

HUMILITY

A. **Many** have walked “by faith” throughout the ages (**Heb 11:32**).

1. These unheralded servants of righteousness were devoted to God against all odds & determined to move forward.
2. Their names were recorded for our benefit.

B. **What** did they have in common?

1. Faith: to subordinate their will to God’s.
2. Belief: that He will reward diligent seeking.

C. **What** was behind their faith?

1. The decisions to obey God despite the cost.
2. The courage to act when hope was dim.
3. Their humility (? Samson)

D. **Humility** is at the root of all faithfulness to God.

1. What gives us the energy to be faithful? **Humility**, because we’re not expending our total energy on our own interests.
2. What gives us the backbone to hope? **Humility**, because we have our hope set on only one thing: heaven.
3. What gives us the ability to love? **Humility**, because we are thinking of the welfare of others before our own.

E. **Humility** is hard.

1. To give respect when it is unearned.
2. To disregard personal interests to help others.
3. To stand aside & let others serve.
4. To allow others to take the credit.
5. To allow insult without comment.

[And yet this is what a humble person will do. To be servants of God, the attitude of humility must guide our every word, thought & action.]

I. WHAT IS HUMILITY?

Pro 3:34 – Surely He scorns the scornful [*God* resists the proud], but *gives grace to the humble*. (**Jas 4:6**; **1 Pet 5:5**).

Acts 20:17 – From Miletus he sent to Ephesus & called for the elders of the church. 18 And when they had come to him, he said to them: "You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you, 19 *serving the Lord with all humility*, with many tears & trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews; 20 how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, & taught you publicly & from house to house, 21 testifying to Jews, & also to Greeks, repentance toward God & faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."

Col 3:12-13 – Therefore, as *the elect of God, holy & beloved, put on* tender mercies, kindness, *humility*, meekness, longsuffering; 13 bearing with one another, & forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.

Tit 3:1-3 – Remind them to be subject to rulers & authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, 2 to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, *showing all humility to all men*. 3 For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts & pleasures, living in malice & envy, hateful & hating one another.

1 Pet 5:5-7 – Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, & *be clothed with humility*, for "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." 6 Therefore *humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God*, that He may exalt you in due time, 7 casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. (**Jas 4:10**)

A. **Metaphorically** *humility* means having a low opinion of self.

1. Greek: *tapeinos* – *low-lying*
2. English root: *humus* – *grass close to ground*
3. Latin root means *soil*
4. Yet it is a sign of inner strength (**Phil 2:1-11**).
5. Paradox: precedes exalting (**2:9**).

B. **Humility** is understood by the first three beatitudes.

1. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, ...mourn..., ...meek... (**Matt 5:3-5**).
2. Isn't Jesus telling us that we must take three steps down in our own self-estimation to enter the kingdom?

Matt 18:3-4 – Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 Therefore *whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven*. – *he can enter the kingdom*.

C. **Humility** is an attitude that we must worked at.

1. Elusive: “My best sermon is on humility.”

I read about a man who was given an award for being humble, & when he accepted it, they teased him by taking it away.

2. We cannot obtain humility by waking up one morning & saying, “I’m going to be humble today.”
3. We can only begin to develop humility by saying each day, “I’m going to strive to be a Christian.”
4. Because humility is a byproduct of the will to obey God.

[Humility is an attitude that we must consider important enough to nurture & develop throughout our lives.]

II. WHAT WILL HUMILITY CAUSE US TO DO?

A. **To be like our Master.**

1. Jesus oft said that He was “from God” (Jn 6:46; 8:42).
2. But only once did He describe His character.

Matt 11:28-29 – “Come to Me, all you who labor & are heavy laden, & I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you & learn from Me, for *I am gentle & lowly [humble] in heart*, & you will find rest for your souls.”

3. What did His humility cause Him to do?

John 4:34 – Jesus said to them, “My food is to do *the will of Him who sent Me*, & to finish His work.” **6:38** – “*For I have come down from heaven*, not *to do* My own will, but *the will of Him who sent Me.*”

4. Humility is where every person must begin his or her service to God.

B. **To give due credit to God.**

1. Moses was in his day the most humble man on the earth, but he once failed to be so (**Num 12:3; 20:1-13**).
 - a. Oh yes, Moses was God’s law-giver, but Moses momentarily forgot that **God** was the Author of the Law.
 - b. This can be a problem among preachers & preacher admirers.

1 Cor 4:5-8 – Who then is Paul, & who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, *as the Lord gave to each one*? 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but *God gave the increase*.

7 For who makes you differ from another? And *what do you have that you did not receive*? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it? 8 You are already full! You are already rich! You have reigned as kings without us — & indeed I could wish you did reign, that we also might reign with you!

1 Cor 4:8 (TLB) - You seem to think you already have all the spiritual food you need. You are full & spiritually contented, rich kings on your thrones, leaving us far behind! I wish you really were already on your thrones, for when that time comes you can be sure that we will be there, too, reigning with you.

2. A humble Christian wishes God to be glorified.

1 Cor 15:10 – But *by the grace of God I am what I am*, & His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

Eph 3:7-8 – of which [the gospel] *I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power*. 8 To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.

C. To provide a basis for learning God's word.

1. What is the opposite of humility? Pride. And a proud person doesn't listen well.

Prov 26:12 – Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him. **29:20** – Do you see a man hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him.

2. The Ethiopian Eunuch demonstrated that humility is the proper attitude for learning (**Acts 8:31**).
3. I remember times when it was all I could do to listen to someone, when I already had it figured out. But after listening, I often learned a better way of doing the job.
4. People generally have their minds made up when it comes to God's word (but so do we!).
5. Humility will create an atmosphere for learning, for everyone.

D. To suppress the spirit of competition.

1. A humble Christian knows that he or she is only one member in a complex body; each member of Christ has an important role.

Phil 4:2-3 – *I implore Euodia & I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord*. 3 And I urge you also, true companion [unnamed], help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life.

Rom 12:3-5 – *For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.* 4 For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, being many, are one body in Christ, & individually members of one another.

1 Cor 3:5 – Who then is Paul, & who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? **4:6** – Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself & Apollos for your sakes, *that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other.*

2. A humble Christian will not envy another's abilities, nor will he expect others to have his abilities.
3. He will humbly search out & use his own God-given talents.
 - a. Care for building.
 - b. Attention to widows.
 - c. Provisions for the sick.
 - d. Greeting, welcoming visitors.
 - e. Edifying the young people.
 - f. Differing Gifts: Ministering, Teaching, Exhorting, Giving, Showing Mercy (**Rom 12:6-8**).
 - g. The remainder intended for all (**Rom 12:9-21**).

E. To self-evaluate.

2 Cor 13:5 – *Examine yourselves* as to whether you are in the faith. *Test yourselves.* Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? — unless indeed you are disqualified.

1. Self-examination is impossible without humility.
2. Pride stands in the way of introspection.
3. Humble self-examination is a prerequisite to helping others.

Matt 7:4-6 – Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; & look, a plank is in your own eye? 5 Hypocrite! *First remove the plank from your own eye,* & then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

F. To prepare for acts of compassion.

Matt 9:36-38 – But when He saw the multitudes, *He was moved with compassion for them,* because they were weary **AND** scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. 37 Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. 38 Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest." **10:1** – And when He had called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, & to heal all kinds of sickness & all kinds of disease.

1. Only a humble man would have made the effort to help these people.

2. Jesus had compassion on both their physical & spiritual needs, because He was a gentle & humble man.

{ Source: Bowman, Dee. 1999. *Common Sense Preaching*. Florida College Press. Chapter 2, pages 24-28. }

3. The priest & Levite (**Lk 10**) lacked compassion because they lacked humility; it was beneath them to help.

a. The Samaritan was humble enough to see himself in that predicament.

4. But the greatest act of compassion is to teach the lost.

G. To be effective in teaching the lost.

1. Nobody likes a no-it-all, & few will listen to a harsh judgmental person.

2. But people will listen to a humble person, because a humble person will admit weakness & imperfection (**Jas 5:17**).

2 Tim 2:24-25 – *A servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, 25 in humility correcting those who are in opposition*, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth,

1 Cor 9:22 – *to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak*. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.

3. Being humble will open doors for the gospel.