

2 Corinthians 9 - 10

Day 1

Preparation for Giving. Read 2 Corinthians 9

1. Even though they had yet to complete the act of giving, what did Paul conclude about the Corinthians? 9:1,2 (What two adjectives did he use to describe them?)

FYI: "**Zeal.** The same Greek word is translated 'deep concern' in Colossians 4:13" - Irving Jensen (49)

2. How would taking a collection ahead of his visit benefit and safeguard Paul and the Corinthians? 9:3,4

3. What else was Paul trying to achieve by giving the Corinthians time for the collection before he came? 9:5 (Compare with his instructions in 1 Cor. 16:2.)

FYI: **grudgingly given/covetousness/ grudging obligation/extortion** *pleonexia* Strongs NT:4124, "covetousness," lit., "a desire to have more" (pleon, "more," echo, "to have"), always in a bad sense...2 Cor 9:5, lit., "as (a matter of) extortion" i. e., a gift which betrays the giver's unwillingness to bestow what is due"
- Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

Verse 9:5b - other versions read:

"...so that it would be ready, not as something extorted [or wrung out of you], but as a [voluntary and] generous gift" *Amplified Bible*

"...I want it to be a real gift and not look as if it were being given under pressure." - *Living Bible*

4. What kinds of pressure do you think the Corinthians may have felt if Paul had been the one to collect the money? (See 1 Thessalonians 2:5)

5. What principle about sowing did Paul give? 9:6 What type of reaping do you think Paul is referring to (material, spiritual, both)?

- What did Jesus say? Acts 20:35

Digging Deeper

What else did Paul say about this principle in Galatians 6:7-9?

FYI: "God never promises to match you dollar for dollar, or even to reward you in kind. What He promises are the blessings of the heart - the joy of knowing you're obedient, the pleasure of peace, the good feeling of having a part in His work...God's going to honor you for your active, enthusiastic, knowledgeable involvement with His cause."
- Charles Swindoll (ME 21)

"The bountiful return promised by God for generous giving is not necessarily (though possibly it is in some cases) to be measured in material plenty...He does, indeed, promise to supply our need (Philippians 4:19), but perhaps more commonly the rewards are spiritual, which in terms of eternity are far more valuable...Therefore, when we give with abundance, we are not really "giving," but "sowing."
- Henry Morris

6. What should direct and motivate our giving? 9:7 (See Exodus 25:2) Why do you think God loves a cheerful giver?

FYI: Decided/Purposed "The Greek term for purposed means to 'choose beforehand, to decide ahead of time.' This planning should originate not from external pressures but from within, 'in his heart.' Gracious giving is the result of heartfelt resolve. If it isn't from the heart, it is given 'grudgingly or under compulsion.' But when giving is from a heart full of cheer, it evokes not only the attention of God but also His love." - Charles Swindoll (ME 27)

Cheerful Strong's NT:2431 *hilaros*, propitious or merry ("hilarious"), i.e. prompt or willing:

"Christ loves givers who are sincere [not reluctant], spontaneous [not under compulsion], and joyful [not begrudging]. He does not look at the amount but at the heart [Mark 12:41-44]." - The Woman's Study Bible (1938)

7. What trust and confidence do we need to have? 9:8 (See also Philippians 4:19)

- How much does God bless us? (Note the repetition of the words *all*, *always* and *every*.)

FYI: "The ancient Greek word for sufficiency (*autarkeia*) may also be translated contentment...God gives a special gift to the giving heart: always...all contentment in all things. That is a lot of all!" - David Guzik

8. What qualities are connected with righteousness? 9:9 (Cf. Psalm 112:3,9)

9. How does God bless our giving? 9:10,11

From
Ephesians 1,
see the list
of blessings we
have in Christ.

10. List the blessings that would come from their generous giving.

- 9:12a
- 9:12b

11. What did Paul call the support by the Corinthians? 9:13a (See also 8:24)

12. If the Corinthians gave generously, what outcomes would there be? 9:13b (See Romans 15:26 for the apparent response by the Corinthians.)

- How would they feel about the Corinthians? 9:14

13. Write out Paul's ending to the whole matter of giving. 9:15

FYI: "Gratitude for God's gift brings to an end all debate on the question of giving. It is only proper that those who have benefited from such a vast, incomparable spiritual gift should generously and freely give material gifts to relieve the needs of others."
- The Woman's Study Bible (1939)

"When Paul writes **His indescribable gift**, the ancient Greek word he uses for **indescribable** (*anekdiegetos*) is not found in any ancient writing before this time. Apparently, Paul made up the word."
- David Guzik

"The great gift of God to man in the sacrificial, redemptive death of His Son for our sins, providing us forgiveness and everlasting life, is beyond all human language to express adequately. We cannot merit such a gift; we can only thank Him for it and...give ourselves to the Lord and live henceforth only unto Him. His gift to us must define all our gifts to Him."
- Henry Morris

Applying the Word: *How much are you following these principles about giving? How and with what kinds of giving have you blessed others? How have you been blessed?*

Day 2

Paul's Defense. Read 2 Corinthians 10:1-4

14. To whom did Paul equate himself? 10:1a (See Matthew 11:29)

- What had others been saying about him? 10:1b (See 10:10)

15. On the contrary, how was Paul willing to deal with "some people" who were misjudging him? 10:2a How did he feel about that? (See also 13:10)

FYI: "Our Lord was meek and gentle, but there were times when He spoke sharply. Paul says, in effect, 'When I come to Corinth, I will act as Jesus did. Like the Lord...I will deal forcefully with those who corrupt the truth.'"
- Ray Stedman (371,372)

16. Why were others misjudging him? 10:2b (Cross-reference other misperceptions Paul had dealt with. 2 Cor 1:17; 2:17; 4:2; 7:2)

FYI: "The Corinthian Christians didn't admire Paul's apostolic credentials because they thought in a worldly way, not having the mind of Jesus. They didn't like Paul's apparent weakness and unimpressive appearance. This was an important point because Paul's apparent weakness was shared by Jesus... [Philippians 2:6-8](#)) It wasn't only the apostolic credentials of Paul that were under attack; the very nature of Jesus was attacked."
- David Guzik

17. How did Paul confront and correct the thinking that he was walking by worldly standards or relying on human power? 10:3,4a (See Romans 8:12-14)

- What kind of force do these weapons have? 10:4b
- What do these weapons demolish?

Fortresses/ Strongholds Strong's NT:3794 *ochuroma*; a castle (figuratively, argument):

"(akin to *ochuroo*, 'to make firm'), is used metaphorically in 2 Cor 10:4, of those things in which mere human confidence is imposed."
- Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

"Used metaphorically of any strong points or arguments in which ones trusts. (2 Cor 10:4; Prov. 10:29; 21:22)"
- The Complete Word Dictionary (1083)

18. Underline what we fight against.

- Galatians 5:17 For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. NIV
- Ephesians 6:11-12 Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. NAS
- 1 Peter 2:11 Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. NIV

19. In the following verses, underline **weapons** available to us.

- Ps 119:11 I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. NIV
- Ephesians 6:13-18 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. NIV
- John 8:31-32 Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." NIV
- Luke 6:27-28 Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. NIV
- Romans 12:21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. NAS
- Galatians 5:16 So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. NIV

- Philippians 4:6-7 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. NIV
- Colossians 3:14-16 Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. NAS
- Colossians 4:2 Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; NAS
- 1 John 5:5 Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God. NIV
- Ps 56:3-4 When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You. In God, whose word I praise, In God I have put my trust; I shall not be afraid. What can mere man do to me? NAS
- Ps 18:2-3 The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I call to the LORD, who is worthy of praise, and I am saved from my enemies. NIV

FYI: "It is difficult to argue with evil. Falsehood is a fortress that aggressively defends itself....Never give in to falsehood - and never take up the fleshly weapons that the fortress of evil uses against you. Stick with the weapons of God that Paul say are 'divinely powerful'...Wield divine weapons of Scripture, Christlike love, bold faith, fervent prayer, and loving service to others, including your enemies." - Ray Stedman (375,376)

Applying the Word: *What are some "fortresses/strongholds" in your mind and heart? Which of the divine weapons above do you need to employ more in the fight against these strongholds?*

Day 3

Divine Power. Read 2 Corinthians 10:4-11

20. List the types of strongholds/fortresses that our divine weapons destroy or capture. 10:5

Arguments/imaginings/speculations NT:3053 *logismos*; computation, i.e. (figuratively) reasoning
 "Speculations...refers to the intellectual process of rationalizing and defending an idea." - Ray Stedman (375,376)

Pretension/lofty thing/high thing NT:5313 *hupsoma*; an elevated place or thing, i.e. altitude, or (by implication) a barrier

"Figuratively of a proud adversary, a lofty tower or fortress built up proudly by the enemy (2 Cor. 10:5). Pride (Job 24:24)."
 - The Word Study Dictionary (1433)

"Thought" NT:3540 *noema*; a perception, i.e. purpose, or (by implication) the intellect "a purpose, device of the mind"
 - Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

21. What kind of humanistic *speculations (reasonings)* does Colossians 2:8 list?

22. Underline other things that people trust in or barriers (*high/lofty things*) they erect.

- Jeremiah 48:7 "For because of your trust in your own achievements and treasures, NAS
- Isaiah 30:12 Therefore, this is what the Holy One of Israel says: "Because you have rejected this message, relied on oppression and depended on deceit, NIV
- Isaiah 42:17 But those who trust in idols, who say to images, 'You are our gods,' will be turned back in utter shame. NIV
- Ps 10:4 In his pride the wicked does not seek him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God. NIV
- Romans 1:21-22,25,28 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened...25 They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator-who is forever praised. Amen...28 Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, NIV
- Luke 18:9 And He also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt: NAS
- Psalm 36:1-2 There is no fear of God before his eyes. 2 For in his own eyes he flatters himself too much to detect or hate his sin. NIV
- Luke 16:15 He said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts...
- Romans 10:3 Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. NIV

23. Underline problems with trusting in our own *thoughts and imaginings*:

- Proverbs 16:2 All a man's ways seem innocent to him, but motives are weighed by the LORD. NIV
- Proverbs 16:25 There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death. NAS
- Jeremiah 17:9 "The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it? NAS
- Romans 7:18 I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. NIV

FYI: Speculations and Lofty thing: "If you read the writings that defend error in our day, you'll often see an arrogant statement about human ability. You'll read that human beings have a nearly god-like ability to solve problems and control human destiny. The human race is afflicted with a strange and persistent insanity that makes men think that human wisdom is equal to every challenge and problem faced by the human race. The humanists will tell you that Christianity is an obstacle to human progress. 'If we could just get rid of the God myth, then war would end, poverty would disappear, and people would finally love one another.' This is one of Satan's most insidious lies, and the fortress of falsehood defends it with murderous zeal... Paul also refers to the falsehoods that arise within our own hearts and souls saying, 'We are taking every thought captive...He used a word that refers to the imaginings of our minds, our daydreams of power, our lust for inner satisfaction, including sexual desires.'" - Ray Stedman (376)

24. What do we need to do with our thoughts? 10:5b (See Romans 12:2) (See the article at the end of the lesson: "A Study of the Mind.")

- What connection is there between our thought life and a walk of obedience? Proverbs 23:7a
- Why is the "mind" (same word as "thought": *noema*) a difficult battle ground? 2 Cor. 4:4

25. In the following verses, underline where we should set our thoughts:

- Isaiah 26:3 You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You. NKJV
- Psalm 46:10 Be still, and know that I am God... ASV
- Psalm 147:11 the LORD delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love. NIV
- Philippians 4:6-7 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. NIV
- Romans 8:5-6 Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. 6 The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; NIV
- Colossians 3:2 Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. NAS
- Philippians 4:8 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable-if anything is excellent or praiseworthy-think about such things. NIV

26. How was Paul willing to deal with those who were being disobedient? 10:6

27. What was the problem with the way in which some were judging Paul? 10:7a (Cf. 5:12b; 10:2b)

- What did they need to consider? 10:7b
- What, in particular, did they need to understand? 10:8

FYI: "Everyone knew that the result of [Paul's] service at Corinth had been the upbuilding of the Corinthian church in faith and in harmony, while the presence of the false apostles had produced friction and division...In Galatians...Paul had emphasized against his opponents the divine origin of his call and gospel. Here he stresses the divine origin of his authority (cf. 3:5, 6; 13:10)." - The Expositor's Bible Commentary

28. What were Paul's intentions?

- 10:8 "which the Lord gave for
- 10:9 "I do not

29. What judgments had been made about Paul? 10:10 How did Paul correct that impression? 10:11

- Interestingly, what did Paul freely admit? 1 Corinthians 2:1-4

Applying the Word: How does Paul gentleness, but with a willingness to be firm, teach you about relationships in ministry? How do you think Paul decided when to draw the line and take disciplinary action?

Day 4

Paul's Boasting. Read 2 Corinthians 10:12-18

30. With whom did Paul refuse to compare his ministry? 10:12

- What measurement did the false apostles use? 10:12b What did Paul say call this? (See Proverbs 26:12)

Classify/number *enkrino* Strong's NT:1469, "to reckon among" is translated "to number... (ourselves) with" in 2 Cor 10:12 (RV marg., 'to judge ourselves among or... with')" - Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

31. To what sphere did Paul confine his boasting? 10:13 (See Acts 16:9,10)

32. Why could Paul claim the Corinthian church as part of his ministry? 10:14

FYI: "It started with that Macedonian call...In response, Paul went to Philippi. There he got into trouble and ended up in jail. When he got out, he went to the next city Thessalonica. Again, his preaching met with opposition and he was driven away. He went to Berea - and again there was trouble and a riot. He went to Athens and message was rejected. Finally he came to Corinth, armed with nothing but the power of the Spirit of God. All alone, he started preaching... - and the Corinthian church was founded." [See Acts 16-17] - Ray Stedman

33. What was Paul careful not to “boast” about? 10:15a;16b (See Romans 15:20)

34. What was Paul’s hope for his ministry? 10:15b,16

FYI: “As it turned out, Paul later had ministries to the saints at Rome (as a prisoner there and as writer of the Epistle to the Romans); and he [some believe] journeyed as far as Spain after his first Roman imprisonment.”
- Irving Jensen (DIY 55)

35. What is the only reason for boasting? 10:17 (See Jeremiah 9:23,24)

- How did Paul *boast* in the Lord? 1 Corinthians 15:10

36. What is the only way to be approved? 10:18
(See Romans 15:18-19)

Digging Deeper
Paul had written earlier about the people God calls. Why isn’t there room for boasting?
1 Corinthians 1:26-31

37. Why was Jesus critical of many of the religious leaders? John 5:44; 12:43

Applying the Word: *Why can comparisons can be deceptive and/or counterproductive?*

Memory Verse: (Pick one)

2 Cor. 9:8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed; NAS

2 Cor 9:15 Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift! NAS

2 Cor 10:3-4 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, 4 for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. NAS

A Study of the Mind

(excerpts from) <https://lifetimeministries.org>

by Preston H. Gillham and Anabel Gillham

“Setting my mind on spiritual things is a fact that the Bible stresses in several places: The Bible notes that the flesh wars against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, because these two combatants hate one another (cf. Gal. 5:17). If you deem this Scriptural perspective true, then a tremendous battle, of universal proportion, ebbs and flows around you constantly...

When the Bible speaks of flesh, it can draw upon 15-20 different uses of the term. The only definition we are interested in now is this one: Flesh is the habitual patterning that you have independently formed for how you think, feel, and behave...

You have formed these fleshly patterns apart from God, of your own choosing, in a lifetime of effort to satisfy your most compelling needs, e.g. acceptance, a sense of belonging, personal worth as an individual, and competence as a human being among others...

Second, let's examine the Holy Spirit as a combatant. The Spirit is the presence of God in your life. He resides within you to comfort you, protect you, and guide you into the truth about Himself and about you. His supreme desire is to help you live like the man or woman of God that you are as His follower.

The bad news about the flesh is that it is powerful and pervasive, guiding-almost dictating-that you think, feel, and behave today the same way you thought, felt, and behaved yesterday. This implies that there is little hope that tomorrow can be different from today or yesterday. And, the mechanism promoted by the flesh is independent living. The motto of the flesh is, I am my own.

The good news is that the flesh is habitual...and habits can be changed, reformed, or largely go into remission if not be outright forgotten.

The challenge is that your spiritual enemy has influenced your construction of the flesh and is wholly invested in preserving it throughout your lifetime. However, the Holy Spirit who lives within you is wholly devoted to guiding your experiential transformation into the spiritual individual your Heavenly Father declares you to be.

Isa 26:3 You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You. NKJV

Rom 8:5-6 For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, NAS

Col 3:2 Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. NAS

The ultimate intention, as a result of having set my mind on spiritual things, is found in Romans 12:2 *Do not be conformed any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-his good, pleasing and perfect will. NIV*

Now setting my mind on spiritual things is not as easy as it may sound. The Bible makes reference in several places to a spiritual warfare. *For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore,*

take up the full armor of God. Ephesians 6:12-13a The struggle to set my mind and see it transformed and renewed is not a casual thing; it is a serious warfare!

In her book *Streams in the Desert*, Mrs. Charles Cowman implies that the Lord cannot do much with a dejected soul, hence, the adversary's attempt to push the Lord's children into despair and hopelessness over their own condition and the condition of those around them. He will magnify and give a false coloring to our problems, rending the burdens too heavy to bear. We can neither resist the wiles of the enemy ourselves while in this state, nor can we prevail in prayer for others. We need to understand more of these attacks of the enemy upon our minds and how to resist him. If the enemy can cause us to waver, then he seeks to 'wear us down' by a prolonged siege, so that we, out of sheer weakness and frustration, let go the 'cry of victory,' which is our only hope of overcoming.

If God's enemy, Satan, can tempt me to focus on disappointments, it will not be long until these become discouragements, spiraling into depression, then despair and demoralization, finally resulting in a stronghold of the enemy, realizing little of the hope that lies in Christ. Satan will spare no effort to tempt, deceive and accuse me if it will result in my choosing to focus my mind on something, anything, other than Christ and him alone. These efforts, often prolonged sieges, demand that as God's child I be mentally ready for these onslaughts.

Perhaps the most important point to keep in mind when discussing these issues is the fact that Satan is a defeated foe, a 'lion with no teeth,' only a growl - a 'dog that is all bark.' He has no authority whatsoever over me. Regrettable, I will be deceived and I will sin at times, but I do not have to sin.

It seems helpful for me to think of my mental process in terms of two channels. Channel I is to follow Satan's wishes and desires for my life, resulting in disappointment, depression, defeat and possibly death. Channel II is to follow Christ will and goals for my life. I sometimes refer to Channel I as 'walking after the flesh' and Channel II as 'walking in the Spirit.' These channels are switched just like the television channels at home. A decision is made to change perspectives on my mental screen.

Perhaps one of the most beneficial truths a Christian can grasp is the fact that 'walking in the Spirit' or being under Christ's control is not an emotional or 'feeling' concept; it can be, but most of the time it is not. Walking in channel II, or 'in the Spirit,' is something we choose to do and then set our mind on.

Setting my mind on spiritual matters is not dependent upon my feeling like this is what I should do. It is entirely possible to control the focus of my mind. To try to allow my emotions to set my mind-focus us to destine myself for a rollercoaster experience in life. In His grace...I rest! I do not experience victory many times because I do not feel it. I must get up and walk in the complete assurance and firm conviction that He has taken care of the situation whether I feel differently or not....

How can we renew our minds and practice Christ's mind set? We must "bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5).

a) Through His WISDOM I **RECOGNIZE** these thoughts as Sin in my life. Through a knowledge of His word I see that these thoughts are not His way for me.

b) Through His POWER I **REFUSE** to accept thoughts of disappointment, despair, bitterness, hopelessness, self-pity, self-fulfillment, self-destruction, resentment, anger, unhappiness, defeat and unbelief. These thoughts are presented to me by Satan, "...the father of lies" (John 8:44), through the Power of Sin, who then tempts, deceives and accuses me.

c) By His AUTHORITY I **RECKON** myself dead to Sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. I do not have to obey Satan, speaking to me through the Power of Sin, because I have considered myself or reckoned myself dead to Sin.

d) in His GRACE I **REST**. Many times I go through the first steps but never experience victory because I do not feel victorious. I must walk in the complete assurance, the firm conviction--that He has taken care of the situation... whether I feel any different or not."

How many times a day do we have to do these things? A hundred, probably, and only ninety-nine on the second, and maybe ninety-eight on the third, but back up to ninety-nine on the fourth!...As we claim this victory as ours - and practice it- one day we will actually sense that in some way we 'feel' victory - praise God!

Pride Goes Before Destruction

"Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall." (Proverbs 16:18)

This is the middle verse of the entire book of Proverbs, and, in view of the obviously structured original verse divisions throughout the book, it may well have been divinely designed as such. In any case, the sin of pride is so deadly, it is appropriate that a solemn warning concerning it should be placed here right at the heart of God's book of true wisdom.

The sin of pride was the primeval sin of Satan: "Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness" (Ezekiel 28:17). It was the sin by which Satan led Adam and Eve to fall. "Ye shall be as gods" (Genesis 3:5), he had said. It is always the "easily besetting" sin of Christian leaders, especially those who have assumed such leadership prematurely. "Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil" (1 Timothy 3:6). Even Jesus was 30 years old before He began to teach.

Though pride is not named as such in the Ten Commandments, in reality it is implied in the very first one. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3). The essence of all false religion is evolutionary humanism—worshipping and serving the creature more than the Creator (Romans 1:25). Pride and unbelief are two sides of the same coin. When men and women refuse the word of their Creator, it is fundamentally because they want to be their own "gods," as did Adam and Eve. Human pride is the hidden root of humanism, and of evolutionism, and of "every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God" (2 Corinthians 10:5). It is the very essence of the sin nature which we have inherited from our first parents. How carefully we need to guard against this secret sin of pride. If we do not, it will inevitably lead to humiliation and defeat. HMM

- Henry Morris; from *Days of Praise* <https://www.icr.org/article/20807>