

INTRO

- What is something you are proud about in your life (an achievement, overcoming something)?
- When you think of a proud person, describe the characteristics that make them proud.

In today's topic, we read about the world's most powerful King who fell in his pride but was graciously restored by God. It may be hard for us to self-identify with such a powerful person, but the reality is we are all building our own empires. And often, our personal empires clash with God and his kingdom.

READ

Daniel 4:1-37

REFLECT & RESPOND

A big part of why we clash with God comes down to the root of pride in every human heart.

THE PROBLEM OF PRIDE is that it ultimately rejects God in favour of self. Our culture highly values individualism which compounds our pride: *"Pride creates the illusion that we are competent to run our own lives, achieve our own sense of self-worth and find a purpose big enough to give us meaning in life without God."*

Qu: In what ways does our culture promote unhealthy pride (or an unhealthy focus on self)?

A PICTURE OF WHAT PRIDE does to us is seen in this story - it dehumanizes us. As image-bearers, we have an internal purpose to worship and trust God. When we turn to other things in worship and trust, we turn away from having God in his rightful place in our lives. Pride places other things in the place of God in our lives, and ultimately anything in place of God is too small.

Qu: How does sin, and specifically pride, dehumanize us?

GOD'S PURPOSE IN CONFRONTING PRIDE is clearly mentioned 3 times (v17, 25, 32) and it is essentially this: "I am God and you are not. When I am in my rightful place in your life, it gives me glory and maximizes your joy."

Qu: Why do you think God confronts our pride?

GOD'S PURSUIT OF PROUD PEOPLE like King Nebuchadnezzar should give us great encouragement and hope. God loves us enough to interrupt our lives and warn us of the consequences pride will bring. We are then left with the opportunity to humble ourselves or be humbled. We don't need to go through the school of humiliation to learn the lesson of humility.

God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. (James 4:6)

Qu: Practically speaking, what does it look like to humble yourself rather than being humbled by God?

As we look to Jesus—how he humbled himself to come to earth, live as we do, die in our place—his gospel gives us both confidence (without the pride), and humility (without the humiliation).

Closing thought: Despite all the King endured, he was able to look on what God did for him with gratitude - what a sign of a heart that's been humbled!

RESPOND & PRAY

- What was most encouraging/challenging from today's discussion?
- How will you apply what you learnt to your life?
- Pray for one another and pray for those on your PEBCI card (I encourage you to get everyone to take it out and pray over it).