

## ME, MY #SELFIE AND I

Opposing God

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Discussion Notes

The Crossing Church

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### OPENING

Today we in the midst of a three week series about pride. Pride is an issue that we can see in other people, but rarely can we see it in ourselves. When it comes to control, influence, and approval, our lives can easily become self-centered and empty. We are learning in our series, using the book of Daniel as a backdrop, how centering our lives around God puts Him in control and allows Him to use our influence for good. God's word has incredible wisdom on how to lead with humility.

### SCRIPTURE<sup>1</sup>

**Daniel 5:1-9** "King Belshazzar gave a great banquet for a thousand of his nobles and drank wine with them. While Belshazzar was drinking his wine, he gave orders to bring in the gold and silver goblets that Nebuchadnezzar his (grand)father had taken from the temple in Jerusalem, so that the King and his nobles, his wives and his concubines might drink from them. So they brought in the gold goblets that had been taken from the temple of God in Jerusalem and the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines drank from them. As they drank the wine, they praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood and stone. Suddenly the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall, near the lampstand in the royal palace. The king watched the hand as it wrote. His face turned pale and he was so frightened that his knees knocked together and his legs gave way. The king called out for the enchanters, astrologers and diviners to be brought and said to these wise men of Babylon, 'Whoever reads this writing and tells me what it means will be clothed in purple and have a gold chain placed around his neck, and he will be made the third highest ruler in the kingdom.' Then all the king's wise men came in, but they could not read the writing or tell the king what it meant. So King Belshazzar became even more terrified and his face grew more pale. His nobles were baffled.

**Daniel 5:17-30** "Then Daniel answered the king, 'You may keep your gifts for yourself and give your rewards to someone else. Nevertheless, I will read the writing for the king and tell him what it means. O king, the Most High God gave your (grand)father Nebuchadnezzar sovereignty and greatness and glory and splendor. Because of the high position he gave him, all the peoples and nations and men of every language dreaded and feared him. Those the king wanted to put to death, he put to death; those he wanted to spare, he spared; those he wanted to promote he promoted; and those he wanted to humble, he humbled. But when his heart became arrogant and hardened with pride, he was deposed from his royal throne and stripped of his glory. He was driven away from people and given the mind of an animal; he lived with the wild donkeys and ate grass like cattle; and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven, until he acknowledged that the Most High God is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and sets over them anyone he wishes. But you his (grand)son, O Belshazzar, have not humbled yourself, though you knew all this. Instead, you have set yourself up against the Lord of heaven. You had the goblets from his temple brought to you, and you and your nobles, your wives and your concubines drank wine from them. You praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood and stone, which cannot see or hear or understand. But you did not honor the God who holds in his hand your life and all your ways. Therefore he sent the hand that wrote the inscription. This is the inscription that was written: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, PARSIN. This is what these words mean: MENE: God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end. TEKEL: You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting. PARSIN (PERES): Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.' Then at Belshazzar's command, Daniel was

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<sup>1</sup> All scripture listed is NIV unless otherwise indicated

clothed in purple, a gold chain was placed around his neck, and he was proclaimed the third highest ruler in the kingdom. That very night Belshazzar, king of the Babylonians, was slain, and Darius the Mede took over the kingdom at the age of sixty-two.”

**Psalm 90:12** “Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.”

**James 4:6** “But he gives us more grace. That is why the Scripture says: God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.

**Question:** Why is it so hard to humble yourself before God?

### **OBSERVATION**

The temple articles were anointed by Moses and he pronounced them holy. They were reserved exclusively for God, were put in the Most Holy Place, and were used only for worship to God. Belshazzar treated the Holy as Unholy. This is one of Satan’s greatest tactics.

**Question:** When have you taken what was set apart for God and used it for your own purposes?

**Question:** When has God given you discernment or insight into a situation and how did that feel?

### **APPLICATION**

Beth Moore defines the words in the handwriting on the wall as: “MENE I am in control of your destiny; TEKEL I know what you have done and you’ve come up short; PARSIN I will act to tear your power away from you.” Belshazzar had set himself up against the Lord.

**Question:** When have you set yourself up against the Lord? How did that work for you?

**Question:** What did you see happen to others that you ignored and were disciplined by God when you did it?

Just like salvation, we get to choose if God acts against us or shows us favor. We want God to show His plan for our lives: our marriages, our spouses, our kids, our jobs, our health and our finances. But pride is a cheater and it will cheat us out of the life God has for us.

**Question:** When you realize that if you have a pride issue, God opposes you. How does that realization make you feel?

No matter how powerful we think we are, no matter how important we think we are, God is greater than our plans.

**Question:** What plans are you considering that don’t include God?

C. S. Lewis said, “True humility is not thinking less of yourself; it is thinking of yourself less.” Jim Collins, author of the book, Good to Great, went looking for characteristics of great leaders and he found that the distinguishing factor was humility. We know that whoever exalts himself will be humbled and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.<sup>2</sup> We know that leadership, influence and plans are temporary and we need to find a heart of wisdom because ultimately we are accountable to God knowing that He will act accordingly. Wherever we find ourselves today, we have a stewardship, and it will not last forever.

**Question:** What has happened during the past week to remind you that there is an issue of pride in your life? What are you doing about it?

### **PRAYER**

Heavenly Father, please show us Your plans for our lives. We know that our pride interferes with Your ability to do this, so, by Your grace and mercy, move in our hearts and destroy that cancerous sin. We praise You for Your patience and perseverance in pursuing our hearts broken by pride. In Jesus’ Name. Amen.

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<sup>2</sup> Matthew 23:12