

## PROUD BOASTING

From the bits and pieces (#200) series by Elder Ralph Harris

It is a natural characteristic of fallen men to be proud and boastful (Rom. 1:30). The carnal mind tends to vaunt itself or make a vainglorious display. It is common, particularly among wicked men, for them to speak "great swelling words of vanity" (II Peter 2:18). It is also common for unprincipled men of wealth to *trust* therein and to "boast themselves in the multitude of their riches" (Psalm 49:6). Boasting has been a natural part of man's composition ever since his fall in the pleasant shades of Eden. This corrupt trait manifests itself more vividly in some than in others. For example, we find Simon the sorcerer "giving out that himself was some great one" (Acts 8:9). But though some can keep it more contained and less obvious this man did, *all* men have the seeds of this proud nature within them.

But God searcheth the hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts (I Chronicles. 28:9, Rom. 8:27). He is well aware of man's boastful disposition. He allowed only three hundred men to go with Gideon into battle against the Midianites lest Israel should vaunt themselves against Him and say, "Mine own hand hath saved me" (Judges 7:2). And when He would save His people from their sins He did it in such way as to leave no grounds at all for them to take credit for their own salvation. He saved them entirely by His grace "lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:9), "according to His mercy" and not by works of righteousness on their part (Titus 3:5). He accomplished their redemption in such manner as to exclude boasting (Rom. 3:27).

The boastful nature of man may be clearly observed among those who believe they have had something to do with their own eternal standing with God, for many of them are not at all reluctant to recite the many "wonderful works" they have done (or rather *think* they have done) in His name (Matt. 7:22). Some of these people also believe they have been instrumental in saving others for heaven, and we have heard them speaking with great pride concerning the numbers they have "saved".

I once spent a day working with a former classmate in a factory, and throughout that entire day he talked about what he had done for the Lord, and he boasted that during one particular year he had "saved more people in the state of Georgia than any other man." He was the most boastful individual that I have ever been exposed to. I felt very thankful when the day was done, not just to be rid of him, but also because the Lord had shown me the evil and the vanity of boasting. The wise man Solomon said, "Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips" (Prov. 27:2).

If any of us has done anything worthy of commendation it is far better for us to give as little thought to it as those mentioned in Matt. 25, who wondered when they had ministered unto the Lord. They had done this when they ministered unto His people, but they obviously had not kept an account of what they had done and were not looking upon it with any degree of pride, or glorying in it at all. They didn't even remember doing it. This, I believe, is the attitude of every truly humble spirit-taught child of God.

A vain and proud attitude toward ones own appearance, or achievements, is a stench in the nostrils of God. Proud boasting is an abomination to Him, and He condemns it throughout His word. Someone has said that when a man sings his own praises, he always gets the tune too high! How true!

Let us humbly and faithfully serve our Lord and His people and if we are to be praised or commended, let others do it. No one wants to hear it from our own lips. "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord" (I Cor. 1:31). ---Elder Ralph Harris