

"Haughty Eyes"

Proverbs 6:16-19; Romans 12:1-16

Introduction

We've all known arrogant people. People who carry themselves in such a way that their whole being seems to declare that they don't need anything and that they are better than everyone else. It's hard to abide the presence of such haughtiness. The truth is such insolent pride affects a person's view of all of life. If you find a haughty person, you will see that the way he looks at himself, at others and at God are all out of focus.

The ultimate expression of such arrogance is a declaration of oneself as god. But that's not an unusual thing in history. The Pharaohs of Egypt viewed themselves as god. Many of the emperors of Rome, with Nero being the foremost, considered themselves god. In Acts 12, King Herod actually took his seat on the throne, put on his royal robes and had the people shouting *The voice of a god and not a man!* It was that supreme act of haughtiness that led to God destroying his life.

Most people aren't so full of themselves as to proclaim deity, but all of us struggle with pride on some level. Whenever we push away from God and do our own thing we are declaring that we are good enough without God, that we don't need Him. That is great pride. Today we are going to see that God hates and opposes those who view themselves as great in their own eyes. This is the second in a

series on things God hates. Today we find that God hates haughty eyes.

[Proverbs 6:16-19; Romans 12:1-16]

When we introduced this series a couple of weeks ago, we found that hatred is not an evil thing if it is directed at the right object. There are things that God hates and things that we are to hate. We are to hate evil. We are to hate anything that would separate us from God. And while we are to love our enemies and do good to those who persecute us, there is still a general sense in which we are to hate the enemies of God. That's not an easy task.

But what does God hate? In Proverbs we are looking at 7 things at the top of God's list. And first on that list are haughty eyes. As we've already indicated, everyone suffers from pride. It is rightly said that pride is at the root of every sin. So, in the big picture it's easy to see why God hates pride. But there seems to be something more here. Why is haughtiness the particularly target for God's wrath? And why the eyes? Eyes are the window to a man's heart. They reflect what's in the soul. But the reason God singles out haughty eyes is not because of what He sees in the eye as it is because of what a haughty eye looks at.

This morning we are going to consider how you can recognize a haughty eye. Where is its gaze? What does it see? How do haughty eyes view the world around them?

I. How They Look at Self.

The trick of the devil is to get us looking away from God and at ourselves. This was at the heart of the first temptation in the Garden of Eden. *For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be*

opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil. When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate. It's interesting to note that the eyes came prominently into play. Eve was tempted by looking at herself and the apple and thinking she deserved something better than God was delivering.

She succumbed to the temptation to have haughty eyes. We would do well to understand that haughtiness is a particular form of pride. Pride is simply self-focus. A proud person can think either too highly of himself so that he seeks self exaltation, or too lowly, in which case he seeks the pity of others.

Haughtiness is of the former variety. It is thinking too highly of self. You might call it *exaggerated pride*. In Proverbs 30:12, 13 we find a pretty good description of haughtiness. *There is a kind who is pure in his own eyes, Yet is not washed from his filthiness. There is a kind—oh how lofty are his eyes! And his eyelids are raised in arrogance.*

You see, this kind of person does not see himself accurately. He is covered with sin and filthiness, and yet he views himself as pure. That kind of thing leads to all kinds of problems. Proverbs 21:24 identifies some them. *Proud,* “*Haughty,*” “*Scoffer,*” *are his names, Who acts with insolent pride.*

A haughty person then is someone who scoffs at truth and acts or lives out his arrogance. The phrase *insolent pride* is actually pretty good. We might call a haughty person someone with super pride or bold pride. His actions and attitudes are overbearing and insulting.

I was thinking about Nebuchadnezzar as a pretty good illustration of someone who viewed

himself with haughty eyes. Do you remember the story? He was the king of Babylon at the height of its glory. He was wealthy and powerful beyond description. Babylon was the most powerful and influential kingdom on earth at the time and he had everything a king could hope for. On top of that God had graciously given to him a witness of the gospel. Daniel and Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego had been captured from Jerusalem and brought into the Babylonian empire. And Nebuchadnezzar had personally interacted with all four of them and had come to see the power of the One true God. Daniel had accurately interpreted dreams for him. The other three had defied the king and lived to tell about it because God delivered them from the fiery furnace right in front of his eyes.

But still the king had an insolent pride. You might remember those words he spoke walking on his roof one day as he looked out upon his kingdom. *The king reflected and said, 'Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?'*

Haughty eyes look at self, and instead of seeing the hand of God or the need for God, sees one's own greatness and glory. God hates that kind of pride.

A second way we can recognize haughty eyes is by noticing:

II. How they look at others.

It's a pretty consistent thing that people who think too highly of themselves, usually look down on other people. They exalt themselves and debase others.

That Proverbs 30 passage we looked at is a good example. That's the verse that says a haughty man thinks he is pure when he is really filthy. In that passage we are told how he treats others. *There is a kind of man who curses his father And does not bless his*

mother. . . . There is a kind of man whose teeth are like swords And his jaw teeth like knives, To devour the afflicted from the earth And the needy from among men.

Haughty people don't respect and honor others. Not their parents, not the poor, not those who are suffering; not the needy; not the hurting.

The reason is arrogant people put down others in an attempt to make themselves look better. Psalm 101:5 says *Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor, him I will destroy; No one who has a haughty look and an arrogant heart will I endure.* Watch out for those who have a critical spirit of others; for those who are quick to judge others.

In the Book of Esther the story is told of Haman. He was the king's right hand man who loved himself and loved to be honored and magnified by others. Mordecai the Jew refused to bow down to him; and for that Haman hated him and sought to destroy all Jews. The true heart of Haman is revealed when Queen Esther invited Haman to join her and the king for a banquet. Listen to how Haman looked at himself and others. *Then Haman went out that day glad and pleased of heart; but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate and that he did not stand up or tremble before him, Haman was filled with anger against Mordecai. Haman controlled himself, however, went to his house and sent for his friends and his wife Zeresh. **Then Haman recounted to them the glory of his riches, and the number of his sons, and every instance where the king had magnified him and how he had promoted him above the princes and servants of the king. Haman also said, "Even Esther the queen let no one but me come with the king to the banquet which she had prepared; and tomorrow also I am invited by her with the king. "Yet all of this does not satisfy me every time I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate."** Then Zeresh his wife and all his friends*

said to him, “Have a gallows fifty cubits high made and in the morning ask the king to have Mordecai hanged on it; then go joyfully with the king to the banquet.” And the advice pleased Haman, so he had the gallows made.

Of course if you know the story, you know that Haman himself ended up hanging on those very gallows.

God opposes the proud. Time and again the Scriptures say that *pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before stumbling*.

III. How they look at God.

Here is the heart of the matter. If we do not know God and do not draw near to Him, we will in fact be filled with pride. It is pride that keeps us from God. And it is God who stays away from the proud. We sang this morning Psalm 138. *For though the Lord is exalted, Yet He regards the lowly, But the haughty He knows from afar*. Haughty eyes are eyes that refuse to be lifted up to Jesus Christ.

It is impossible to become a Christian without humility. If we believe that we are good without Christ; if we think that He will accept us based on our own good works and merit, then we will never bow down before the cross. Faith in Jesus Christ is first and foremost a confession that we are not good, that we are not clean, but filthy because of our sin. It is admitting to God that only He can save us. It is believing that Jesus lived the only perfect life and is therefore worthy and able to take away our sins. And having thus begun, are we to go back now and think that we can live by merit? May it never be!

God hates haughty eyes. How should you look at yourself? With an understanding that you are a needy sinner. That you have no glory in yourself. That you are separated from God and

have value only in Him. That's how you humble yourself before the mighty hand of God.

How should you look at others? When Jesus looked at people he was not filled with disdain. He was moved with compassion. When you see people to do you love them or do you criticize them? Do you talk to others about them so you will seem better than they? Or do you look for what is commendable?

How do you look to God? Do you see Him as interfering in your life and restricting what you want to do? Or do you look to Christ with faith and love, knowing that He has loved you and given up His life to save you and forgive you?

When God looks in your eyes, what does He see? What kind of eyes do you have?