

I GOT THIS?, GENESIS 10-11

This is My Father's World #8

◆**Intro:** *A wife was making a breakfast of fried eggs for her husband. Suddenly, her husband burst into the kitchen. "Careful," he said, "CAREFUL! Put in some more butter! Oh my goodness! You're cooking too many at once. TOO MANY! Turn them! TURN THEM NOW! We need more butter. Oh have MERCY! WHERE are we going to get MORE BUTTER? They're going to STICK! Careful. CAREFUL! I said be CAREFUL! You NEVER listen to me when you're cooking! Never! Turn them! Hurry up! Are you CRAZY? Have you LOST your mind? Don't forget to salt them. You know you always forget to salt them. Use the salt. USE THE SALT! THE SALT!" The wife stared at him. "What in the world is wrong with you? You think I don't know how to fry a couple of eggs?" The husband calmly replied, "I just wanted to show you what it feels like when I'm driving."*

◆There is of course a reason behind why wives instruct their husbands, and why husbands naturally don't appreciate it. We call that reason pride and it all started in the Garden of Eden (Gen.3). Adam and Eve observed the fruit of the tree of The Knowledge of Good and Evil. It looked good for food, and the serpent promised it would make you "wise", and "like God." Then, you may recall, God described what they had done to themselves in breaking his command: They had messed up even their relationship with the creation around him, and they had birthed an inherent desire to be the boss over one another: Eve would want to take over her husband, even though she was made the perfect partner/helper to him. And Adam would want to rule over her. Pride.

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◆**1. Pride is perhaps a foundational sin in mankind.** Our text illustrates again that no matter how many times God patiently instructs mankind, we would prefer he didn't. "I got this!" is our favorite phrase. Do you see it in our story? Chapter 11 actually comes chronologically before chapter 10. Chapter 10 describes how people after the flood began to spread out over the earth as God instructed Adam in chapter 1, and Noah in chapter 9. Noah's descendants are finally doing it. Note the repetition...

◆v5 "the maritime peoples *spread out* into their territories by their clans within their *nations*, each with its own *language*."

◆v18 "Later the Canaanite clans *scattered*... These are the sons of Ham by their clans and *languages*, in their territories and *nations*."

◆v32 "These are the clans of Noah's sons, according to their lines of descent, within their *nations*. From these the nations *spread out* over the earth after the flood."

◆A. So Moses is showing us how it finally happened, but then he flashes back to what made it happen. That's chapter 11. We might think that this text is all about the Tower of Babel, but the tower is only an example of the real topic, human pride and rebellion. Genesis 11 reveals man's specific attempts to curb God, and do the opposite of what he commanded.

◆God said to fill the earth as his ambassadors to the world. But they decide not to be scattered over the whole earth (v4)

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◆ Instead, they want to put their collective minds together and build a rocket ship to the moon. In their case, a tower would have to do, and like many pagan ziggurats, they assumed that higher they got in the air the closer they got to heaven (although the Hebrew word probably precludes a ziggurat per se). They're kinda "storming the gates of heaven" so to speak. Babylon means "gateway to the gods". Oh look, they want to "be like God" just like Adam & Eve. They want to "make a name for" themselves (v4). Pride.

◆ 10:10 tells us Nimrod built Babylon, and Nimrod means "we shall rebel!" They even use God's phrase *Come let us make man in our image*, but change it to *come let us make bricks and...make a name of us!*

◆ Don't we all have a little of Nimrod in us? We want to break the rules just to say "you're not the boss of me."

◆ Someone tells us we can't do something and now that's exactly what we want to do! My friend Jim tells of when his strong-willed daughter Melissa was riding her little tricycle. He showed her a line in the sidewalk beyond which she was not to go or she would get a spanking. Her response was to rev her tricycle and say, "Then you'd better warm up your hand because I'm going across that line!"

◆ **B.** But the text shows us yet again that our pride is a fools errand! "Come let's make bricks" they say (v3). "Come let's

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make a tower to the heavens" they say (v4). But God is so high he has to "come down" (v5) just to see the little diorama! I wonder if verse 6-7 isn't God kinda tongue-in-cheek mocking them. ("Oo, Oo. These folks can do anything once they put all their minds to it. Come on. Let's go all the way down there and stop 'em... those silly humans. I'll just have to scatter them myself.") Scripture seeks to open our eyes to pride's foolishness over and over.

◆ *"For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice." James 3:16, NIV.*

◆ Pride only breeds quarrels, but wisdom is found in those who take advice. Proverbs 13:10

◆ Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall. Proverbs 16:18

◆ A man's pride brings him low, but a man of lowly spirit gains honor. Proverbs 29:23

◆ Need we go on? Babylon in one language meant "gateway to the gods", but in the Hebrew language it sounds just like their word for "confusion." It's survived to this day in our language. To babel is to talk foolish nonsense. It doesn't make sense to be proud.

◆ **2. But I don't have pride, do I?** We can all think of proud people. We mostly don't seem to like them. Probably most of us here are proud of the fact that we aren't proud people. Let me explain what kind of pride we're dealing with here.

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◆A. I surely don't mean the kind where you are proud of say, your daughter for getting a 3.5 average in school. I equally don't mean the necessary esteem of self that recognizes that you, as a human creature, are immensely valued of God the Maker, above all other levels of created reality. I don't mean the heart at peace that reminds you that God knows your very name, your constant thoughts, and delights in watching you, and that you are his child.

◆B. The pride we must be concerned about is that part of us that so much wants what WE want, and what WE desire, and what WE feel that we become the center of our own decision making instead of our Maker. It's the pride that says, "My life is about getting myself ahead, to riches, or retirement, or a "better life" than now. It's the pride that keeps us from saying "Im sorry, that was wrong of me." instead of, "well, you.... and I just..." It's the pride that's angry about what you don't have, instead of grateful for what you do.

◆Every affair starts because someone thinks they deserve a better spouse than the one they have. Envy and division in our life, home, church, nation start with "hey, I want it my way?" Taking credit for things that we shouldn't starts with prideful ambition. Like the beaver told the rabbit as they stared up at the immense wall of Hoover Dam, "No, I didn't actually build it myself. But it was based on an idea of mine."

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◆ But what if we killed off pride, or at least asked God to kill it off in us?

◆ **3. Humble obedience to God is the only solution to pride.**

Can we believe it? Could it be true? Everything inside me says, "fight for yourself. Be a mighty man." Like Nimrod! God says

◆ "... 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty." Zechariah 4:6, NIV.

◆ Everything inside me says, "toot your own horn as much as you can." God says

◆ "Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up."
James 4:10;

◆ A. Now humility is not hanging your head and thinking less of yourself. Humility is not thinking first of yourself at all, and lifting your head to the sovereignty of God, choosing to accept that His ways are right, and choosing to align ourselves with the will of God, trusting he is holy and best. Humility is accepting God's dreams for your life over your own dreams, trusting that God's dreams are by far better dreams.

◆ Let's return to the husband and wife in the kitchen frying eggs, or in the car driving. Ephesians 5:21 tells husbands and wives to submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. The wife is told to voluntarily acknowledge her husband's leadership, while the husband is told to lay his life down for his wife like Jesus on the cross. This is the humble view that oneness is more important than our rights. Pride

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crushes the other's spirit by always knowing a little more than or coming up with a better idea than the other. Humility gives the other space to be valuable, or responsible, or even to fail. A humble man will do things for his wife that she hates to do, even if there's no logic to it at all. But isn't that exactly what romancing is. And who doesn't want romance?

◆B. Humility and love are twins! You often find them together and the look very much alike. When you romance someone, you want to do what *they* think is fun (golf? Garage sale hopping?) Your affection/love actually causes you to be more *selfless*, or shall we say humble.

◆Want to know if pride is alive in your relationship or marriage? Do you do things for the other person without expecting to receive extra credit, or some kind of payback? When you serve, do you wear it like a badge and expect trumpets to play and the children to salute you because you finally cleaned the shower? Take this to heart men, because God expects you to be the lead servant in the family.

Arterburn and Stoeker, husbands themselves, in their book *Every Man's Marriage* put it like this:

◆"As ChiefServant we are to give in more often at impasses than anyone else. No one should choose to inconvenience themselves more often that we do and no one should have a better attitude in serving that we do." One of my

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seminary profs put it like this: the husband should claim his God-ordained authority in his marriage to insist that his wife have her way. I think you can see the point.

◆**Conclusion:** So what's it gonna be for us? Are we gonna say "I got this!" Every proud attempted world leader from Nimrod to Stalin has failed. God overrules and limits them. God even told Daniel of the fall of the Babylonians to the Persians, and the Persians to the Greeks, and the Greeks to the Romans –all hundreds of years before it happened. Here's an interesting take away. The men of Babel stayed home and built a tower to make themselves a proud name, and God troubled their cause. One chapter later, God tells Abraham that if he forsakes his name and leaves with God to a place he doesn't even know about yet, then God will give Abraham the very thing the men of Babel were denied.

◆Genesis 12:1-2 The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing!" (We'll study that next week.)

◆*"Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time." 1 Peter 5:6, NIV*

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◆ One final urging: pride will keep you from eternal life with God. You see, the only requirement for salvation is to admit your own rebellious nature, and ask to be forgiven in Jesus' merit alone!

◆ And all of you, serve each other in humility, for "God opposes the proud but favors the humble." So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time he will lift you up in honor. Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you. 1 Pet5:5-7