

# CAPITOL STUDIES

MARCH 24, 2021 • WEEK 11



## SEVEN DEADLY SINS AND CIVIL SERVANTS

### *Contents*

Personal Power	2
Too Much Esteem	2
God Against You?	2
Fighting Pride	3
Political Power	3
Pride Made the Devil	4
Lucifer's Fall	4
King Uzziah	5
King Herod	6
Vice King Joseph	6
About Capitol Studies	8



### *Verse of the Week*

James 4:6, 10

*But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble." ...Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.*

## Power, Pride, & Politics (Part II)



**P**RIDE, AS A NOUN, WAS FIRST APPLIED to groups of lions in the year 1486. Pride, as a verb, in the reflexive sense of “congratulate oneself,” was first seen recorded in 1275. Pride, as the root of all sins, was first seen in the Garden of Eden over 6,000 years ago in the first days of human history. Sinful pride, as the first sin in the universe, took place before time began, in the heart of the then-perfect angelic being Lucifer.

Deadly pride—it entered the universe through Lucifer’s prehistoric, freewill choice to sinfully congratulate himself, exalting himself mentally above God. The problem of inappropriate self-congratulation is severe. Selfishly seeking “too much” attention is the deadliest of sins.

Rev. Perry M. Gauthier, V. D. M.

*(This study is adapted from an earlier series by Rev. Gauthier, 1960–2020.)*



## 1. PEOPLE'S PRIDE AND PERSONAL POWER

I find it interesting that a group of the “king of beasts” is called a pride of lions. Lions are noble, with stately strength, exuding a strong confidence that just seems proper. English philosopher Bertrand Russell also helps us think about the value of proper pride in this observation from the animal kingdom:

I do not believe that any peacock envies another peacock his tail, because every peacock is persuaded that his own tail is the finest in the world. The consequence of this is that peacocks are peaceable birds.<sup>1</sup>

People need proper pride, peaceful self-esteem, and a healthy self-valuation. After all, we are handcrafted creatures made by God Himself, in His own image. Proper pride is good. The properly proud person is whole—happy to be himself. The improperly proud person struts all about, and “you’re gonna hear him roar” as he seeks undue attention and *too much* self-esteem.

### A. Thinking About Too Much Self-Esteem

Next week we will see how pride relates to deadly envy. Suffice it to say both sins seek more for self than God has allotted. Recalling last week’s theme:

*Romans 12:3*

*For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.<sup>2</sup>*

We should not think lowly of ourselves. That would be an insult to God who says He made us “fearfully and wonderfully.”<sup>3</sup> An adoption poster I saw said:

**“GOD MADE ME AND GOD DON’T MAKE JUNK!”<sup>4</sup>**

We should think highly of God’s human creation—and even of our own selves as a part of that creation. We should not think lowly, but we should also not think “too highly” of ourselves, which is sinful pride—a desire for too much attention and self-esteem.

### B. Will God Ever Fight Against You?

God made you, Senator, and God loves you and cares about your personal life, because “senators are people too.” But would God ever fight against you?

*James 4:6-7, 10*

*But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, “God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”<sup>7</sup> Submit therefore to God....*

*<sup>10</sup>Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.*

When the Holy Spirit inspired James to write verse six, he wrote the word ἀντιτάσσω (pronounced antitasso, translated “opposed”), which



has a military flavor meaning “to arrange in battle against” someone. In our own personal walk with Christ, we will all do well to remember just how very *strongly* God opposes pride. May we not be found doing this:

### **WE WERE APPLAUDING OURSELVES LIKE SEALS!**

Self-exaltation is unnecessary. It is also ungodly, because the root of all sin is pride. The root of all true professional success is the personal success that comes from private humility. In James 4:10, James tells us the place *where* we are to humble ourselves, and *Who* will exalt us if we do. “Humble yourselves *in the presence of the Lord*, and *He* will exalt you.” When the drug of pride calls your name, do not listen to its siren song. Humble yourself. God wars against pride.

### **C. Humility: “The How To” of Fighting Pride**

In the spiritual warfare for your souls, pride will hurt you. How can you fight it? Your private lives (which are without term limits) matter more to God than your political lives. On a personal level, know that the essence of sin is pride. Every sin begins with turning from God, hence all sins begin in pride.

**THEOLOGIAN THOMAS AQUINAS TAUGHT THAT PRIDE WAS MAN’S DISORDERED DESIRE TO BE EXALTED AND THAT PRIDE WAS CONTEMPT FOR GOD, SEEN CLEARLY IN THE REFUSAL TO SUBMIT TO GOD’S DIVINE RULE.<sup>5</sup>**

We saw last week that the apostolic leader Peter struggled with two forms of pride the night before the crucifixion. When he wore a younger man’s sandals, Peter wanted to refuse Christ’s desire to wash his feet. Peter had contempt for the Divine will, exalting himself in false humility (sneaky pride). Later, wearing an older man’s toga, Peter humbly wrote wise advice (knowing his bouts with pride) helping us to humble ourselves before the Lord.

*1 Peter 5:5-6*

*Clothe yourselves with humility... for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. <sup>6</sup>Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time.*

Peter and James have given us very similar advice, but Peter highlights the power of God’s hand to humble us (if we choose not to humble ourselves). God’s hand is also mighty to exalt us (again, if we choose not to exalt ourselves). We should choose humility, so God does not have to humble us (and fight against us). We should not have a disordered desire to exalt ourselves pridefully since that would be *too much* exaltation. We should wait for God to exalt us at the proper time.

## **2. POLITICIANS’ PRIDE AND POLITICAL POWER**

Pride affects your personal *and your political* lives. Pride is a personal, heart issue for every human. As political leaders, privileged with power, you must be doubly aware of the dangers of an unsubmitive will. You have a responsibility to moralize culture, codifying God’s will in these





halls of power. Government is necessarily about power, and power is a good thing. Power is an attribute of God (He is omnipotent). It is a good gift transferred to humans so that we might get His work on earth done quickly and efficiently. We enjoy powered utilities, power mowers, power steering, power tools, and admire powerful athletes. Please note that the problem with power is not so much that *it* corrupts but that humans corrupt *it!*

Again, it is better to say “humans, with free will, choosing to sin, corrupt power.” Humans corrupt wealth by choosing greed. Humans corrupt sex when choosing lust. Humans corrupt anger when choosing to be volcano heads or bitter bottlers of anger. Humans corrupt rest by choosing sloth. The same formula holds true regarding God’s gift of power:

**POLITICAL LEADERS CORRUPT POWER WHEN THEY CHOOSE TO SIN CONCERNING THE USER OF POWER.**

**A. “Pride Made the Devil the Devil” – C. S. Lewis<sup>6</sup>**

There is pain in the world because of sin. Sin entered the human world through “Lord and Lady Earth,” Adam and Eve. Satan tempted them in the Garden paradise to choose an anti-God state of mind. Satan tempted them to pride. They chose to follow his temptations rather than God’s revelations. Paul tells Pastor Timothy that a man seeking the position of pastor/elder in the church must not be a neophyte in faith. Having a younger man’s ego, such a leader may have too many fresh struggles with pride (the root of all sins). Wisdom and humility are gained with time if a disciple has a submissive heart. Note what Paul commands that a spiritual leader/elder must *not* be.

*1 Timothy 3:6*

*Not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil.*

Wherever your political career path takes you, may you always remember the devilishness of pride.

**POLITICAL PRIDE CORRUPTS GOD’S GOOD GIFT OF POWER**

Did you know pride was the first sin on earth in God’s perfect, prehistoric government? Read on.

**B. Lucifer’s Fall from God’s Government**

Before time began, before the earthly, green garden of Eden, there was a heavenly gemstone garden of Eden. That gem-clad mountain was the glorious mountain of the government of God somewhere in eternity past. The prophet Ezekiel draws back a mysterious curtain, showing us, in that time before time, how Lucifer, the angelic prime minister of God, fell into sin through pride. God rebukes Lucifer here:

*Ezekiel 28:12-16*

*You had the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.*

*<sup>13</sup>You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: the ruby, the topaz and the diamond; the beryl, the onyx and*



*the jasper; the lapis lazuli, the turquoise and the emerald; and the gold, the workmanship of your settings and sockets was in you on the day that you were created.*

*<sup>14</sup>You were the anointed cherub who covers, and I placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God; you walked in the midst of the stones of fire. <sup>15</sup>You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created until unrighteousness was found in you.*

*<sup>16</sup>By the abundance of your trade you were internally filled with violence, and you sinned; therefore I have cast you as profane from the mountain of God.*

We find—and Ezekiel 28:15 records—the origin of sin in the universe rooted in the freewill choice of Lucifer, God’s perfect angelic creature. “The mountain of God” is symbolic language for God’s government. His mountain was the place of God’s wonderful dominion of His heavenly realms through a strongly mounted hierarchy of delegated power. Power is a good thing, a God thing, a heavenly thing. Unfortunately, even in heaven, corruption in the heart, through free will, corrupted power. Lucifer’s pride had “an ‘I’ in the middle.” The first sin in the pre-earthly universe also had “an ‘I’ in the middle.” Note Lucifer’s famed *Five I Wills*.

*Isaiah 14:12-15*

*How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, you who have weakened the nations! <sup>13</sup>But you said in your heart,*

*“I will ascend to heaven;*

*I will raise my throne above the stars of God, and*

*I will sit on the mount... in the recesses of the north.*

*<sup>14</sup>I will ascend above the heights of the clouds;*

*I will make myself like the Most High.”*

*<sup>15</sup>Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol, to the recesses of the pit.*

Eternity’s first failure in government was due to the corruption of good power, corrupted by the self-centered freewill choice of an exalted official, now called Satan. *Pride* made the devil the devil.

### C. King Uzziah: Strong but Proud

In political power, in the capital of Israel, a human king followed this same pattern: “power then pride.”

*2 Chronicles 26:15-21*

*In Jerusalem [Uzziah] made engines of war invented by skillful men to be on the towers and on the corners for the purpose of shooting arrows and great stones. Hence his fame spread afar, for he was marvelously helped until he was strong. <sup>16</sup>But when he became strong, his heart was so proud that he acted corruptly, and he was unfaithful to the LORD his God.... <sup>20</sup>[T]he LORD [smote] him [with leprosy]. <sup>21</sup>King Uzziah was a leper to the day of his death; and he lived in a separate house, being a leper... cut off from the house of the LORD.*





Power, which is a good thing, did not “corrupt” poor King Uzziah. King Uzziah, like Lucifer, made a freewill choice to disobey God’s design for power. He corruptly chose self-exaltation in the midst of great power to his own demise.

#### D. King Herod, a Prideful Politico, Pays

Powerful speech is a good thing. Moses was “a man of power in words and deeds.”<sup>7</sup> Jesus was said to be a man “mighty in deed and word.”<sup>8</sup> Political confidence and eloquence (power of mind and mouth) are both good things. People need clear-thinking leaders who can communicate well. Selfish pride, ever seeking too much self-esteem and inappropriate amounts of glory, corrupts human leadership. The powerful political speaker who is puffed up in pride will someday pay. See the tragic ending to what King Herod Agrippa I thought was going to be quite the royal reception.

#### HEROD SAW IN HIS MIRROR, MIRROR, ON THE WALL A MORE AMAZING KING THAN THEM ALL.

Herod Agrippa’s swollen head had been filled with daydreams of a glorious stump speech. Would that day be filled with focused praise and loud applause for his divine magnificence? This swaggeringly proud politico arrogantly wanted far *too much* attention.

*Acts 12:21-23*

*On an appointed day Herod, having put on his royal apparel, took his seat on the rostrum and began delivering an address to them. <sup>22</sup>The people kept crying out, “The voice of a god and not of a man!” <sup>23</sup>And immediately an angel of the Lord struck him because he did not give God the glory.... [H]e was eaten by worms and died.*

Selfish pride ends political careers, ruins political power, and perverts the political office. Prideful political leaders want *too much* attention. New York City’s 105th Mayor, Ed Koch, pressed the question, “But enough of me. Let’s talk about you. What do you think of me?”

#### E. Vice King Joseph: Strong but Humble

Power is a good thing, and with godly humility, it is of great use in God’s world in the institution of human government. Power does not corrupt humble leaders, but some prideful, political leaders will corrupt political power, even to their own demise.

Let us close our study by looking at a political leader who did things right. Joseph is a refreshing example of the truth that a good-hearted, humble, political leader need not abuse power. The king exalts Joseph to the second highest position of political power on earth. Joseph makes great use of governmental power to the great good of multitudes.

*Genesis 41:41-45*

*Pharaoh said to Joseph, “See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt.” <sup>42</sup>Then Pharaoh took off his signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph’s hand, and clothed him in garments of fine linen and put*



*the gold necklace around his neck. <sup>43</sup>He had him ride in his second chariot; and they proclaimed before him, “Bow the knee!” And he set him over all the land of Egypt. <sup>44</sup>Moreover, Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Though I am Pharaoh, yet without your permission no one shall raise his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.” <sup>45</sup>Then Pharaoh named Joseph Zaphenath-paneah.... And Joseph went forth over the land of Egypt.*

In Egyptian, Zaphenath-paneah means “Savior,” and so Joseph was. Joseph’s understanding of the goodness of godly governmental power was like a chunky, gold signet ring. Joseph’s godly humility was brilliant like a manly, gold necklace. Humble Joseph was in a total pro-God state of mind. As a powerful political leader, he saved much of the world in his day. When government leaders are humble stewards of political power, societies are well ordered and healthy. Political power can be a very good thing.

*Genesis 45:4-8*

*Then Joseph said to his brothers, “Please come closer to me.... God sent me before you to preserve life.... <sup>7</sup>God sent me before you to... keep you alive by a great deliverance. <sup>8</sup>Now, therefore, it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh and lord of all his household and ruler over all the land of Egypt.”*

Because Joseph knew his chief end was to know and love God, he avoided the chief sin of pride. In humility, he knew the great good of the power of human government. As such, Joseph became a “life preserver, great deliverer, and (advisory) *father*” to Pharaoh, the most powerful king on earth at the time. In humility, he became the day-to-day political ruler over the most powerful nation on the planet.

## CONCLUDING EXHORTATION

Dear Senator:

Please know that corruption of power *by* the prideful human heart has always been the prime source of sin in all governments. May you ignore pride’s siren song for the good of your own personal soul and the good of your political career.

Humbly submitted for your diligent discipleship,

Rev. Perry M. Gauthier



## Verse of the Week

James 4:6, 10

*But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble." ...Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.*

## FOOTNOTES

1. Bertrand Russell, *The Conquest of Happiness*, 1930.
2. All Scripture quotations are from the *New American Standard Bible 1995 Update* unless otherwise noted.
3. King David pens praise to God who knit him together in his mother's womb. For this reason, I'm unashamedly pro-innocent-life. Psalm 139:13-16 – "For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother's womb. I will give thanks to You for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret and skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth; Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; And in Your book were all written the days that were ordained for me when as yet there was not one of them."
4. The original form of this quote comes from Ethel Waters: "I know I'm somebody 'cause God made me and God don't make no junk."
5. Michael Eric Dyson, *The Seven Deadly Sins: Pride*, The New York Public Library: Oxford University Press, 2006, page 12.
6. C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, Harper Collins, 2001, Book 3, Chapter 8, page 123.
7. Acts 7:22; Stephen's eloquently powerful speech got him killed.
8. Luke 24:19; This is spoken to and about Jesus on the Emmaus road.

## Personal Study Notes

---

---

---

---

---

---



## Serving Civil Servants with Scripture

Capitol Studies™ is serving kings for the King of kings until His glorious return. Capitol Studies was founded by Rev. Perry Gauthier (1960 – 2020), who faithfully served the cause of Christ in over 33 U.S. State Capitols, in Washington D.C., and in multiple capitols around the world.

Capitol Studies Offices  
4547 Calvert Street • Lincoln, NE 68506



## WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY

Meets during the 107<sup>th</sup> Legislature's First Session

### SENATORS

6:45–8:00 A.M. Wednesdays  
Room 1022, Facilitated by  
Sen. Clements & Sen. Arch

### STAFF

12:00 P.M. Wednesdays  
Room 1022, Facilitated by  
Joel Hunt



[www.CapitolStudies.org](http://www.CapitolStudies.org)  
[info@capitolstudies.org](mailto:info@capitolstudies.org)  
[f/CapitolStudies](https://www.facebook.com/CapitolStudies)