

PRIDE



—by Peter Hammond

Shortly after my conversion I was shocked to find a theological graduate who was too proud to speak to a youth group, or join in evangelistic outreaches. I had been quite excited when I heard that this graduate was returning from Theological College; he had been studying the Word of God for five years and I immediately invited him to speak to our youth group, but he looked

youth group! I also invited him to speak to my Bible class, or to join us for an evangelistic outreach we were planning. He made it very clear that such activities were quite beneath him. This graduate sat for over a year waiting for 'a call' but was unwilling to engage in evangelism during that time. "But if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself." Gal 6:3.

same shaven head and brown uniform. However, I gladly seized the opportunity that the chaplain had just scorned. What a poor testimony that minister was to the men that day...

Humble and teachable?

If you wonder why your life is not bearing fruit, perhaps it is because pride has taken root and God is resisting you (James 4:6). The Scriptures teach: "The humble He guides in justice, the humble He teaches His way. All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, to such as keep His Covenant and His testimonies." Psalm 25:9-10.

There is no doubt that God gives the very best to those who leave the choice to Him. The Will of God will never lead us where the Grace of God cannot keep us. The question is: "Am I humble and teachable?"

Are you willing and available?

Often, after speaking on missions at various churches, I have some individual approach me and declare: "When I was young I made myself available to God. I said I would go anywhere He sent me, do anything He told me, but nothing! God never guided me. I was available, I was keen to go, but God never gave me the green light."

I find these testimonies unbelievable. By their account, their motives were pure, their hearts were fully surrendered, they were eager and willing, but the only problem was that God neglected to guide them! This kind of self-justification insinuates that if there was any fault it was on God's side.

Another phrase that I frequently hear which indicates dangerous spiritual pride is: "I won't do anything unless God guides

"But He gives more grace. Therefore it says, 'God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.' Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded." James 4:6-8

me!" When we get our priorities straight: "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" Matt 6:33, everything tends to follow from that.

"The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and He delights in his way..." Psalm 27:23. The Will of God is no mystery for us to discover. He has made His Will

to actually do what the Bible clearly commands us to do, which is to pray to God and proclaim the Gospel to the unsaved. "Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and prudent in their own sight!" Isaiah 5:21.

Inconsistent faith

Do we receive guidance from God to shop, cook and eat food? Do we need guidance

expected to use common sense and be diligent and dependable in our duties.

"He who is of a proud heart stirs up strife. But he who trusts in the Lord will be prospered." Prov 28:25.

Suffering from spiritual pride

Spiritual pride is also seen in those who declare: "I only read the Bible!" Of course, we must be Bible-based Christians. We need to be soaked and saturated in the Word. We should be like the Bereans who were more noble than the rest "... in that they received the Word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether

Most Christians would not consider themselves to be prideful, in that they do not appear 'arrogant' or 'conceited', yet those with false humility and spiritual bravado are as guilty.

When you pull up next to someone and take pleasure in your newer car - you have pride. When you see a Christian backslide and raise your eyebrows at their fate...you are in danger.

at me with disdain and declared that he hadn't studied at Theological college for five years just to speak to a

Ministers who are too important

It was a similar shock during my military service when the chaplain arrived for a mid-week service only to turn around and, disgusted, declared: "I'm not going to waste my time with just a handful of people!" There were 80 of our company gathered in the hall for the service, but this dominee did not seem to think that we were worth his time.

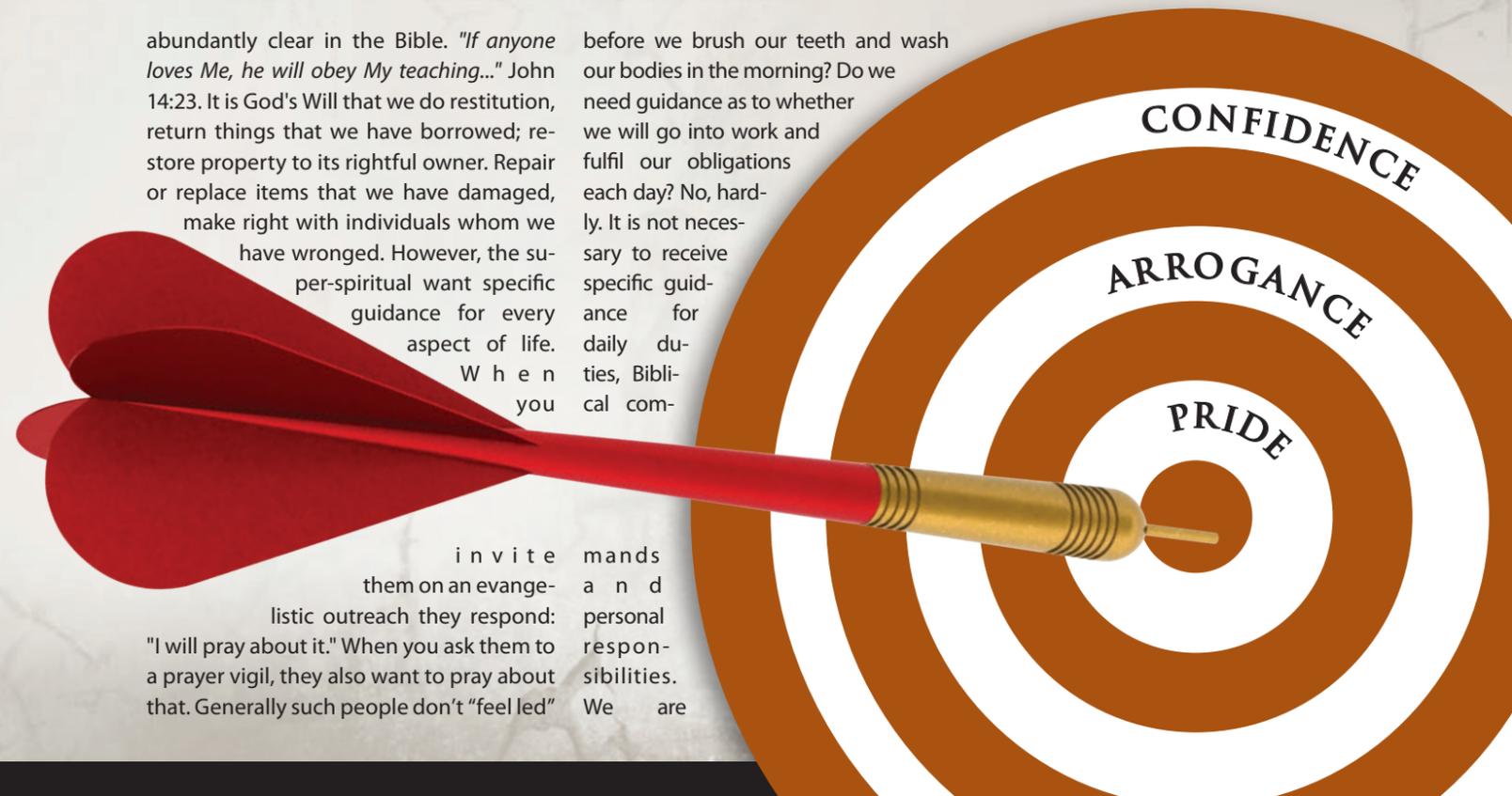
Most of the unit were still out on field practicals seeking to find their way back to base with compass and map work. Our 80 odd men were the only ones who had arrived back in time for the chaplain's period. As it so happened, the men weren't keen to give up this break in our hectic training schedule and go back to drilling, so they started to shout for me (their resident religious fanatic) to come and present a sermon. I was a rifleman in training, just as they were, with the

abundantly clear in the Bible. "If anyone loves Me, he will obey My teaching..." John 14:23. It is God's Will that we do restitution, return things that we have borrowed; restore property to its rightful owner. Repair or replace items that we have damaged, make right with individuals whom we have wronged. However, the super-spiritual want specific guidance for every aspect of life. When you

before we brush our teeth and wash our bodies in the morning? Do we need guidance as to whether we will go into work and fulfil our obligations each day? No, hardly. It is not necessary to receive specific guidance for daily duties, Biblical com-

invite them on an evangelistic outreach they respond: "I will pray about it." When you ask them to a prayer vigil, they also want to pray about that. Generally such people don't "feel led"

mands and personal responsibilities. We are



PRIDE



these things were so." Acts 17:11.

However, to refuse to read good Christian books, discipleship materials and Bible study aids, is to stifle our Spiritual growth. "Have you heard the counsel of God? Do not limit wisdom to yourself." Job 15:8.

We can learn from others

It is extremely prideful to assume that we can understand more of the Bible than the Church fathers, Reformers and faithful students of the Word who have gone be-

disaster for the Egyptian empire. The pride of Pharaoh led to complete economic, social and military catastrophe. After God had judged Egypt with the ten plagues, the superpower of the world was crippled and never fully recovered. "Everyone that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord." Prov 16:5.

Pride comes before a fall

When King Nebuchadnezzar boasted "Is not this great Babylon that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the hon-

our of my majesty?" Dan 4:30. God rebuked his pride and he was driven out from men and lived amongst the animals in the field until he acknowledged and honoured the greatness of Almighty God. "A man's pride shall bring him low" Prov 29:33.

Pride leads to catastrophe

When King Herod arrayed himself in royal apparel and sat on his throne, "... the people kept shouting, 'the voice of a God and not of a man!' Then immediately an angel of the Lord struck him, because he did not give Glory to God and he was eaten by worms and died." Acts 19:22-23.

"Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles!" James 3:5. Of King Hezekiah the Scripture says: "his heart was lifted up, therefore wrath was looming over him and over Judah and Jerusalem." 2 Chron 32:25. Clearly personal pride in national leaders can lead to national catastrophe.

Herod's arrogance

Our Lord Jesus Christ warned of the danger of pride as He taught on the Pharisee who dared to come into the Temple and pray to himself: "God, I thank You that I am not like other men..." Luke 18:11. In Revelation Jesus condemned the church of Laodicea: "Because you say I am rich, have become wealthy and have need of nothing - and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked." Rev 3:17.

The national religion of hell

Pride is the idolatrous worship of ourselves. It is the national religion of hell. The first step towards hell is pride; the first »

Often in churches today we see 'spiritual pride' in full blown operation. From the congregation right through to the pastors who have people pandering to their every whim...

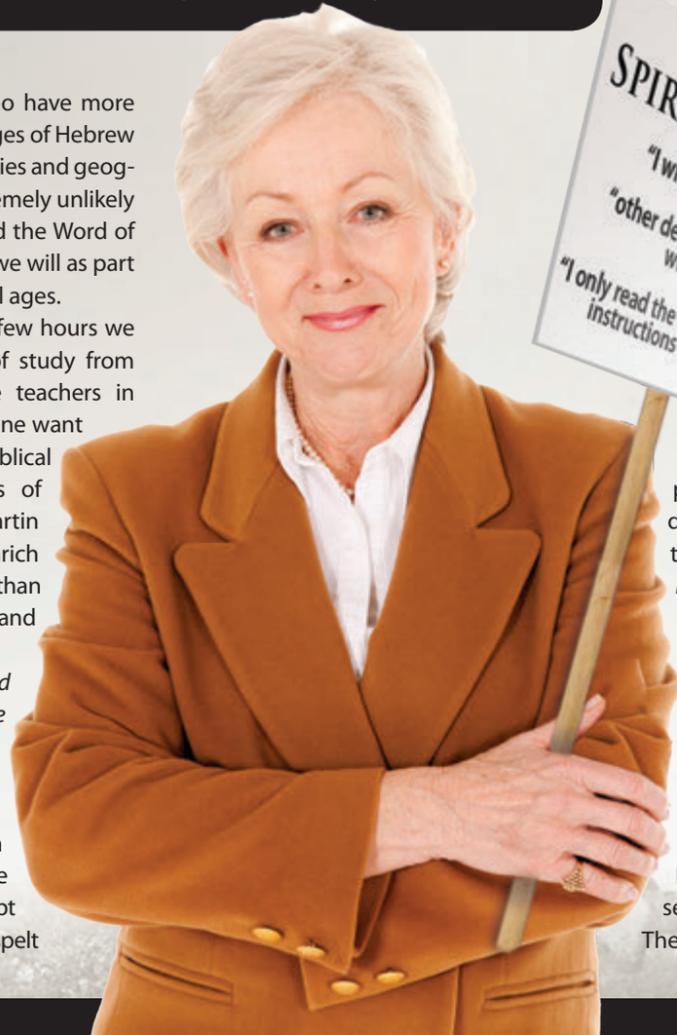
fore us. There are others who have more diligently studied the languages of Hebrew and Greek, the cultures, histories and geography of Bible lands. It is extremely unlikely that any of us will understand the Word of God better on our own than we will as part of the worldwide Church of all ages.

For the expenditure of a few hours we can benefit from lifetimes of study from some of the greatest Bible teachers in Church history. Why would one want to deprive oneself of the Biblical insights of faithful servants of God such as Augustine, Martin Luther, William Tyndale, Heinrich Bullinger, John Calvin, Jonathan Edwards, Charles Spurgeon and so many others?

"A haughty look, a proud heart and the ploughing of the wicked are sin." Prov 21:4.

The pride of Pharaoh

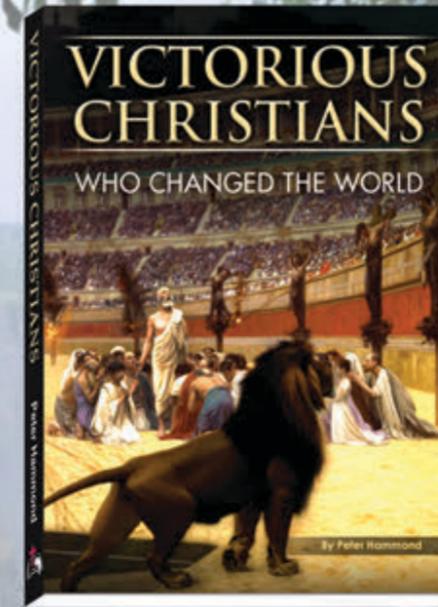
There are many examples in Scripture of God resisting the proud. The pharaoh of Egypt was proud and his arrogance spelt



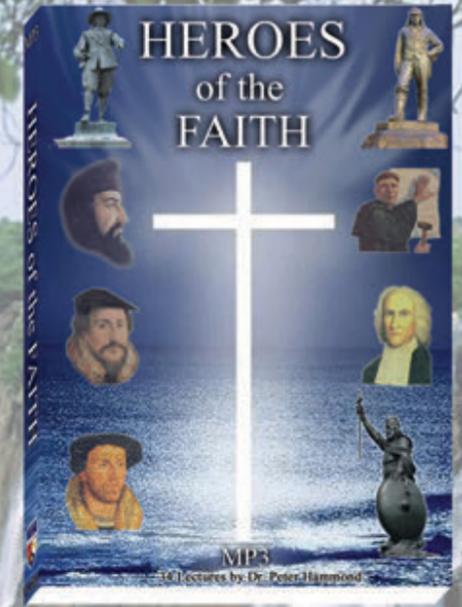
WORKING FOR REFORMATION AND REVIVAL History Kit



Soldiers for Christ MP3
14 messages on one CD (R98)



Victorious Christians
Peter Hammond (R135)
380 pages, over 250 pictures



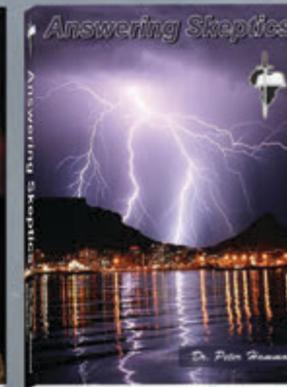
Heroes of the Faith MP3
34 Lectures on One CD (R98)

HISTORY SPECIAL COMBO OFFER: R295

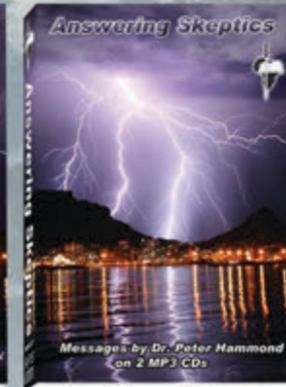
Evangelism Workshop Kit



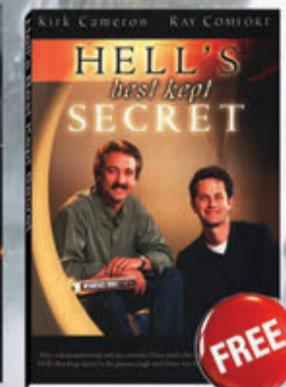
The Ten Commandments
Peter Hammond (R58)
120 pages, 10 pictures



Answering Skeptics
Dr. Peter Hammond (R75)
144 pages



Answering Skeptics MP3
Dr. Peter Hammond (R120)
32 Messages on 2 CDs



Hell's Best Kept Secret DVD
approx 38minutes (R85)



One Heartbeat Away
Mark Cahill
240 pages

EVANGELISM WORKSHOP SPECIAL COMBO OFFER: R250



CHRISTIAN LIBERTY BOOKS

PO Box 358 Howard Place 7450
Cape Town South Africa
Tel/Fax: (021) 689 7478
admin@christianlibertybooks.co.za
www.christianlibertybooks.co.za

(All Prices Exclude Postage. Certain free books and DVDs only available as part the combo offer.)

PRIDE




step towards Heaven is humility. Pride thrust Lucifer out of Heaven, Adam out of paradise, Nebuchadnezzar out of society and Saul out of his kingdom. St. Augustine wrote: "Men ought to be ashamed of being proud, seeing that God was humbled for his sake." DL Moody said, "God sends no one away empty, except those who are full of themselves."

recognised as true?

3. The test of criticism: Does criticism arouse hostility and resentment in your heart? Does criticism cause you to fly in immediate self-justification? There is nothing that pride resents so much as to be rebuked. *"The folly of fools is deceit."* Prov 14:8

of others is a significant step forward to defeating pride

- Confess your sins of pride to those you have affected. Encourage a close friend or mentor to hold you accountable to living humbly and with a teachable spirit. Humility isn't an emotion; it's a decision of the will to think and act differently (1 Pet 5:6)
- Encourage and serve others each and every day. Associate with the lowly. Do the things you don't want to do; die to self and put down your flesh
- Regularly study the goodness and greatness of God. Meditate on the Word and what it has to say about our Lord. Find your satisfaction in Him and not in your vain accomplishments. Live to glorify God and promote His Kingdom - not your own.

Repenting of your pride; focussing on God and His greatness, and inviting a friend or mentor to hold you accountable to living with humility, will help defeat arrogance.

Three tests to recognise pride

Oswald Sanders recommended three tests to evaluate how much pride we must repent of:

1. The test of precedence: How do you react when another is selected for the assignment you expected? Or for the office you coveted? How do you react when another is promoted and you are overlooked? When someone else outshines you in gifts and accomplishments?
2. The test of sincerity: In your moments of honest self-criticism you will admit many things about your own failings and weaknesses. But how do you feel when others say exactly the same things about you that you, in the sincerity of your heart, have

Steps to defeating pride

- Pray and ask God to reveal areas where pride has crept into your heart and life
- Ask God to convict you point by point (Psalm 139:23-24) in His loving way
- Confess your pride to God and receive forgiveness for it. The righteousness of Christ and the Grace of God empowers you (1 John 1:9)
- Ask friends to point out the fruits of pride in you. Submitting to the counsel

Take your pride to the Cross

God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. In the words of Isaac Watts' hymn:

"When I survey the wondrous Cross
on which the Prince of Glory died,
my richest gain I count but loss,
and pour contempt on all my pride."

Remember your war against pride is life-long. It is not a battle won in a day. But as you faithfully put pride to death and put on humility, you will experience greater freedom and more importantly greater conformity to image and likeness of Christ. It is our priority to ensure that we are not conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of our minds (Rom 12:2). *"The fear of the Lord teaches a man wisdom, and humility comes before honour."* Proverbs 15:33.■

DR PETER HAMMOND is a missionary. www.frontline.org.za or email: missions@frontline.org.za
To order his books or audio CDS call 021 689 4480

