



Jaxson Harlan Ministry

Knees First

Pride falls hard — salvation waits where the proud break

01

LISTEN

Song + lyric hook

02

DIG

Dan 5 · Prov 16 · Jas 4

03

TALK

Tower · crown · knees

04

RESPOND

Empty hands · real
surrender

AGES	13–18 (youth group / small group)
TIME	35–45 minutes
PAIR WITH	Chord sheet · Knees First
GOSPEL AIM	Pride dies on its knees; grace meets empty hands

Leader Guide

One song. Four movements. One gospel landing.

BIG IDEA

Pride builds towers, claims crowns, and laughs at warning. Belshazzar's banquet ended with handwriting on the wall. Scripture is clear: pride goes before destruction (Proverbs 16:18), but God gives grace to the humble (James 4:6). Salvation waits where proud people break — knees first, empty hands open.

SESSION MAP

1. Warm open

5 min

Phone-down. Where do teens feel pressure to look like they have it together?

2. Listen

8 min

Play "Knees First." Hand lyric strip. Circle lines that hit.

3. Dig Scripture

12 min

Daniel 5 (summary) · Prov 16:18 · James 4:6 · Phil 2 · Luke 18.

4. Talk honest

10 min

Tower / Crown / Knees cards. Keep it concrete for teens.

5. Gospel respond

8 min

Name the crown. Kneel — not for show. Ask for grace empty hands can catch.

YOU'LL NEED

- Speaker + "Knees First" (jaxsonharlan.com/music)
- Printed Student Sheets (page 4) + Truth Cards (page 5)
- Bibles or printed Dan 5 / Prov 16 / James 4 / Phil 2 / Luke 18
- Optional: chord sheet for worship open/close

LEADER NOTE

Pride stories in the song echo Belshazzar / Nebuchadnezzar / Paul-like turnarounds. Keep it concrete for teens (image, control, being right). Don't romanticize the fall — point to grace.

Teaching Flow

Say this / ask this — usable script, not a lecture.

LISTEN — LYRIC HOOKS

"It's knees first, boy, that's the only way down"

"When the Lord decides to take your crown"

"Only empty hands can catch the grace"

"Salvation's waitin' where the proud men break"

"Knees first... that's how the lost get found"

After the song: "Which line named something true about pride in your world?"

DIG — SCRIPTURE

Daniel 5 (Belshazzar)

Handwriting on the wall — a proud king weighed, found wanting, fallen overnight.

Proverbs 16:18

Pride goes before destruction; a haughty spirit before a fall.

James 4:6

God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.

TALK — THREE HEART CHECKS

TOWER

What are you building to prove you're enough?

CROWN

Where does pride show up at school/home/online?

KNEES

What would kneeling look like this week — not show, real surrender?

GOSPEL LANDING

Pride doesn't leave survivors — but grace meets empty hands. The Lord who can take a crown also knelt in Philippians 2 and justified the tax collector who wouldn't lift his eyes. You don't catch mercy standing tall. Knees first — that's how the lost get found.

Student Sheet

Knees First · fill this while you listen & talk

Name _____ Date _____ Group _____

1. CIRCLE THE LINE THAT HIT HARDEST

- ☐ It's knees first, boy, that's the only way down
- ☐ When the Lord decides to take your crown
- ☐ Only empty hands can catch the grace
- ☐ Salvation's waitin' where the proud men break
- ☐ Knees first... that's how the lost get found

2. MY TOWER / MY CROWN

What am I building or defending so I won't look weak? (image, grades, being right, control...)

3. SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT

Daniel 5

What happened when pride ignored the warning?

James 4

Who gets grace — and who gets opposed?

Luke 18

Whose prayer went home justified?

4. PRIDE LABEL → REAL NAME

WHAT I CALL IT

WHAT GOD CALLS IT

5. ONE HONEST PRAYER

"Lord who takes crowns — here are my empty hands. I can't catch grace standing tall..."

Truth Cards + Take-Home

Print · cut · keep in a Bible or locker

Cut along the dashed lines. Two wallet cards + one fridge verse.

TRUTH CARD

Empty Hands

*"God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble."
— James 4:6*

Only empty hands can catch the grace.

TRUTH CARD

Knees First

*"Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall."
— Proverbs 16:18*

Salvation's waiting where the proud break.

FRIDGE / LOCKER VERSE

**"God opposes the proud
but shows favor to the humble."**

James 4:6

This week: when the crown feels heavy, ask — Whose approval am I protecting?

Jaxson Harlan Ministry · Song-to-Scripture · Knees First

How this sits in the series

Song-to-Scripture Youth Studies · Ages 13–18

THIS STUDY

Knees First

Pride falls hard — salvation waits where the proud break

A hard-edged study on pride, collapse, and grace. Biblical tower stories made concrete for teens — image, control, being right. Strong follow-up after He Sees You Still.

FULL SONG-TO-SCRIPTURE SET

- **I Called It Mercy** Rename sin · ask for real mercy
- **He Sees You Still** El Roi — God sees lonely teens

- **Knees First** Pride falls · grace meets empty hands
- **Who's on the Throne** Self-rule vs Jesus is Lord
- **Hold It Light** Provision is gift · not a throne

PAIRING TIPS

- Works well after He Sees You Still (soft) before Who's on the Throne (lordship).
- Keep Belshazzar as a short story-summary — don't get lost in chapter details.
- End on grace, not shame: empty hands, not crushed egos for sport.

Website placement

On /ministry-resources/, file under “Youth Song-to-Scripture Studies.” Card layout with cover thumbnail, age badge (13–18), time badge (35–45 min), and Download PDF — same visual language as chord sheet links. Link the matching chord sheet.