

We come now to a small little three verse Psalm. But this little Psalm is potent. Charles Spurgeon said, "It is one of the shortest Psalms to read, but one of the longest to learn."

We need this Psalm. We need the challenge and the comfort that comes from this Psalm. Every one of us needs to be weaned away from every source of pride that we have and that is what this Psalm is designed to do. Pride is a subtle and sneaky enemy. It creeps in as quietly as a snake and can do poisonous damage. The pride of life is a spirituality killer and it is a threat to all.

There are times when we can get caught up in trusting something other than God. We can trust in the dollar. We can save or invest and have a few positive things happen financially and we can become so full of ourselves. But the truth is, we can hoard it and store it and be proud of it and have it melt away in an instant.

We can really trust in a person, who seems to be so powerful and positive, only to have that person fail us. We can begin to trust in ourselves and fall into the trap of self-exaltation. We want to be appreciated and seen and known. People can actually manipulate themselves into public positions, not necessarily to do the will of God, but out of a motive of secret pride.

Psalm 131 is a Psalm of David. If ever there were a man who could have been proud of accomplishment and achievement, it was David. One of the most dramatic stories in all the Bible that people still talk about today was the time when he single-handedly walked into the middle of a valley with thousands of eyes on him and dropped Goliath. David eventually became a powerful and exalted king. But David learned the great secret of what makes one a giant spiritually. It is the secret of humility. In Psalm 131, he writes on that theme.

Psalm 131 describes the kind of life and the kind of existence one has who is right with God. There seems to be a connection between Psalm 130 and Psalm 131. The phrase "O Israel, hope in the LORD" occurs in Psalm 130:7 and also in Psalm 131:3.

Psalm 130, as we saw, deals with crying out to God for forgiveness when one has been in the depths of sin. The believer fails but then cries to God for His cleansing grace.

The results of experiencing God's cleansing grace are found in Psalm 131. One who is truly right with God has a spirit about them that shows that. The point of the Psalm is this:

WHEN ONE EXPERIENCES THE FORGIVENESS OF GOD AND IS IN A RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD, IT WILL MANIFEST ITSELF IN CERTAIN HUMBLE REALITIES THAT DEMONSTRATE THAT.

What is described here is one who has a right relationship with God. What we see here is a mature spirituality that obviously fears God and has a right perspective of things.

It is a difficult thing to write about humility. There is a humorous account of one who tried to write about his own humility and needed to choose a title for his book about humility.

He narrowed it down to three choices: 1) Humility and How I Attained it; 2) How I Became Very Humble; 3) Me and My Humility. He decided on the last title and when he mailed it into the publisher he included twelve full page pictures of himself. Humility it is a very difficult subject to discuss because most of the time, the moment we discuss it, we don't have it. Well David had it.

This is a Psalm of genuine humility. We do not know what prompted David to write it. Contextually, it is perhaps due to the fact that David had experienced the remarkable forgiveness of God and he wanted to write about lessons he had learned about being right with God.

Notice how the Psalm begins "O LORD." So David begins by talking to God as the Sovereign, I AM Jehovah, the covenant God of Israel. David begins by realizing He is in a relationship with the glorious, sovereign, self-existing God. That would be enough to humble anyone.

There are multiple passages that teach us pride is a barrier to God:

- 1) Psalm 138:6—God is near the lowly, not the proud.
- 2) Proverbs 18:12—Pride is the fast way to destruction; humility is the way to honor.
- 3) Isaiah 57:15—God is with those contrite and lowly of spirit.
- 4) I Peter 5:5—God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.
- 5) James 4:10—Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord and He will exalt you.

There are five realities that are evidenced by one right with God:

REALITY #1 – My heart is not proud. 131:1a

The word "proud" (gah bah) refers to one who magnifies himself and holds himself up as a powerful mountain or tower. It refers to one who wants the highest part of even his heart (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 153).

Proud people want to be seen as big and important. They are always looking and comparing and competing and they are never content. They are always trying to outdo someone else because they want to be on top.

I read of a minister who preached a message on pride and a woman came to him and she said I am in total distress and I need to confess sin. The minister said well, what is the sin. She said pride. She said for the last hour I sat in church admiring my own beauty. The minister said your sin is not pride; it is the sin of lying imagination. But the truth is the desire to be at the top is pride.

If you see what is actually in your heart honestly and Biblically, there is nothing there of which to be proud. David was not proud. David was not high and exalted in his heart.

Being a proud person or being arrogant or being loudly self-opinionated or having a lofty view of self that lacks humility proves one lacks real spirituality. One who thinks this way and acts this way does not have peace with God or really with himself.

We live in a world that tends to glorify and reward selfish, proud, arrogant self-elevation. But pride will never be rewarded by God. In fact, God hates pride in people.

REALITY #2 – My eyes are not haughty. **131:1b**

Proverbs 6:16-17 and Proverbs 30:13 clearly teach that there is an arrogant, haughty, proud look in certain people and you can see it. Pride is a problem of the heart but often it can be seen in the eyes.

That word “haughty” is one that means to have eyes that are lofty, lifted up and raised. There are two ways to detect whether one is full of pride: 1) By their eyes, how they look; 2) By their speech, what they say.

There are people who do literally walk around with haughty eyes. There are people who look proud and they strut around proud. They are full of themselves and puffed up in a bloated way. They are not right with God.

REALITY #3 – I do not involve myself in things too difficult for me. **131:1c**

David did not involve himself or occupy himself with ambitions and schemes that were impossible for him to achieve. He did not involve himself in things he knew nothing about. There are people who want you to think they know everything about everything. They want you to think they are the authority. David had no problem admitting there were those who knew more than he did. He knew there were those more knowledgeable in certain areas. He did not involve himself in things too difficult for him.

One commentator said we do need to identify what this does not mean. This does not mean one should be a “faint-hearted, spineless, mousy, or unwilling to take on great challenges” (Dr. William D. Barrick, *Psalms 131- Godly Contentment*, pp. 2-3).

The missionary William Carey, who is called “the father of modern missions,” preached a message in England in 1792 that he entitled: “Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God.” It is estimated that his Bible translation work provided Bibles for 300 million people. So this is not a challenge to never step out in faith and take chances.

The emphasis of this text is stay out of matters that we have no business or skills in which to be involved. Know your limitations and don’t think of ourselves more highly than we should.

There are people who are so arrogant and proud that they think they know everything about everything. There are people who are so haughty that they think they can take on any challenge and “micro-manage” everyone and everything.

This kind of person tries to take control of any situation, conversation or any organization. This kind of person wants to be on center stage. They want the limelight. They don’t even know what they are talking about most of the time, but they want you to believe they do.

Someone does a great job and others think they can do that. I think there is a real application here to Biblical things. There are people who think they can teach or lead doctrinal discussions when they have no idea what they are talking about. David was not a man like that. He was not afraid to say, “I don’t know” or “That is way over my head.”

One right with God does not do this. One right with God recognizes that God gives different skill sets to different people in different areas.

REALITY #4 – He composed and quieted his soul. **131:2**

Notice the emphasis on “I have composed and quieted my soul.” How did he do that? How did he quiet down his soul? By not being proud and by not meddling in things he knows nothing about and by his relationship with God.

A composed soul means David had a smooth, even, level, solid character.
A quieted soul means David had a soul free from turbulence and chaos.

Now in the last part of **verse 2** what we learn is that this is a weaning process. In a weaning process the child breaks the dependency on the mother. This is what one must do to have spirituality; break the dependency of pride in oneself.

Dr. Gaebelein said when a soul is weaned from all discontentment, ambition, self-seeking pride and selfishness, your soul is quiet and it does have rest.

In order to do that, one must be right with God.

REALITY #5 – He has his hope always and forever in God. **131:3**

Our hope is not in ourselves; it is always in the Lord. All of Israel needed to follow this pattern. Israel longs to be seen and esteemed as the nation of God and one day she will be.

What Israel needs to do now is stop fretting and start trusting in the Lord. That is where we all find real peace, real rest and real hope.

PRACTICAL LESSONS:

- 1. Keep on constant alert for any type of pride that creeps into our life and snuff it out immediately because pride will ruin our relationship with God.**
- 2. We need to realize our own limitations and not think more highly of ourselves than we ought.**
- 3. We need to allow God to wean us away from any pride or limelight mentality.**
- 4. We need to know that often times the turmoil and trouble we have is caused by our own pride.**