



# The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V21 N40 October 13, 2019

## TOXIC

“The Poisonous Problem of Pride ”

Proverbs 16:18

### THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

#### Humility

I choose to esteem others above myself.

*“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.”*

Philippians 2:3-4



What kind of pride does Proverbs warn against?

Long-time friends of ours, Jim and Tamara Hilliard, have a son, Sam, who was recently called up from the minor leagues to play for the Colorado Rockies. Sunday, after watching the Dallas Cowboys rout the Miami Dolphins, friends gathered around Jim (who has been diagnosed with ALS) and Tamara to watch Sam's game against the Los Angeles Dodgers. He went 3-for-4 with a home run, a double and three RBIs. Sam has hit six home runs since joining the Rockies in August—his first one in his first game with the team! Jim and Tamara are proud parents, and rightly so. The kind of pride they have in their son is not the kind of pride disapproved of by the proverb: “Pride leads to destruction, and arrogance to downfall” (Pr 16:18). Nor is destructive pride the kind *any* parents or *any* grandparents, for that matter, take in their children or grandchildren. Neither is it pride in a job well done, an outstanding accomplishment, overcoming a disability, and the like. This kind of pride is generally viewed in a positive light. Note that “pride” in the proverb is paired with “arrogance.”

The kind of pride disapproved of by biblical wisdom is the kind called “hubris” by the ancient Greeks, who used the term with reference to those who thought themselves superior to the gods. One writer notes: “Hubristic pride is sinister and dangerous. In the name of pride, sport participants cheat, engage in violence, and selfishly take advantage of others. Hubristic pride is not to be confused with the satisfaction one receives from successful performance and positive feedback. Hubristic pride is pride that has gone wrong. It allows individuals to engage in harmful acts without feeling remorse” (Dr. Steven Aicinena, “When Pride Goes Wrong,” *The Sport Journal*,

vol. 21, [thesportjournal.org/article/when-pride-goes-wrong](http://thesportjournal.org/article/when-pride-goes-wrong)).

To find a contemporary example of “hubris” and its consequences, one needs to look no farther than Tiger Woods. The same author goes on to say:

“During a televised speech, professional golfer Tiger Woods apologized for extramarital affairs that gained worldwide attention, garnered negative publicity and cost him millions of dollars in commercial sponsorships. The words of Woods illustrated how athletic success can lead to hubristic pride and a sense of entitlement:

‘I knew my actions were wrong, but I convinced myself that normal rules did not apply. I never thought about who I was hurting . . . I thought I could get away with whatever I wanted to. I felt that I had worked hard my entire life and deserved to enjoy all the temptations around me. I felt I was entitled. Thanks to money and fame, I didn’t have to go far to find them. I was wrong. I was foolish. I don’t get to play by different rules. The same boundaries that apply to everyone apply to me. I brought this shame on myself.’

Many who find success in sport are seduced by the calling of hubris. They grow to feel that they are special; that they are more important than others, and that they are entitled to have what they want and to act as they please.”

Such pride flies in the face of the fear of the LORD, which is antithetical to “pride and arrogance” that lead to evil: “To fear the LORD is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech” (Pr 8:13).

# 1

## EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

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### Proverbs 16:18

17 *The highway of the upright avoids evil;  
those who guard their ways preserve their lives.*

18 *Pride goes before destruction,  
a haughty spirit before a fall.*

19 *Better to be lowly in spirit along with the oppressed  
than to share plunder with the proud.*

### READ in other translations

17 *Those who are good travel a road that avoids evil; so  
watch where you are going – it may save your life.*

18 *Pride leads to destruction, and arrogance to  
downfall.*

19 *It is better to be humble and stay poor than to be one  
of the arrogant and get a share of their loot. (GNT)*

17 *The highway of the upright is to depart from evil;  
He who watches his way preserves his life.*

18 *Pride goes before destruction,  
And a haughty spirit before stumbling.*

19 *It is better to be humble in spirit with the lowly  
Than to divide the spoil with the proud. (NASB)*

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Underline “pride” and “haughty spirit” with one line.
- Underline “destruction” and “a fall” with two lines.
- Circle “goes before” in line 1

What one word would you use to describe the TONE of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What is one thing you do not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the THEME of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, “This text is about \_\_\_\_\_.”



## DIG DEEPER

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Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. The proverb in 16:18 gives the strong impression that it's saying the same thing twice. How so?
2. How can you tell from line 2 that "pride" has a *negative* connotation in line 1?
3. How can you tell from verse 19 that "pride" has a *very negative* connotation in verse 18?
4. Can "pride" ever have a *positive* connotation? Explain (cf., Ro 11:13-14).
5. Put the relationship of "pride" to "destruction" (suggested by the words "goes before") in your own words.
6. The term "fall" in line 2 is clearly used *figuratively*. To what does it refer?
7. How does that affect the meaning of "destruction" in line 1?
8. Do you consider the relationship of the two pairs of synonyms – "pride/haughty spirit": "destruction/fall" – to be inevitable? Explain.
9. In the light of verse 19, one writer says, "Poverty and humility are natural allies, and impious pride goes with ill-gotten gain." Explain why you agree or disagree.
10. **Discussion:** No one would argue that *impious pride/arrogance* is a good thing. Talk about how we can detect it in ourselves and what we can do about it

### Commentary On The Text

When reading the book of Proverbs, remember proverbs are *not* promises. Herbert Wolf explains: “The proverbs contained in this book are not to be interpreted as prophecies or their statements about effects and result as promises. For instance, 10:27 says that the years of the wicked are cut short, while the righteous live long and prosperous lives (see 3:2 and note). The righteous have abundant food (10:3), but the wicked will go hungry (13:25). While such statements are generally true, there are enough exceptions to indicate that sometimes the righteous suffer and the wicked prosper (see note on 3:2). Normally the righteous and wicked ‘receive their due on earth’ (11:31), but at other times reward and punishment lie beyond the grave” (“Introduction: Proverbs,” *The NIV Study Bible*, 1025).

Proverbs 16:18 is found in the main collection of Solomon’s proverbs in the longest section of the book, 10:1-22:16. There doesn’t seem to be any discernible arrangement of the proverbs in this section, although *occasionally* two or three isolated or a small cluster of proverbs dealing with the same subject occur in the same chapter. For example, three proverbs in chapter 16 deal with pride: 16:5, 18, 19. And the one in verse 18 is loosely linked to the ones in verses 17 and 18—“highway” in verse 17 links to “stumbling” (NASB) or “fall” in verse 18, and “haughty spirit” in verse 18 links to “lowly in spirit” in verse 19. On the puzzling matter of structure in general, one commentator writes: “Perhaps the most arresting feature of Prov 10:1-2:23 is what seems a complete lack of structure of arrangement in the collection of proverbs. They appear to have been assembled altogether at random.” And then he adds an interesting observation: “The proverbs are presented in the seemingly haphazard way we encounter the issues with which they deal” (Duane A. Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon*, NAC, 46).

According to verse 17, “the upright” avoid evil, in the sense of hardship and trouble, by staying on the straight and narrow “highway” of wisdom. The upright are those “who guard their ways” and thereby “preserve their lives.” On the imagery one commentator writes: “In Iron Age Israel (1100-600 B.C.) the highway was the main prepared thoroughfare and normally passed by cities, not through them. Those who wished to enter the city by way of an access road’ turned aside’ to enter it (cf. Judg. 19:11, 12, 15). Those who steer a straight course resolutely turn

aside from evil, which implicitly likens the corruption and consequences of evil (see 1:16) to a condemned city with its corrupt practices and certain calamity (13:14-15; 15:24; 17:13). By this turning aside from the access roads to the condemned city, the upright stay on the road that is wide enough for all comers and free from all obstacles” (Bruce K. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 15-31*, NICOT, 26). Those who proudly depart from the “highway” risk “stumbling” or “falling” on the rough, pothole-laden access road.

Verse 18 is an example of synonymous parallelism. “Pride” in the first line is synonymous with “haughty spirit” in the second, and “destruction” in the first line is synonymous with “a fall” in the second. As a result, speaking figuratively the proverb essentially says the same thing twice. “In this way its truth is underscored and clarified; the proud are defined more precisely as the haughty in spirit, and the ensuing ‘shattering’ of their body is explained as due to their ‘stumbling.’ The fracturing of their limbs that inflicted evil exemplifies the book’s principle of divine retribution (see I: 73). The use of “haughty spirit” or “arrogance” (GNT) in the second line gives an ugly nuance to this kind of “pride.”

According to verse 19, in *contrast* to being “haughty in spirit” (v. 18), it’s better to be “lowly in spirit” (a character quality more frequently found in the oppressed rather than their oppressors) than “to share plunder with the proud.” The proverb suggests that the economic prosperity of the proud often comes at the expense of the humble. In the words of one writer: “poverty and humility are natural allies, and impious pride goes will ill-gotten gain” (William McKane, *Proverbs*, OTL, 499).

The point of the proverb in verse 18 is more or less obvious: The arrogant take their eyes off the “highway of the upright,” namely wisdom, (perhaps in a quest for wealth) and wind up falling into a ditch alongside the access road.

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## Word Studies/Notes

v. 18 **Pride** “The special evil of pride is that it opposes the first principle of wisdom (the fear of the Lord) and the two great commandments. The proud man is therefore at odds with himself (8:36) [i.e., those who hate wisdom hurt themselves], his neighbor (13:10) [i.e., pride leads to conflict with others] and the Lord (16:5) [i.e., the Lord detests the proud]. Destruction may appropriately come from any quarter. See also 18:12” (Derek Kidner, *The Proverbs*, TOTC, 120). “Haman is a classic example of ‘pride’ preceding a fall (Esth. 5:9-14; 7). The Edomites’ ‘haughty spirit’ drew Obadiah’s prophetic curse (Obad.), which was fulfilled in time. The Pharaoh of the Exodus, King Ben-hadad, King Sennacherib, King Nebuchadnezzar, and King Herod Agrippa I are also examples” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on Proverbs,” 2019 ed., 137, [planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/proverbs.pdf](http://planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/proverbs.pdf)).

v. 18 **goes before** I.e., “results in” or “leads to” (GNT) destruction. Pride is the “forerunner,” “precursor,” or “harbinger” of destruction, suggesting the relationship is *causal*.

v. 18 **destruction** Cf., “disaster” (CEB, GW, NABRE). “Disaster” renders the *figurative* sense of the term – destruction, namely, any kind of disaster or failure. “Destruction” renders the *literal* sense of the term – destruction, namely, the physical consequences of deviating from “the highway of the upright” (v. 17).

v. 18 **haughty spirit** Cf., “arrogant spirit” (HCSB); “arrogant attitude” (NOG). “Verse 18 is linked to v. 19, in that both concern humility and the consequences of pride. Proverbs here links pride to robbery. In doing so, it alludes either to the arrogant certainty of the criminal that he will not be caught or to the act of robbery itself as an expression of self-centeredness and indifference to the rights of others. At any rate, v. 18 teaches that the apparent prosperity of the proud is short-lived” (Duane A. Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, NAC, 157).

v. 18 **fall** Cf., “stumbling” (NASB). Verses 17 and 18 are probably linked by the metaphors of ‘way/road’ (see v. 17) and ‘stumbling,’ (implicitly of the foot walking on a road) . . . Instead of looking where they are going, in defiance of the first principle of wisdom (see

15:33), the arrogant raise their eyes above God and humanity (cf. 30:13) and stumble to their perdition (see the variant proverb in 18:12). The juxtaposition of the upright with the proud suggests that the two verses are antithetical” (Bruce K. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 15-31*, NICOT, 26).

## Other Texts to Consider

### Proverbs 18:5

“The LORD detests all the proud of heart.

Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished.”

# 4

## APPLY THE TEXT

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### CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Don't let pride take your eyes off the highway of wisdom;  
don't let arrogance leave you in the ditch of fools.

### CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



### 3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The "Living Questions" are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



## FAMILY TALK

As parents we pay careful attention to our child’s growth. We consistently measure height, weight, and developmental milestones taking pride in our child’s accomplishments. I’m not going to lie. My child being the biggest, smartest, strongest, (or whatever else fits here) puffed me up with a pride that was certainly not of the Lord. I remember having a conversation with a friend who was asking for advice on how to break a terrible habit her toddler had recently developed. It was so bad she whispered her cry for help. The horrible and disgusting nose picking era of toddlerhood had started for her child. It didn’t take but a fraction of a second to think with pride, “I’m so glad my child doesn’t do that!” In a moment of complete transparency, I might have even flipped my hair and turned my nose up. Oh, but the haughty spirit will be dealt with! A few short weeks later my own precious little darling started digging for gold and thus began a long and arduous battle with nose picking. I remember thinking to myself, “Never again. *Never* will I *ever* say, ‘At least my child doesn’t do that.’” It’s like a guarantee they’ll start doing whatever behavior you are so haughty about. Isn’t the Lord gracious to help us humble through our kids? As you parent this week notice whether your pride in your child is God-entered or self-centered. Give Him the glory for a job well done! We are praying for your family this week!

### What Does The Bible Say?

Read Proverbs 16:18 and Daniel 4:28-37

1. Put Proverbs 16:18 in your own words.
2. Who did Nebuchadnezzar say made Babylon?
3. What happened to Nebuchadnezzar?

### What Do You Think?

What is the difference between taking pride in a job well done and self-centered pride?

### What Do You Do?

Humility before the Lord begins with your posture. This week as you pray set a posture of reverence before the Lord and pray on your knees.

### CORE COMPETENCY: Humility

I make others more important than me.

### MEMORY VERSE: Proverbs 11:2

*When pride comes, then comes disgrace; but with humility comes wisdom*

## KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: [kids@wearecentral.org](mailto:kids@wearecentral.org)

- \_\_\_\_\_ I completed my Bible Study
- \_\_\_\_\_ I memorized this week’s verse
- \_\_\_\_\_ I brought my Bible to church
- \_\_\_\_\_ I brought a friend



CHILD’S NAME \_\_\_\_\_

GRADE \_\_\_\_\_

PARENT SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

# OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

## CENTRAL BELIEFS

**Authority of the Bible** (2 Timothy 3:16-17)  
*I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.*

**Church** (Ephesians 4:15-16)

*I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.*

**Eternity** (John 14:1-4)

*I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.*

**The Holy Spirit** (Romans 8:9)

*I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.*

**Humanity** (John 3:16)

*I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.*

**Identity in Christ** (John 1:12)

*I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.*

**Jesus Christ** (Hebrews 1:1-4)

*I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.*

**Life Purpose** (Acts 20:24)

*I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.*

**Personal God** (Psalm 121:1-2)

*I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.*

**Salvation by Grace** (Ephesians 2:8-9)

*I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.*



## CENTRAL VIRTUES

**Love** (1 John 4:10-12)

*I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.*

**Joy** (John 15:11)

*I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.*

**Peace** (Philippians 4:6-7)

*I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.*

**Patience** (Proverbs 14:29)

*I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.*

**Kindness/Goodness** (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

*I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others*

**Faithfulness** (Proverbs 3:3-4)

*I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.*

**Gentleness** (Philippians 4:5)

*I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.*

**Self-Control** (Titus 2:11-13)

*I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.*

**Grace** (Colossians 3:13)

*I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.*

**Hope** (1 Peter 1:3-5)

*I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.*

**Humility** (Philippians 2:3-4)

*I choose to esteem others above myself.*



## CENTRAL PRACTICES

**Bible Study** (Hebrews 4:12)

*I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.*

**Biblical Community** (Acts 2:44-47)

*I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.*

**Compassion** (Psalm 82:3-4)

*I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.*

**Evangelism** (Acts 1:8)

*I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.*

**Generosity** (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

*I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.*

**Prayer** (Psalm 66:16-20)

*I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.*

**Single-Mindedness** (Matthew 6:33)

*I focus on God and His priorities for my life.*

**Spiritual Gifts** (Romans 12:4-6)

*I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.*

**Worship** (Psalm 95:1-7)

*I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.*

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