



BULLY

U.S. statistics report that roughly 20% of students ages 12–18 have experienced bullying. Those who were bullied said it was typically done by students who could influence what others thought of them (56.3%), were more popular (52%), physically stronger or larger (39.7%), or had more money (35.2%). In other words, bullies tend to target those they perceive as vulnerable—people they can intimidate without consequence.

In this week's study, we're looking at the shortest book in the Old Testament: Obadiah. Just one chapter long, this prophecy is directed at Israel's southern neighbors, Edom. The Edomites were descendants of Esau, the brother of Jacob (later renamed "Israel"). Though Jacob and Esau eventually came to a truce, their descendants reignited the rivalry for generations.

While the exact date of Obadiah is debated, it was likely written during a time when Edom was strong and Israel was weak. Edom exploited Israel's suffering. Like a bully, they used their strength to harm. Obadiah is God's rebuke of Edom's pride and betrayal—and a promise that justice will come and Israel will be restored.

OBADIAH 1–9

¹ The vision of Obadiah. Thus says the Lord GOD concerning Edom: We have heard a report from the LORD, and a messenger has been sent among the nations: "Rise up! Let us rise against her for battle!"

² Behold, I will make you small among the nations; you shall be utterly despised. ³ The pride of your heart has deceived you, you who live in the clefts of the rock, in your lofty dwelling, who say in your heart, "Who will bring me down to the ground?" ⁴ Though you soar aloft like the eagle, though your nest is set among the stars, from there I will bring you down, declares the LORD.

⁵ If thieves came to you, if plunderers came by night—how you have been destroyed!—would they not steal only enough for themselves? If grape gatherers came to you, would they not leave gleanings? ⁶ How Esau has been pillaged, his treasures sought out! ⁷ All your allies have driven you to your border; those at peace with you have deceived you; they have prevailed against you; those who eat your bread have set a trap beneath you—you have no understanding.

⁸ Will I not on that day, declares the LORD, destroy the wise men out of Edom, and understanding out of Mount Esau? ⁹ And your mighty men shall be dismayed, O Teman, so that every man from Mount Esau will be cut off by slaughter.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Obadiah hits hard despite its size. Although Edom was named, this small book provides a warning to all of Israel's enemies. Many of the book's prophecies were literally fulfilled over the next couple centuries as empires like Babylon came and went.

Ultimately, the hope of Israel was found in Jesus Christ who will one day return to fulfill all that Obadiah declared. Scan the QR code for more.



DISCUSSION

How would you define the words "pride" and "humility" in your own words?

1. Who is speaking? What about? (1)

2. Aside from military might, what are examples of Edom's pride that the Lord will bring destruction?

(3-4):

(5-6):

(8):

3. How does the Lord's judgment fulfill the words, "*The pride of your heart has deceived you*" in verse 3?

4. What sources of sinful pride might a modern audience trust in?

5. Where do you see pride or self-reliance showing up in your life, and how might the gospel lead you toward greater humility?

Is God confronting areas of sin in your life? This study may challenge you to stop or start habits to pursue obedience. Don't walk alone—talk to your coach today

ICEBREAKER

OBSERVATION

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION



STUDY NOTES

PRIDE

In the garden of Eden, all the way back in Genesis 3, Adam and Eve had free reign to do as they pleased. God had judged all that he had made, including man and woman, to be “very good.” Adam and Eve were warned not to eat from a particular tree. God’s explicit command meant that it was “not good.” And yet, they decided, *“the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate”* (Genesis 3:6).

Notice that sin began with disagreeing with God about what is good—they wanted to become like God. Pride seeks to dethrone God so that we may sit in his seat. Ultimately, all sin is rooted in pride.

Pride is so insidious, that even when a person is like, “Woe is me. I’m the worst. I’m no good.” That’s just reverse pride. It’s often an attempt to generate a response from someone to say, “No, you’re not the worst. You’re great!” Be on the lookout for this—it won’t take long before you see someone seeking attention to bolster their own sinful pride through some sort of outburst or negative self-talk.

A problem exists using the word “pride” because you should take justifiable pride in your family, school, community, and nation. That’s (usually) not *sinful* pride. It’s not sinful to express humble confidence, gratitude, and respect for yourself, your peers, and your community. However, there’s a fine line between that kind of pride and biblically-defined *sinful* pride.

PRIDE LEADS TO FALSE SECURITY

As we previously said, *The vision of Obadiah* is **concerning Edom**. They need to know that **a messenger has been sent among the nations: “Rise up! Let us rise against her for battle!”** In other words, your nation will stand alone against everyone else. Why such judgment against Edom? **“The pride of your heart has deceived you, you who live in the clefts of the rock, in your lofty dwelling, who say in your heart, ‘Who will bring me down to the ground?’ Though you soar aloft like the eagle, though your nest is set among the stars, from there I will bring you down, declares the LORD.”**

Edom’s geographical location in the mountains caused it to trust in its natural protection. Edom sat on a higher plateau (up to 5,500’) than its surrounding area. Land passage through Edom’s

territory often required navigating through narrow passages between towering rocks, a way easily blocked by a few well-placed soldiers. This control of the high ground led Edom to see itself as impregnable to outside military forces. This also means that they often had a safe place to run when they attacked weaker forces, stole goods, and ran back home before a solid counter attack could be mustered.

God foretold their security would be gone. So would their wealth and produce such that no **gleanings** would remain on a vine. Finally, the Lord even promised to **destroy the wise men out of Edom, and understanding out of Mount Esau**. Everything in which Edom found pride would be gone leaving them weak, poor, and dumb—because that’s usually how things end for sinful pride.

HOPE LIVES FOR VICTIMS OF PRIDE

James 4:6 echoed Proverbs 3:34 when James wrote, *“God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”* Scripture makes very clear that God hates pride. No quarter is given for those who elevate themselves, especially at the expense of others.

Whereas pride seeks to elevate ourselves by any means necessary, humility seeks to view ourselves in right relation to God. Humanity is created in God’s image. All people have dignity, value, and worth (That’s part of why God hates when one person takes advantage of another). Humility doesn’t devalue God’s image by saying we’re awful or worthless. Instead, humility acknowledges the truth from God’s perspective.

Sin has defaced but not erased God’s image in humanity. In our sin, we can do nothing to earn salvation for ourselves—and even if we could, because of our sin, we wouldn’t want to (Romans 3:10–12). Instead, in the depths of our hopelessness and helplessness God sent a Rescuer. God sent his only Son to fight a battle we could never win. He took our place, taking our sin on himself, *the righteous for the unrighteous that he might bring us to God* (1 Peter 3:18).

Jesus died on the Cross for our sin, was buried, and on the third day rose again. That’s the Gospel message. But, James says that *“even the demons believe—and shudder!”* (James 2:19). In fact, they understand who God is and what Christ accomplished way better than any person can. Knowledge isn’t enough. Our belief must be accompanied by surrender, which requires *humility*. Our pride will *never* bring salvation. How could it? Instead, we must believe and receive Jesus as Lord and Savior (Romans 10:9–10).