

“THE TIME OF YOUR LIFE!”

June 28, 2020

James 4: 1—8, 13—17

INTRODUCTION — PRIDE CAN GET US ALL into TROUBLE. Former heavy-weight boxer James (Quick) Tillis was a cowboy from Oklahoma who fought out of Chicago in the early 1980s. He still remembers his first day in the Windy City after his arrival from Tulsa. “I got off the bus with two cardboard suitcases under my arms in downtown Chicago and stopped in front of the Sears Tower. I put my suitcases down, and I looked up at the Tower and I said to myself, ‘I’m going to conquer Chicago.’ “When I looked down, the suitcases were gone.”

JAMES wanted to TEACH PEOPLE SOME GODLY INSIGHTS about— PRIDE.

I. *PRIDE* — and *SUBMITTING to GOD*

1. The PROBLEM with PRIDE — v. 1–3

—Many people have heard of the thought in Proverbs 16: 18, “*Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.*”

—But the Bible has more to say about the sin of pride: Solomon wrote in another Chapter of Proverbs (13:10) that: “*Pride only breeds quarrels*” One senior pastor in Pasadena, CA, said that certainly was true in his experience. “Where there are conflicts and fightings and warrings within [a] church, the sin of pride is always present.” 1

—Of course, pride need not be negative. Parents can have a healthy pride in what their children achieve and accomplish —> as long as that pride does not blind the parents to the imperfections and shortcomings of their child or children.

—It is when pride is used as proof of the superiority of one person over another that pride becomes a tool of sin. There are certainly plenty of examples of prideful people in today’s world. —

—Howard Hughes is another person who comes to mind in this category — He inherited several millions of dollars from his father, who had built a great tool & dye company, and Howard built it into an even greater company, adding an aircraft manufacturing company (Hughes Aircraft), and becoming a movie mogul, with several important and Oscar— nominated films in the 1930's. He romanced

movie stars, and at the outbreak of World War II became an absolutely necessary defense industry supplier. Hughes was extremely proud of all he had accomplished.

—But Proverbs 16: 18 certainly came true for Howard Hughes. — He was concerned that Nazi German U-boats were sinking so many American and British ships that sailed across the Atlantic Ocean, that he designed a huge, new kind of plane — a giant plane, first in a fleet of giant military cargo planes, capable of carrying almost half the contents of a commercial cargo ship of 1942 —and it was made, not of the steel and aluminum of most planes, because steel was needed to make guns and tanks and battleships. No, Howard Hughes designed this new class of giant plane to be made of — wood !! Birch, to be exact (‘tho people called it the ‘spruce goose’). Hughes finally found out why no one else built large cargo planes out of wood

—It just wasn’t structurally sound !! Hughes was called up before congressional hearings about the millions of taxpayer dollars that went into building just one prototype ‘spruce goose.’ In 1947, two years after the end of the war, Howard Hughes himself piloted the giant plane for about a mile over the Pacific Ocean near Los Angeles, and then it was stored away and never flown again. The difficulties Hughes had with that aircraft, along with some childhood problems, may have led to the dementia he began to suffer, and led to the downfall of his empire. sadly, Howard Hughes was an example of: *“Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.”*

2. BECOMING HUMBLE — v. 4–10

—James tells us that a real problem with pride is that it is a tool in the devil’s toolbox. James tells us that the way to avoid pride, and the devil, is to *submit to God—resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*” v. 7.

—But how do we do that ??

—First, pray each day that the lord will keep you from the sin of pride.

—And when we are tempted to be proud — ask the Lord to help you be humble. .

—An eight year old girl, at Children’s Time at her church – the pastor asked how they dealt with temptation, and she said: “when the devil knocks on the door of my heart with temptation, I send Jesus to answer the door.”

II. GOD’S IDEAS about the FUTURE v. 13– 17

1. PRIDEFUL PLANNING —

— The Bible tells us that it is good to PLAN for the future.

— The issue is, ‘How do we plan?’ Is it just our wants and desires that we consider?

2. HUMBLE PLANNING —

— We should put Jesus Christ at the center of every kind of planning we do — whether at church, at home, for our children or grandchildren, for our job or profession. In Committee meetings, Church Council....

— Most of us have heard someone say, “Lord willing” — or, in the south, “Lord willing and the creek don’t rise”

— Those persons have read James Ch. 4

CONCLUSION — James wrote, “*HUMBLE YOURSELVES BEFORE the LORD, and HE WILL LIFT YOU UP.*”

Ronald Reagan recalled an occasion when he was governor of California and made a speech in Mexico City in 1970: “After I had finished speaking, I sat down to rather unenthusiastic applause, and I was a little embarrassed. The speaker who followed me spoke in Spanish -- which I didn't understand -- and he was being applauded about every paragraph. To hide my embarrassment, I started clapping before everyone else and longer than anyone else until our U.S. ambassador leaned over and said, ‘I wouldn't do that if I were you. He's interpreting your speech.’ ”

Follow James' insights: plan ahead, humbly, letting the Lord have the final say on things. And don't ever let pride get the better of you— don't even let the appearance of pride overtake you. Plan humbly— and act humbly. Always.

[Quoted by Gerald Gardner in All the Presidents' Wits (Morrow), in Reader's Digest.]

ENDNOTES:

1 *JAMES: The Communicators Commentary Series*, (Waco: Word Books, 1984), p. 80.