

Danger of Comparisons
Lesson 10– What does it mean to be Humble?
August 9, 2015

A. God's View of Us

Starter Questions

- What does it mean to be humble of spirit? How are we to act and conduct ourselves?
- How is humbleness tied to our relationship with Christ?
- Does our degree of humbleness affect our ability to serve? Or be saved?
- Does being humble mean that we are submissive, weak or not standing up for beliefs?

Definition of Humble:

- Not proud or arrogant; modest
- Having a feeling of insignificance, subservience
- low in rank, importance, status
- courteously respectful
- Lower in condition, importance
- to destroy the independence, power, or will
- to make meek

God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. While the world might define humility as a lowering of oneself in relation to others, a freedom of pride and arrogance, and having a modest opinion or estimate of one's own worth; It is not groveling in front of others, being a doormat, or is a sign of weakness.

Moses was said to be the humble or meekest man on earth (Numb 12:3) but meekness is not weakness but actually strength that is under control. The fact is that "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble" (James 4:6). The word James uses for "opposes" is the Greek word "antitasso" which means "to range in battle against" so we could put James 4:6 like this; "God is in battle against the proud but gives grace to the humble." Until a person humbles themselves they cannot receive the grace of God which is a gift that He only gives to those who are of a humble and contrite nature.

Isaiah testified of this by writing "this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word" (66:2) and that "I live in a high and holy place, but also with the one who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite" (57:15).

B. Scripture Verses

Matthew 18:1-4 "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

- Children are naturally humble and teachable and that is why Jesus said that we must be like children. He is not saying that we are to be childish but childlike. That is a huge difference. The greatest are the most humble because they are more likely to learn, to serve, and to not think too highly of themselves. God cannot fill a person who is already full of themselves.

Philippians 2:3-4 "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others."

- The person that is truly humble is the person who will “count others more significant than” themselves because they will “look not only to their own interests, but also to the interests of others.” Serving others when we need something ourselves is true humility. Thinking more highly of others than self and putting their interests ahead of ours.

1 Peter 5:5-6 “Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you.”

- We are to clothe ourselves in “humility toward one another”. Peter actually quotes James (4:6) and repeats “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble”. By Peter quoting James he also authenticates that what James had written was considered Scripture. The Book of James was one of the first books written in the New Testament and both James and Peter saw the importance of humility because they understood that God is at war with the proud of heart.

Matthew 23:10-12 “Neither be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Christ. The greatest among you shall be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.”

- Who will be the greatest among those in the church today? It will be those who are servants or serving others. If a person exalts themselves, they will be humbled but if they humble themselves first then they will be exalted by God because God exalts the humble and humbles the exalted.

Ephesians 4:1-3 “ I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

- The manner in which we walk that is worthy of our calling is to walk with “all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love”. Irritation and differences of opinion over time can create something beautiful that can only be formed by walking in humility, gentleness, patience, and forbearance.

2 Chronicles 7:14 “If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land”

C. Questions for Small Group Discussion:

1. Discuss the difference between “humbleness of Spirit” and showing humbleness outwardly; Is there or can there be a difference?
2. Can a person be saved without being humble?
3. Why does the world’s definition of “humbleness” usually include or focus on being submissive or weak?
4. Why can Christians find it easier to humble themselves before God, but show so much arrogance and piousness with our fellow humans?
5. Why do we see the reference to “servant” used so many times in conjunction with humbleness?
6. Discuss the best ways you have found to be humble and keep your own importance in check? What wisdom has God shared with you?
7. Is being humble something attained at salvation or something that is learned through your growth and wisdom over time?