

## Pursuing Partnership: Moving Mountains of Strongholds

*Stronghold #3 – Pride*

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*In this series of blogs, Leslie and Chad identify spiritual strongholds that need to be unearthed and removed so that godly men and women can partner well together for the completion of the Great Commission. Pray with us into these mountains, and by faith may these tectonic plates move in Jesus' name!*

### **Puffed Up with Pride – And God Hates It**



#### **Yucky Pride!**

Years ago, we attended a church in Bangkok, Thailand. A Thai woman preached a powerful message that day, and we learned she served on a team of pastors at the church. We asked if we could meet her. They took us to a room, and she came in looking a little nervous. We expressed to her how much we enjoyed the sermon, and she looked both shocked and relieved. She said, *“That is so encouraging to hear. Sometimes when Westerners come, they walk out if it’s my turn to preach because I am a woman. It hurts so much.”*

Now it was our turn to look shocked. We told her how sorry we were to hear of Westerners who did not walk with humility or recognize the Holy Spirit in her life and message. As we sat together, she shared more of her story. *“Before I preach, I pray and I prepare. When I preach, I can’t help it, the Holy Spirit just*

*comes over me. But that causes some problems. Some of the male pastors here get angry. I try to encourage them, but sometimes I think, 'Do I need to stutter when I preach so they will accept me more? I cannot help what the Holy Spirit does through me.'"*

This story highlights the yuckiness of pride. Pride caused Westerners to disrespect a servant of God because they could not recognize the Holy Spirit working through a female. Satan smiled as they left the building expressing their rejection of God's daughter.

Pride caused this sister's Asian colleagues to not accept her because they felt intimidated by her sermons. Rather than leaning deeper into Christ themselves, they built a wall of hostility. Satan laughed as a sister in Christ felt discouraged and confused.

### **Don't Be Anti-God!**

C.S. Lewis wrote, *"According to Christian teachers, the essential vice, the utmost evil, is Pride. Unchastity, anger, greed, drunkenness, and all that, are mere fleabites in comparison: it was through Pride that the devil became the devil: Pride leads to every other vice: it is the complete anti-God state of mind."*

**"Pride is the complete anti-God state of mind."**

On the issue of men and women, do we have an anti-God state of mind? Heaven forbid. Yet, pride is so normal, so prevalent, and so deeply entrenched inside each of us that we often overlook the reality of pride that shapes the male/female conversation.

Some grasp for position. Some covet authority. Some twist words, or start rumors, or call names, or fail to include, or belittle, or make jokes in order to maintain their status. Others selectively quote or manipulate scripture to keep people "in their place." Both men and women can do any of these pride-filled actions. It's in the *wanting* that the anti-God state of mind creeps in.

Pride is a tricky demon since it all comes down to the heart's disposition. A person consumed with lust or greed may eventually be found out, but pride easily hides. Among Christians, a haughty spirit limits intimacy with God, decreases eternal effectiveness in ministry, and limits godly laborers. So, how can we defeat and overcome an arrogant heart? Through the practice of intentional humility.

### **Practical Lessons in Pride**

In 2010, we spoke for the Lausanne Congress about the collaboration of men and women for the sake of the Gospel. During that talk, we both said how a man or woman can fight pride in order to better collaborate:

*As a man, I have learned that I fight against the Fall when I seek to empower my sisters in the Body of Christ to use every gift they are given - including gifts of teaching, preaching, and leading. It requires humility and a willingness to die to myself - to share, to give power away, to open doors. It makes me ask the question, "Am I teachable? Can I learn from anyone, whether male or female, as long as God is empowering them?" I've learned it's not about maintaining my*

*own status, position, power, or authority. It's not about that. It's about Jesus and multiplying his workers for his mission.*

*As a woman, I have learned that I work against the Fall, when I use every gift that God has given me including the gift of leadership. It requires humility and a willingness to die to myself to step up in a church culture that often prefers my brothers. I cannot allow others' restrictions to be used as an excuse for my own disobedience. Daily, I have to remind myself that because Jesus died and rose again, I also am a priest and an ambassador in the kingdom of God. I must resume my responsibility to again share dominion on the earth with my brothers. It is about Jesus and about his mission of reconciliation.*

Jesus defeated the demonic stronghold of pride by walking in the opposite spirit. Jesus demonstrated a life of humility. Humility, in its many forms, wages battle against the mountain of pride. May godly men and women walk in humble, submissive unity... like Jesus.

Do you want God to oppose you? Have pride. Do you want God to pour out his grace on you? Have humility! *"God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble"* (James 4:6). Like Jesus, each of us should walk humbly with our gifts given to us by God, and each of us should walk humbly empowering others – with gentleness and kindness, courageously following God.

**Pray God's people will live with humility – empowering others in God's mission! May the mountain of PRIDE be moved, in Jesus' name!**