31, 72; Luke 22:33-34, 61-62).
- It's best to pray that your faith fail not (Luke 22:32, 1 Peter 1:5).

B. **Justifying Self Before Men (Luke 16:15)** Sometimes in our attempts to look right before men, we presume to esteem ourselves highly among them.

C. **Solution: No Confidence in the Flesh (Philippians 3:3)**

- **There is no good thing in our flesh (Romans 7:18). We are strengthened through Christ (Phil. 4:13).**

II. **PRIDE:** A false sense of self-importance

A. **Thinking Highly of Yourself (Romans 12:3)**

- God is the one who made you the way you are (1 Cor 4:7). You've got no grounds to boast.

B. **Wise in Your Own Conceits (Proverbs 26:12)**

C. Solution: I Must Decrease (John 3:30)

- Jesus Christ must increase. We must identify ourselves in His death on the cross (Galatians 2:20), so that the life we are living is not our own, but belongs to Jesus.

III. PRETENSE

A. Striving to be Seen of Men (Matthew 23:5)

- The Pharisee in Luke 18:11 “prayed with himself” to be seen of men. He wasn’t praying to God.
- If you’re serving God to be praised of men, your motives are wrong. You’ll quit when the praise quits.
- Jesus warns us not to serve for public glory from men (Matthew 6:2).
- Serve “as to the Lord, and not unto men” (Colossians 3:23).

B. Claiming the Perks of Importance (Matthew 23:6-10)

- They “*love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues.*”
- Men who desire to be addressed by important titles have forgotten who deserves all the honor and praise. We should be happy just to have a voice to praise Jesus Christ. To Him be all the glory.
- If you receive a compliment for your spiritual work, say, “Thank you,” and pass the compliment up to the Lord in prayer. Don’t get too full of yourself.

C. Solution: Sit in the Lowest Room (Luke 14:7-11) Don’t exalt yourself. Be humble and watch as others promote you.

IV. AMBITION

A. Seeking Great Things for Yourself (Jeremiah 45:5)

B. Loving to have the Preeminence (3John 1:9)

Examples of men whose ambition for fame, glory, or power led to their early deaths:

1. Alexander
2. Hannibal
3. Caesar
4. Napoleon

These men were all abased because they exalted themselves.

C. Solution: Be the Servant of Others (Matthew 20:25-28) (Jesus Christ is the greatest example of this)
