

Below are some verses that can help us stay grateful for God's manifold grace and stay small in our own eyes. It's only God's grace that we weren't born in Beirut Lebanon to a family of Hezbollah terrorists or born a cannibal in Borneo. When I see a person that appears to be in between blessings, I always think, there but for the grace of God, go I. That's what we always said growing up and it really is true.

I remember volunteering at a particular homeless mission for a couple of years and a guy who lived there showed me his stomach, and there were all these circular areas of melted flesh. He asked me if I knew what they were, and I said no. He told me his dad would come home drunk on the weekends and beat him up and then put out his red-hot cigar on his torso. You just don't know what some people have been through, and that's part of the reason why I believe Jesus said not to judge. All I could think was, there but for the grace of God, go I. That young man didn't ask to have a dad like that. Nobody would.

I remember several times my car started going sideways on an icy street when I called out to Jesus and He straightened my car out. I used to have a 3rd degree blackbelt in stupidity and God mercifully kept me alive. I didn't deserve it, but God is very merciful. I know people who get up Sunday morning and the thought of going to church never ever crosses their mind. I always think about going to church and I know it's God's amazing grace that I think like that.

I believe we should make the most of the measure of God's grace we have received in this life and follow the Lord's plan for our lives. We should not let God's grace that we have received be in vain (1Cor15:10).

If you are proud, you will soon come to an end.

Anyone who boasts will soon fall down. (Proverbs EASY 16:18 – words of King Solomon)

But He gives a greater grace. Therefore, *it* says, "**God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.**" (James 4:6 NASB – words of James, the half-brother of Jesus)

I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, **for apart from Me you can do nothing.** (John 15:5 NASB – words of Jesus)

1 Corinthians 3:6 NASB1995 [6] I planted, Apollos watered, **but God was causing the growth.**

But the greatest among you shall be your servant. 12Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted. (Matt 23:11-12 NASB – words of Jesus)

For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. (Galatians 6:3 words of Paul)

For who regards you as superior? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, **why do you boast as if you had not received it?** (1 Corinthians 4:7 NASB – Paul refers to the free gift of salvation which Jesus earned for us)

But by the grace of God, I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me. (1 Corinthians 15:10 – words of Paul)

so that, just as it is written, **“Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord.”** (1 Corinthians 1:31 – words of Paul)

But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. (Galatians 6:14 NASB – words of Paul)

Thus says the Lord: “Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty man glory in his might, Nor let the rich man glory in his riches; [24] **But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I am the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight,”** says the Lord. (Jeremiah 9:23-24 NKJV – words of Jeremiah the Prophet)

Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, **but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.** Philippians 2:3 NKJV – words of Paul)

For **through the grace** given to me **I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think;** but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. (Romans 12:3 NASB – words of Paul)

For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; [27] but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, (1 Corinthians 1:26-27 NASB – words of Paul)

Those who think they know something do not yet know as they ought to know. (1 Corinthians 8:2 NIV
– words of Paul)

Such confidence we have through Christ toward God. [5] Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, (2 Corinthians 3:4-5 NASB
– words of Paul)

Let's look at some practical examples in the Bible where people didn't give God the credit for their success or just got too big for their britches and it ended very badly.

Summary #1 – King Saul: King Saul started out humble, but then made a monument for himself, disobeyed God and was removed as King. Bottom line is King Saul got too big for his britches thinking he didn't need to obey God and made a monument for himself, instead of making a monument to God to give God the credit.

10Then the word of the Lord came to Samuel, saying, 11“I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following Me and has not carried out My commands.” And Samuel was distressed and cried out to the Lord all night. 12Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul; and it was told Samuel, saying, “**Saul came to Carmel, and behold, he set up a monument for himself,** then turned and proceeded on down to Gilgal.” 13Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, “Blessed are you of the Lord! I have carried out the command of the Lord.” 14But Samuel said, “What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?” 15Saul said, “They have brought them from the Amalekites, for the people spared the best of the sheep and oxen, to sacrifice to the Lord your God; but the rest we have utterly destroyed.” 16Then Samuel said to Saul, “Wait, and let me tell you what the Lord said to me last night.” And he said to him, “Speak!”!”

17Samuel said, “Is it not true, though you were little in your own eyes, you were *made* the head of the tribes of Israel? And the Lord anointed you king over Israel, 18and the Lord sent you on a mission, and said, ‘Go and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are

exterminated.' 19Why then did you not obey the voice of the Lord, but rushed upon the spoil and did what was evil in the sight of the Lord?"

20Then Saul said to Samuel, "I did obey the voice of the Lord, and went on the mission on which the Lord sent me, and have brought back Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. 21But the people took *some* of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the choicest of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the Lord your God at Gilgal." 22Samuel said,

"Has the Lord as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices

As in obeying the voice of the Lord?

Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice,

And to heed than the fat of rams.

23For rebellion is as the sin of divination,

And insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry.

Because you have rejected the word of the Lord,

He has also rejected you from *being king*."

Summary #2 - King Nebuchadnezzar: King Nebuchadnezzar credited himself with his great success instead of God's grace. He had been warned earlier about taking all the credit for his world empire. He kept bragging about his own might, power and majesty, so God removed the kingdom from him for 7 years, until he learned the lesson of humility as an animal grazing in the field.

Daniel 4: [30] 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?' [31] While the word was in the king's mouth, a voice came from heaven, saying, 'King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared: sovereignty has been removed from you,

Summary #3 - King Nebuchadnezzar's son Belshazzar: King Belshazzar saw what happened to his dad King Nebuchadnezzar, when God taught him a lesson in humility by having him graze in a field like an animal for 7 years. Even though He saw God's judgment on his dad, he disrespected God by drinking

out of His sacred vessels and worshipped false gods while doing so. Belshazzar had no sense and paid with his life.

Daniel 5:3-22-28 NASB1995. [22] Yet you, his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, even though you knew all this, [23] but you have exalted yourself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of His house before you, and you and your nobles, your wives and your concubines have been drinking wine from them; and you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood and stone, which do not see, hear or understand. But the God in whose hand are your life-breath and all your ways, you have not glorified. [24] Then the hand was sent from Him and this inscription was written out. [25] “Now this is the inscription that was written out: ‘MENĒ, MENĒ, TEKĒL, UPHARSIN.’ [26] This is the interpretation of the message: ‘MENĒ’—God has numbered your kingdom and put an end to it. [27] ‘TEKĒL’—you have been weighed on the scales and found deficient. [28] ‘PERĒS’—your kingdom has been divided and given over to the Medes and Persians.”

Summary #4 - King Sennacherib: King Sennacherib takes all the credit for his great Assyrian empire, bragging and giving all the credit to his own great power and wisdom for his success. God says King Sennacherib was just an axe that He (God) used to judge Israel with, and here the axe (King Sennacherib) is claiming all the credit instead of giving credit to the lumberjack (God). God destroys 185,000 of King Sennacherib’s army and has him killed by his own sons in Nineveh.

Isaiah 10:12-16 NASB1995 [12] So it will be that when the Lord has completed all His work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, He will say, “I will punish the fruit of the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria and the pomp of his haughtiness.” [13] For he has said, “By the power of my hand and by my wisdom I did this, For I have understanding; And I removed the boundaries of the peoples And plundered their treasures, And like a mighty man I brought down their inhabitants, [14] And my hand reached to the riches of the peoples like a nest, And as one gathers abandoned eggs, I gathered all the earth; And there was not one that flapped its wing or opened its beak or chirped.” [15] Is the axe to boast itself over the one who chops with it? Is the saw to exalt itself over the one who wields it? That would be like a club wielding those who lift it, Or like a rod lifting him who is not wood. [16] Therefore the Lord, the God of hosts, will send a wasting disease among his stout warriors; And under his glory a fire will be kindled like a burning flame.

Summary #5 - King Uzziah: King Uzziah prospered when he was listening to God. The devil inspired him to burn incense on the altar of incense which only sons of Aaron are permitted to do. King Uzziah

was breaking God's command and when opposed by the priests, became furious. God judged him with leprosy. He died a leper.

2 Chronicles 26:5 NASB1995 [5] He continued to seek God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding through the vision of God; and as long as he sought the Lord, God prospered him.

[16] But when he became strong, his heart was so proud that he acted corruptly, and he was unfaithful to the Lord his God, for he entered the temple of the Lord to burn incense on the altar of incense. [17] Then Azariah the priest entered after him and with him eighty priests of the Lord, valiant men. [18] They opposed Uzziah the king and said to him, "It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the Lord, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron who are consecrated to burn incense. Get out of the sanctuary, for you have been unfaithful and will have no honor from the Lord God." [19] But Uzziah, with a censer in his hand for burning incense, was enraged; and while he was enraged with the priests, the leprosy broke out on his forehead before the priests in the house of the Lord, beside the altar of incense.

Summary #6 - King Jeroboam: King Jeroboam of Israel disobeyed law #1 & #2 of the 10 commandments by making graven images (golden calves - Baal) and having the people worship Baal (false god) instead of Yahweh (God & author of the Bible). God judged the altar at Bethel by splitting it in two and withered the King's hand. However, God was merciful and healed the king's hand when the prophet prayed for him. Basically, a case of extreme ungrateful arrogant pride breaking commandments #1 & #2 causing all Israel to worship Baal. Extremely ungrateful after Yahweh tore the 10 tribes away from the house of David and gave them to Jeroboam. This caused King Jeroboam to be judged severely (1Kings 14). Eliah had to deal with Baal worship at Mount Carmel in 1 King 18.

1Now behold, there came a man of God from Judah to Bethel by the word of the Lord, while Jeroboam was standing by the altar to burn incense. 2He cried against the altar by the word of the Lord, and said, "O altar, altar, thus says the Lord, 'Behold, a son shall be born to the house of David, Josiah by name; and on you he shall sacrifice the priests of the high places who burn incense on you, and human bones shall be burned on you.'" 3Then he gave a sign the same day, saying, "This is the sign which the Lord has spoken, 'Behold, the altar shall be split apart and the ashes which are on it shall be poured out.'" 4Now when the king heard the saying of the man of God, which he cried against the altar in Bethel, Jeroboam stretched out his hand from the altar, saying, "Seize him." But his hand which he stretched out against him dried up, so that he could not draw it back to himself. 5The altar also was split apart and the ashes were poured out from the altar, according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the Lord. 6The king said to the man of God, "Please entreat the Lord your God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored to me." So the man of God entreated the Lord, and the king's hand was restored to him, and it became as it was before

you also have done more evil than all who were before you, and have gone and made for yourself other gods and molten images to provoke Me to anger, and have cast Me behind your back— 10therefore behold, I am bringing calamity on the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam every male person, both bond and free in Israel, and I will make a clean sweep of the house of Jeroboam, as one sweeps away dung until it is all gone. (1 kings 14:9-10)

Summary #7 – King Josiah: King Josiah didn't ask God if he should go to war with Neco King of Egypt. If He would have, it would have saved his life. King Neco even said to King Josiah he was under orders from Yahweh and not to interfere with the will of God. It would have been easy for King Josiah to summon the prophets and inquire of the Lord to find out if King Neco was telling the truth. It would of saved his life. Never be presumptuous about knowing God's will but take a moment to ask God.

2 Chronicles 35:21-24 NASB1995. [21] But Neco sent messengers to him, saying, "What have we to do with each other, O King of Judah? I am not coming against you today but against the house with which I am at war, and God has ordered me to hurry. Stop for your own sake from interfering with God who is with me, so that He will not destroy you." [22] However, Josiah would not turn away from him, but disguised himself in order to make war with him; nor did he listen to the words of Neco from the mouth of God, but came to make war on the plain of Megiddo. [23] The archers shot King Josiah, and the king said to his servants, "Take me away, for I am badly wounded." [24] So his servants took him out of the chariot and carried him in the second chariot which he had, and brought him to Jerusalem where he died and was buried in the tombs of his fathers. All Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah.

Summary #8 – Nathan the Prophet: Nathan doesn't ask God about whether King David should build him a temple and gives King David the wrong answer. God had to correct Nathan at night that he was wrong about King David being the one to build the temple. The moral of this example is don't assume you know what God's will is without asking Him first. It could save you some embarrassment or worse. Never be presumptuous but take a moment to ask God.

that the king said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells within tent curtains." 3Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that is in your mind, for the Lord is with you."

4But in the same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan, saying, 5“Go and say to My servant David, ‘Thus says the Lord, “Are you the one who should build Me a house to dwell in? 6

When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, **I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. 13He shall build a house for My name,** and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

Summary #9 – Joshua: Joshua didn’t inquire of the Lord before making a covenant with the Gibeonites. Turns out it was a big mistake. It could have been avoided if Joshua had asked God if it was his will or not to make the covenant. Turns out the Israelites got deceived by the Gibeonites.

Then the sons of Israel set out and came to their cities on the third day. Now their cities *were* Gibeon and Chephirah and Beeroth and Kiriath-jearim. 18The sons of Israel did not strike them because the leaders of the congregation had sworn to them by the Lord the God of Israel. And the whole congregation grumbled against the leaders. 19But all the leaders said to the whole congregation, “We have sworn to them by the Lord, the God of Israel, and now we cannot touch them. 20This we will do to them, even let them live, so that wrath will not be upon us for the oath which we swore to them.”

Summary #10 – Apostle Peter: To stay warm it appears the Apostle Peter was with some bad company (1Cor15:33) around the fire (Jn18:18) which we know has a bad influence. The Apostle John had his eyes fixed on Jesus being questioned by the high priest (Jn18:19) within earshot apparently based on the text. Could Peter’s denial been avoided if he had #1) stayed close to John (good company - which would have had a positive influence), even though it would have been cold being away from the fire. #2) If Peter had stayed focused on Jesus (like John), he may not of denied Jesus?

Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. So they said to him, “You are not also one of His disciples, are you?” He denied it, and said, “I am not.” One of the slaves of the high priest, being a relative of the one whose ear Peter cut off, *said, “Did I not see you in the garden with Him?” Peter then denied it again, and immediately a rooster crowed. John 18:25-27 NASB1995

Conclusion:

So why was David called a man after God's own heart even after he committed adultery and murder (2Sam12:9)?

I believe it's because David was quick to repent of sin. Also, because King David recognized God as his source of victory giving God all the credit by establishing 24/7 worship and exaltation of God (1Chron16) to make certain all of Israel's eyes were focused on God (not David) as their source of victory. Just the opposite of what people like King Jeroboam and others had done.

Let's be like king David and give God all the credit for anything good we have experienced in our lives, remembering we are, what we are by the grace of God. Let's be quick to repent of sin. Let's be grateful and use God's grace in our lives to share the Father's infinite love with a dying world (John 3:16) and be like Jesus and start our day inquiring of the Lord in prayer (Mark 1:35).

1 Chronicles 16:4-6 NASB1995. [4] **He appointed some of the Levites as ministers before the ark of the Lord, even to celebrate and to thank and praise the Lord God of Israel:** [5] Asaph the chief, and second to him Zechariah, then Jeiel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Mattithiah, Eliab, Benaiah, Obed-edom and Jeiel, with musical instruments, harps, lyres; also Asaph played loud-sounding cymbals, [6] and Benaiah and Jahaziel the **priests blew trumpets continually before the ark of the covenant of God.**

1 Chronicles 16:37 NASB1995. [37] **So he left Asaph and his relatives there before the ark of the covenant of the Lord to minister before the ark continually,** as every day's work required;