

CHAPTER 30

Humility

KEY IDEA

I choose to esteem others above myself.

KEY VERSE

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

-Philippians 2:3-4

BEGIN BY RECITING THE KEY VERSE AND THE KEY IDEA TOGETHER AS A GROUP.

LESSON

INTRODUCTION

Colossians 2:18 says, *“Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize.”*

> If there is such a thing as false humility there must also be true humility.

< Titus 3:2 says to *show true humility to all men*. The reason the Bible mentions humility in terms of “true” or “false” is because many are confused as to the real meaning of humility.

^ Some think they are humble if they think badly of themselves, when in reality it may be false humility.

Humility is a driving virtue in the Christian life and community. Choosing to esteem others above oneself encourages harmony and love. The opposite of humility is pride. Prideful people typically believe they are better than others. They strive to get their way at the expense of others or boast as a way of boosting low self-esteem. When a person possesses Biblical humility they draw from internal “God-esteem.” They have received God’s unconditional love and embraced their inherent worth as God’s child. From this belief they are capable of lifting others up.

What words or images do you associate with “humility”?

Who is someone you know who is humble? What qualities make him/her humble?

Prior to Jesus Christ coming, the Greek philosophers despised humility as a character trait because it implied weakness, inadequacy and worthlessness. The word was always used in a bad or inferior sense.

- > This however is not the meaning defined in the Bible that was so perfectly illustrated by Christ's life.
 - < Biblical humility is a recognition that by ourselves we are inadequate and worthless (1 Corinthians 4:7). Yet it is because we are created in God's image that we have infinite worth and dignity.
 - < True humility produces gratitude in us. We see that it is God Himself who has lifted us up and given man all his natural gifts.
 - < The humble person sees that they have been the receiving end of God's redeeming love and salvation, and regards him/herself as not being their own, but God's in Christ (John 15:5; Acts 17:28a; Ephesians 2:10).

Humility is often a word used jokingly: "I'm proud of my humility." "I've got this humility thing down!" "I've been complimented on my humility." "People say I'm the most humiliating person they know." And it goes on.
> So... If I say I am humble, then am I humble? If I think I'm humble, am I? Or what if I say, "In my humble opinion, I'm not very humble"? What am I to do and say?



Humility is not a joke when it comes to the virtue given by the Holy Spirit. Let's look at some meanings and explanations of Humility.

- > Humility in the spiritual sense is a grace of the soul that allows one not to think more highly of himself than he out to think (Romans 12:3).
- > A humble mind is at the root of all other graces and virtues.
- > A dictionary definition calls humility the state of being modest, respectful, ego-less.
 - < However the Latin root of the word is *humilitas* which means "grounded." When we are grounded in this spiritual virtue, rather than being too self-absorbed with our personalities and egos, we are humble.
- > The essence of humility is the awareness of the nothingness of ourselves to experience the richness of life through God.
- > QUOTE: "Humility does not mean thinking less of yourself than of other people. Nor does it mean having a low opinion of yourself. Humility means FREEDOM from thinking about yourself one way or the other at all." - WILLIAM TEMPLE
- > QUOTE: "Humility does not mean thinking less of yourself than of other people, nor does it mean having a low opinion of your own gifts. It means FREEDOM from thinking about yourself at all." - ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

Do you notice how similar the two quotes printed above seem to be? Both of them mention humility as bringing freedom. What are your thoughts on this concept?

So, what is humility?

- > Humility is the right understanding of who you are before God.
- > Humility is that quality of a Christian that demonstrates a right relationship and position before God.
 - < This is witnessed in a Christian's attitude, words and deeds.
- > Humility is a distinctively Christian virtue.

< The writers of the New Testament first recognized humility as a virtue because it was one of the characteristics of Jesus.



Let's look at five elements of Christian Humility (ADAPTED FROM KEVIN SCOTT)

1. An awareness of limits.

> There are things we cannot comprehend and things we cannot do because we do not have the knowledge or ability. We are finite, and finiteness has its limitations.

< These limitations caution us to exercise humility because they go beyond our capacity of self-understanding and abilities.

< Because of these limitations we realize we must go outside ourselves and rely on God.

2. A recognition of brokenness.

> We can add to our limitations the fact of our brokenness.

> Because of this brokenness we have a tendency to misunderstand the nature of God and His priorities. Thus we give priority to ourselves, and we hurt ourselves and others in the process.

< We fail to remember that we are broken because of our inherent sin.

< We begin to rely on our own works and accomplishments as a broken people rather than on God's desire to bring us to His unbrokenness and restoration.

3. An appreciation for scale.

> Even with our limitations and our brokenness, we can minimize the damage we might cause by being cautious about when and how we seek to extend our influence over others.

< As our scale of authority and responsibility increases, the potential for making mistakes increases.

< As our Christian maturity increases, we must realize that Christians progress at a different rate.

There is a type of scale of maturity in regard to our Christian growth.

^ Newer Christians may have more temptations, more questions, more difficulties. This should be kept in focus as we work with those relationships.

4. A commitment to mutuality.

> Mutuality means giving attention to the second part of Jesus' Great Commandment: to love others.

> It becomes easy in our human state to think that our positive feelings toward others are love, all the while trying to exercise our authority and sense of superiority over them.

> Love doesn't occur in an "I'm superior, you're inferior" relationship.

< Love should be a domain of mutuality, with each person more concerned for others than for themselves.

5. A continuous submission to God.

> This is the first part of Jesus' great commandment: to love God.

< When we believe our lives are submitted to God, it is too easy to think and act as if limits, brokenness, scale, and mutuality don't really matter. After all we are God's children, we are safe; so we take on an air of arrogance.

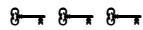
< Genuine love for God and submission to Jesus—who humbled himself for us on the cross—lead us, not to arrogance, but to Christian humility.

Don't confuse humility with being quiet, shy, or timid. Humility is a virtue that fits beautifully with any personality type. God works mightily through humble people.

> People who are genuinely humble do not draw attention to themselves or attempt to advance a personal agenda.

> Humble believers recognize that they don't know it all, and seek to know God who is all-knowing.

< Humility makes one teachable and willing to submit to the instruction of God.



CHRIST AS OUR EXAMPLE

Jesus is our supreme example of humility. The God of the universe could have ridden into our world on a white horse with a serious entourage and fanfare. Instead he came to us as a baby born in a stable to poor parents. (See Luke 2:1-20).

People by nature are proud creatures that love to proclaim what we know and what we can do. We have no qualification to produce the grace of humility in ourselves. So, how do we get it? What do we do? We look to the life of Jesus Christ for the answers.

> Jesus acknowledged that He could do nothing in Himself. It was the Father that dwelt in Him who did the work. He humbled Himself to every aspect of the Father's will.

< God did not humble Him nor compel Him to take this lowly position of sacrifice. He did it Himself, of His own free will.

Jesus had a humble start:

> There is no mention of royalty or fame in the people who were Jesus' family and relatives.

< In the minds of the Jewish people, the birth of the Messiah was to come with great royalty and fanfare.

< A royal child would have been watched carefully and his development documented for the world.

^ Luke 2:40 seems to sum up all that is known of Christ's childhood. (*And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him.*)

> From the beginning of His ministry, Jesus could have been bold and announced Himself to the world. Instead, He submitted to introduction by John—His cousin—and allowed John to baptize Him.

NOTE: *We also see the humility of John. He could have held onto the crowds and his greatness, but when Jesus came onto the scene, he chose to minister in His shadow. (John 3:27-30)*

In Christ we have a living example of humility.

> Jesus allowed the Holy Spirit to fill and control Him. He obeyed and was led (Luke 4:1).

> Although Jesus was equal with God, when He became man He set those privileges aside (Philippians 2:5-8).

> Jesus never flaunted His authority from Heaven. He ministered only as God gave Him direction.

How did Jesus' humility—His total dependence on God—manifest itself in His life?

> While a proud man feels that no one can do a job like he can, Jesus did not work this way.

< He trusted others with the message of the gospel which He had come to proclaim.

> He did not keep knowledge to Himself, but wanted all to have the truth that the Father had given Him.

> He did not try to impress with lofty words, but used parables and stories that people could understand and relate to.

Matthew 13:34-35 / Mark 4:2 / Luke 10:1 / John 15:15 / John 16:15

> He was not afraid to associate with people that were rejected in society.

> He allowed Himself to be touched by and touched the “untouchables.”

Lepers - Matthew 8:2-4 / Luke 5:13

Women--Matthew 8:14-15 / Matthew 9:20-22 / Mark 5:25-34

Blind, Dumb, and Sick of all kind --Matthew 20:34 / Mark 8:22-25 / Luke 6:19

> A proud person wants people to know their greatness and achievements and strives to spread his reputation for greatness. Jesus was not concerned with popularity, or looking good for the people.

< He had deep concerns for even one person who had gone astray or needed help.

< Jesus was concerned about the most insignificant people and not just those that could advance His “career.”

Matthew 19: 13-15 / Mark 5: 22-23, 35-43 / Mark 6:34 / Luke 8:43-48

> Jesus was respectful of authority and yet was not afraid to speak out against all the injustice brought by the Pharisees and law makers at the time.

Matthew 15: 3-9 / Matthew 21: 23-27 / Matthew 23: 13-36 / Luke 11:38-53 / John 18: 23, 33-37

> Jesus kept the law set by authorities.

Mark 2: 23-28 / Mark 3:1-5 / Luke 6: 6-11

> Jesus, as a humble man, was NOT shy and was willing to confront people with their sin. He stood up for the truth. He had a strong character to be able to act when needed.

Mark 1:22-27 / Mark 4: 37-41 / Luke 4:35-36, 41 / Luke 8:26-33 / Luke 9:42

> Even going to His own death He humbled Himself to comfort others.

Luke 23: 27-28

> Even when He was dying He was forgiving.

Luke 23:324



As Jesus was coming to the end of his time on earth, he wanted to impress upon his disciples the importance of humility. He does so in an unforgettable way.

From John 13:1-17

¹ It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

² The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. ³ Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; ⁴ so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. ⁵ After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

...¹² When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. “Do you understand what I have done for you?” he asked them. ¹³ “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. ¹⁴ Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. ¹⁵ I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. ¹⁶ Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷ Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

Jesus was God. Yet Jesus picked up a towel and a basin and did the work of a lowly servant.

> His humility was not born of poverty, but of riches.

< He was rich, yet became poor.

< Jesus stopped to serve.

FROM THE TRANSFORMATION STUDY BIBLE

The servant (slave) is not greater than his master; so, if the master becomes a slave, where does that put the slave? On the same level as the master! By becoming a servant, our Lord did not push us down. He lifted us up! He dignified sacrifice and service. You must keep in mind that the Romans had no use for humility, and the Greeks despised manual labor. Jesus combined these two when he washed the disciples' feet.

We today, just like the disciples that night, desperately need this lesson on humility. The church is filled with a worldly spirit of competition and criticism as believers vie with one another to see who is the greatest. We are growing in knowledge, but not in grace. Jesus served his disciples because of his humility and because of his love.

When Jesus sat back at the table, he asked his followers whether they understood what he had done. He then told them to do the same – to take the same posture of serving others, and in this way follow his example.

In summary: *How was Jesus able to humble himself?*

Ken Boa in Conformed to His Image shares an insight into why Jesus, in his humanity, was able to humble himself:

1. He knew where his dignity and power came from ("knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands").

2. He knew his significance and identity ("and that he had come from God").

3. He knew his security and destiny ("and was going back to God").

When God's people know that their dignity, power, significance, identity, security, and destiny are rooted in the limitless, unconditional love of God in Christ, we, too, can ask for a towel, instead of a title.



Following in the steps of his Savior, the apostle Paul wrote a tender letter to the church at Philippi instructing them to practice humility. He cited Jesus as the model.

Philippians 2:1-11

¹Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion,² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves,⁴not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

⁵In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: ⁶Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;⁷ rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.⁸And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!

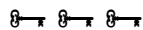
⁹Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,¹¹ and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Paul shows the steps that Jesus took to a life of humility.

- > He emptied himself, laying aside the independent use of his own attributes as God.
- > He became a human, in a sinless physical body.
- > He used his human body to be a servant.
- > He took that body to the cross and willingly died.

By telling the Philippians to be humble Paul was going against its culture—big time! The idea of humility was especially out of place in Philippi.

- > The town hosted a Roman military colony and given a grand name. (Colonia Augusta Julia Philippensis).
- > Unlike other towns it came under a special law which made it a kind of self-governing outpost of the empire.
 - < Pride and self-importance were a normal part of Philippian life.
- > When Paul told the Christians there to cultivate humility, he didn't mean a demeanor of groveling and subservience.
 - < The Biblical humility he did recommend means not thinking that you are better than you really are, but instead acknowledging what you are—with every strength and weakness.
- > Humility was not to be an option for believers – it was to be an essential in order to walk with God.



GOD OPPOSES THE PROUD, GRANTS FAVOR TO THE HUMBLE

Throughout the Bible we find a pattern — God opposes the proud but grants favor to the humble. The following passages from the book of Psalms and the book of Proverbs are brief, but their messages are powerful.

Psalm 10:2-4 *In his arrogance the wicked man hunts down the weak, who are caught in the schemes he devises. He boasts about the cravings of his heart; he blesses the greedy and reviles the Lord. In his pride the wicked man does not seek him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God.*

Psalm 18:27 *You save the humble but bring low those whose eyes are haughty.*

Psalm 25:8-9 *Good and upright is the Lord; therefore he instructs sinners in his ways. He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way.*

Psalm 147:6 *The Lord sustains the humble but casts the wicked to the ground.*

Proverbs 3:33-34 *The Lord's curse is on the house of the wicked, but he blesses the home of the righteous. He mocks proud mockers but shows favor to the humble and oppressed.*

Proverbs 11:2 *When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.*

Proverbs 16:18-19 *Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall. Better to be lowly in spirit along with the oppressed than to share plunder with the proud.*

Proverbs 18:12 *Before a downfall the heart is haughty, but humility comes before honor.*

Proverbs 21:4} *Haughty eyes and a proud heart — the unplowed field of the wicked — produce sin.*

Proverbs 21:24} *The proud and arrogant person — “Mocker” is his name — behaves with insolent fury.*

Proverbs 22:4} *Humility is the fear of the Lord; its wages are riches and honor and life.*

Proverbs 25:6-7} *Do not exalt yourself in the king’s presence, and do not claim a place among his great men; it is better for him to say to you, “Come up here,” than for him to humiliate you before his nobles.*

Proverbs 29:23} *Pride brings a person low, but the lowly in spirit gain honor.*

James, the brother of Jesus, wrote a practical book of application for the first followers of Jesus. Contained in the letter is a “cost-benefit” analysis between pride and humility. (See James 4:1-17, pgs. 474-475 in BELIEVE.)

In Peter’s first letter to the growing Christians in Asia Minor he instructed believers of all ages to practice the virtue of humility. (See 1 Peter 5:1-6, pg. 475 in BELIEVE.)

Christians who are arrogant, prideful and self-righteous, not only harden their hearts to God’s grace and compassion, but also run the risk of spiritually setting themselves up in opposition to God and His will. It is a form of rebellion.

> These proud people are characterized by stubborn and pretentious spirits. They bring disrespect to God and the saving work of Jesus.

< This is why God opposes them.

> The proud and arrogant live in a condition of separation from the Father when they think that they are truly “in fellowship” with God. This is self-deception.

> Humility is the virtue that invites the favor, or grace, of God into the heart and life of the humble believer.

God gives grace to the humble: Our humility starts with God, but is also expressed toward each other. This implies, then, that the lack of humility toward each other reveals the same lack of humility toward God.

> Being humble means submitting ourselves to God entirely, trusting that in every circumstance of joy and suffering he will exalt us at the proper time.

< So we are not to exalt or advance ourselves, we’re to trust God to do it.

“God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” We find this in Proverbs 3:34, also in 1 Peter 5:5 and James 4:6. And much the same meaning in : Isaiah 57:15, Matthew 23:12, and Luke 1:52.

> God gives grace to the humble, comes to the aid of the lowly, and blesses the poor in spirit.

< The humble heart is a submissive heart, an obedient heart, a childlike heart, a heart full of faith, a heart able to trust even to death.

<The humble heart doesn't fight for self, even when right. It's not defensive. It fights for God to be glorified.

>When we respond with humility, God is generous to give us grace-grace to change, grace to endure and grace to glorify God in all things.

>The reason humility is so important is because it's the test of what we believe about God in any situation.

God's opposition to the proud has a purpose and that is to humble us and to lead us to the place where we can receive grace (Psalm 32:1-5).

> God's opposition to the proud is loving. He desires the proud to come to Him because of this love.

> As we humble ourselves before God He will give us grace and the result will be joy and peace in life regardless of circumstances.

God's grace produces humility. God gives grace to the humble but when we receive grace it also produces humility.

> When we understand, grasp and embrace the grace of God it produces humility and God gives grace to the humble.

This process of humility begins with a constant awareness that we are in the presence of God.

> He knows our actions and our hearts, our gifts and our failings.

> With this constant mindfulness of God's presence, it is harder to hide behind our illusions.

< In the presence of other people we can hide our anger, impatience and deceitfulness.

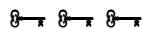
< We can pretend to be something we are not.

< But we cannot hide our hearts from God.

> This forces us into a radical honesty.

< Before God we are who we are. We can no longer deny our failings nor take credit for our gifts.

This is the beginning of humility.



THE PARADOX OF HUMILITY

Some of the paradoxes of the Christian life are:

> The more we give, the more we receive

> The more we sacrifice, the more God blesses.

> The submissive life leads to joy; it makes us more like Christ.

> In the same way, humility becomes a paradox in our Christian lives.

There is a paradox of claiming to be humble while bragging on it. How do you react to that? "Why yes, I do bring humility" sounds so... well, NOT humble. "Nah, I have no humility" is too self-deprecating or unimportant.

>The obvious joke is that no one can truly proclaim they are humble and still be humble. Being humble involves humility; so for a person to tell others about their positive attributes, especially being humble, is far from being humble.

>So what IS humility? And how do we accept it as a quality we own?

< We are our best self when we get out of our own way.

^ This doesn't mean we don't exist or make us disappear.

^ When we get out of our own way, we are less likely to take things too personally, less likely to see things only from our own point of view, and less likely to measure ourselves against others.

< When we get out of our own way, we are more likely to have clear thoughts, enjoy the situation, and hear the joys, pains, sorrows, anger and contentment of others.

^ We are more likely to notice those moments of grace. More likely to be awed by God's creation, and to share that awe with others.

Some might believe that a humble person always loses out, gets overlooked and comes in dead last, while someone with less humility always wins, gets noticed and comes in first. The Bible teaches that regardless of circumstances or the world's perspective, Christians experience true joy and contentment in this life and anticipate the full blessings of God's kingdom in the next life. Read carefully Jesus' opening words in the Sermon on the Mount.

FROM Matthew 5:1-12

¹Now when Jesus saw the crowds, ...he began to teach them. He said:

³"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

⁵Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

⁶Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

⁷Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

⁸Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

⁹Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

¹⁰Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.¹² Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

The beatitudes show that a Christian can be filled with a joy that she/he cannot fully express, yet are sorrowful over things that non-believers consider as insignificant.

> They have a deep and abiding sense of satisfaction, yet sense the brokenness of the world.

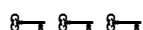
> Their life-experiences are often painful, yet they would not part with them for wealth or fame offered by the world.

> Though the world exalts those filled with pride, self-esteem, and assertiveness, God exalts the humble and meek.

> The world displays its approval of "heroes" by giving them ticker-tape parades, putting them into high office, and remembering their achievements by naming streets, cities, parks, and schools after them, but God blesses peacemakers, the poor in spirit, mourners, meek etc..

A paradox is "a seemingly absurd or self-contradictory statement or proposition that when investigated or explained may prove to be well founded or true." What Jesus says *seems* absurd. There *seems* to be a contradiction here.

> But where He is taking us is humbling and liberating, and with God's help, will prove to be very well-founded and true in our lives.



GOD'S REQUIREMENT

What does God require from us? Micah, a prophet to Israel and Judah in the eighth century BC, answered this question with convicting succinctness. What God required then, he still requires of us today.

Micah 6:8 } *He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.*

TO ACT JUSTLY, LOVE MERCY AND WALK HUMBLY WITH GOD, WE MUST IMITATE CHRIST.

Philippians 2:3a states. *“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit,”*

- > Selfish ambition is listed among the “acts of the sinful nature” in Galatians 5:20; being selfish is sinful.
 - < Pride makes us self-centered, and self-centered people are motivated by their desires.
 - < The desires of a selfish person can vary slightly, but typically includes wanting more than they already have or desiring something they don’t really need.
- > Selfishness affects people around us.
 - < In James 4:1-4, James explains that fights and quarrels are caused by desires, covetousness, and not getting what we want.
 - < In Luke 9:23, Jesus commands us to deny ourselves and follow Him daily.
- > We can imitate Christ’s humility by following His example and obeying His commands.
 - < We must deny our selfish desires, and be content with what we have.
 - < Practicing humility is seeing others as worthy of preferential treatment. (Romans 12:10)
 - ^ 1 Peter 5:5b-6 states: *“All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”*
 - } So we are to humble ourselves under God’s hand so that He may lift us.
 - } We are not to worry about our “position” or “status” or getting proper recognition for things we have done.
 - } God’s recognition is more important than human praise, and He will lift us up in His time.

Philippians 2:4 states: *“Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.”*

- > Instead of being selfish, we need to be selfless. Selfless people are concerned with the lives of others.
 - < We become involved in the interests of others by sharing with them in the good times and being there for them in the bad times
 - < If we are to imitate Christ’s love and humility, we must demonstrate to others the love that He has shown to us.
- > At times it will involve sacrifice – giving energy, time, and money or helping someone out when it is not “convenient” – but following Christ’s love involves more than just a feeling, it reveals itself in action.



KEY QUESTION: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO VALUE OTHERS BEFORE MYSELF?

PARAPHRASED FROM *THINK, ACT, BELIEVE LIKE JESUS* by Randy Frazee

Humility is the opposite of arrogance. An arrogant person wants their presence to dominate a room, while a humble person desires to make their contribution in a room to be about those who are in it.

- > Practicing humility is not about blending into the wall and not being noticed; it's about being open and unassuming to bring out the best in those around us.
- > Arrogance often makes assumptions as to what others may think or feel, while humility will make no such assumptions.

When Jesus attended a dinner where people were looking for the best seats, he told a story about seeking the lowest place and then being invited to relocate to a better place.

- > He summed up the teaching in these words: *"For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."* (Luke 14:11)
- > In Jesus' view, those who desire to exalt themselves are at the opposite extreme of those who are his followers.
- > In the end, his kingdom will be revealed as contrary to the way things are in this present world.



KEY IDEA: I CHOOSE TO ESTEEM OTHERS ABOVE MYSELF.

PARAPHRASED FROM *THINK, ACT, BELIEVE LIKE JESUS* by Randy Frazee
Scripture consistently connects humility and wisdom.

- > Proverbs 11:2 *"When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom."*
- > James 3:13 *"Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom."*
- > Wisdom brings together knowledge, life experience, and a personal skill set that allow a person to live life successfully.
 - < The wise person has a broad vision to be able to see their place and is not threatened by anyone else's position, for they are secure in their own.
 - < The wise person is free to be a humble person.

"By the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you." (Romans 12:3)



KEY APPLICATION: WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES THIS MAKE IN THE WAY I LIVE?

FROM *THINK, ACT, BELIEVE LIKE JESUS* by Randy Frazee

HUMILITY BRINGS A SECURE KNOWLEDGE OF IDENTITY IN CHRIST.

Christ offers us a new life in all aspects, thus creating a new identity. His death and resurrection provide security now and into eternity. Our newfound knowledge of what he has done for us produces a grateful and humble state of the heart, as we continually find our life and breath in him, as Luke reminds us in the book of Acts: *"In him we live and move and have our being."* (Acts 17:28)

HUMILITY BRINGS THE FREEDOM TO ELEVATE AND TO ESTEEM OTHERS.

With our new position in Christ, we now have all the resources we need to live out the greatest commandments — to love God and neighbor. The continual growth of humility allows us to feel no threat or insecurity in placing God’s will and others’ needs ahead of our own. We are set free in our souls to serve.

HUMILITY REDIRECTS ALL OUR RELATIONSHIPS TO BE ABOUT THE WELL-BEING OF OTHERS.

Once we learn to consistently esteem others above ourselves, the next step is to care for people in the way Jesus would have us care. We seek to serve all those with whom we are in relationship. We no longer use others as a means to our own end, but we make it a practice to ask how we can be a part of God’s plan for people. We seek to follow Paul’s advice: “*No one should seek their own good, but the good of others.*” (1Corinthians 10:24) ...

HUMILITY BRINGS A DEEP SENSE OF CARING FOR THE PEOPLE IN OUR CIRCLES.

... Everywhere [Jesus] went, he looked out in compassion for those who needed him. This, too, is our job description, driven from a humble heart to serve as he served.

...

HUMILITY BRINGS A DESIRE TO REFLECT CHRIST IN ALL THINGS.

The ultimate humility is found when we place our heart in the constant position of putting God’s glory first and seeking first his kingdom and his righteousness. (Matthew 6:33) The more we immerse ourselves into the ministry of Christ to others, the more we experience the abundant life he offers. Seeing him change lives through our obedience is humility at its finest hour.

For growing Christians, a strong sense of self-esteem flows from “God-esteem” on the inside, which frees us to focus on “others-esteem.” When they enter any conversation with a neighbor, the prayer is, *Dear God, help me place this person above myself and draw them to you.* As the world becomes increasingly self-absorbed, humility will not only be one of the most attractive and refreshing fruit of God’s Spirit to a searching and hurting world, but also a great blessing to our own lives in offering our hearts daily to the Lord, as we exalt him and him alone. ...

- *Humility is the fear of the Lord; its wages are riches and honor and life.* (Proverbs 22:4)

- *All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, “God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.”* (1 Peter 5:5)

Jesus humbled himself, and in due time, God the Father “exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name” (Philippians 2:9) He promises to do the same for us: “Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.” (James 4:10)



What are the aspects of your life that keep you from deeper humility?

How will you work on changing those aspects of yourself?

Throughout the Bible, the call to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with the God who loves and supports us is clear. So what does this mean? God doesn't want our prideful attempts to atone for our sins. Instead, we, as believers and members of the church, are to serve as God's witnesses to the world. This often means we must be willing to live lives that are dramatically different from the world in which we live. We are to turn from corruption and revenge and pride and turn to the Lord, who is always faithful.

