

Humility - God's Style

Philippians 2:5-11

Lincoln Forlong

By definition: **Pride:** Is an overly high opinion of one's own dignity, importance, or superiority

IN CONTRAST: **Humility:** is a modest opinion or estimate of one's own importance

Humility must be practical. It's to be felt, experienced, seen and heard, or else it's nothing more than a theory in our imaginations.

Andrew Murray, Humility, p.27 (1800's)

Let us consider how our lack of love, indifference to the needs and feelings of others, even sharp comments and hasty judgments that are often excused as being honest and straightforward, are thwarting the effect of the influence of the Holy Spirit on others. Manifestations of temper and touchiness and irritation, feelings of bitterness and estrangement, have their root in nothing but pride.

1) The Humility of Jesus and it's relation to us

In any single study of humility we can't go past looking to Jesus as the Supreme example of humility, this is summarised best in:

Php. 2:5-11

- :5 Your attitude...
- :5 Should be the same as...
- :5 That of Jesus Christ – it is on Christ we MUST focus our attention

Realise this is God Almighty speaking of the character of Jesus Christ. Your ATTITUDE should be the same. You should be a Christian who has yielded/surrendered yourself to duplicating the attitude of Jesus Christ. We don't stack Him onto a pile of years of religious repertoire. Rather, He REPLACES it ALL!

We are not to be bent towards imitating the Apostle Paul, Peter or even John the Baptist. These are merely imperfect men. Our entire focus should be on imitating the characteristics of Christ.

It is alarming that we can so often have our attitude magnetized on anything and everything OTHER than Jesus Christ. We can become easily distracted from making our Lord the entire focus. What's the subject matter on *your* lips most often in your day to day life?

- :6 Christ, in very Nature was God
- :6 Christ didn't grasp at, or pursue equality with God – He was God
- :7 Made Himself nothing – not forced by the Father – voluntary
- :7 Taking the nature of a servant
- :7-8 Made in human likeness – set aside His Heavenly glory
- :8 He humbled Himself
- :8 Obeyed death – even crucifixion

Jesus Christ is not some guru, religious man or merely a prophet. He is, in very nature, God. In the Greek, this word denotes 'in very *essence*', God.

Jesus took on the nature of a servant – a 'bondslave'. By definition a bond-servant was a slave, who, having served his Master for the required six years is supposed to be set free, but instead chooses to stay permanently with his Master as a willing servant for life. See **Deuteronomy 15:12-17**.

Jesus did this for His Father God. He relinquished all Heavenly rights. Try to get a grasp on that. Just imagine. If you were Almighty God, who looked upon this cesspit of an earth, full of sin and filth which is the very antithesis of your very nature, would you want to come down? KNOWING what mankind, whom you created, were going to do to you? How incredible and unfathomable is the humility of Christ!

Gal 3:13 *'Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."*

Jesus HAD to be crucified in order to be cursed by God the Father.

- ✓ :9 **Therefore** - everything that follows is resulting from humility
- ✓ :9 God exalted Him to the highest place
- ✓ :9 Gave Him the name above every name
- ✓ :10 At the name Jesus everyone will bow - all 3 spheres
- ✓ :11 Every tongue will confess Jesus is **Lord**
- ✓ :11 All this **is to the Fathers glory**

'Therefore' - everything that follows is based on the premise of what has just preceded. Everything that follows is BECAUSE of the humility of Jesus Christ. He gets exalted to the HIGHEST place. Nothing is more prominent than this fact!

He has given us the opportunity to bow our knees today so we won't have to be forced to on judgment day. Why fight Him? We're all going to bow down to Him in the end anyway! Why wait to be forced, when you can bow the knee to Him today and enjoy the blessings of God's grace and forgiveness and everything else that comes with it!

He is the LORD. Not big buddy Jesus. He is the Master. He is Sovereign God. Why was Jesus Christ humbled, crucified, and exalted? So God the Father would get all the glory for *all* of it.

Martin Luther said: *"God created the world out of nothing, and as long as we are nothing, He can make something out of us."*

Consider this Example of Religious Humility and Pride toward God found in Lk. 18:9-14

- 2 Religious men
- Same destination – the temple
- Same purpose – to pray

The Pharisee:

- Stood amongst the crowd (the tax collector at a distance)
- Prayed about himself – focused on self even in worship
- Compared himself with others – presumed to giving thanks
- Looked down at his fellows worshippers – wasn't looking to God

The Tax Collector:

- ✓ Stood at a distance – separate
- ✓ Couldn't look up
- ✓ Beat his breast
- ✓ Pleaded God's mercy
- ✓ Acknowledged his sinfulness

Conclusion: The Tax Collector was Justified

Gr. 1344 = to be declared righteous, innocent, just

The Pharisee was the religious man who society looked up to and considered to be the good guy. The Tax Collector was the traitor who extracted tax from the Jews. Therefore society hated him. But this guy didn't even feel worthy to even worship with his own people. He separated himself from the crowd and stood at a distance. He beat his breast because he was so overwhelmed with grief at his own sin.

We are cursed apart from God's mercy in our lives. We should feel disgust at our own sin.

God's Conclusion:

Isa. 66:2b ...*"This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word.*

"esteem" Heb. 5027 = look at with pleasure and respect

2) Consider our humility in relation to others

T.S. Eliot said: *"Humility is the most difficult of all virtues to achieve, nothing dies harder than the desire to think well of yourself."*

Our humility or pride are significant character qualities that captivate God's attention.

Php. 2:1-4

- ✚ :1 If you have genuinely experienced Jesus Christ
- ✚ :2 Be like-minded, same love, one in spirit/purpose
- ✚ :3a No selfish ambition or vain conceit
- ✚ **Jas. 4:1-2a *What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it...***
- ✚ :3b Consider others better than yourselves
- ✚ :4 Look to others interests as well as your own

The mark of a true Christian:

A true Christian is genuinely encouraged and comforted by Jesus Christ and the fellowship his fellow Christian. They are grateful for God's tenderness and compassion. If we are not characterized by this attitude in our lives; if Jesus Christ simply doesn't interest you; if you lack tenderness and compassion; then this is a clear indication that there is no relationship between you and Jesus Christ.

A united relationship with Jesus however, requires like-mindedness among the Believers. Unity costs. It costs pride and self-righteousness and it comes with humility. It works as we find our commonality in Jesus and His Word. We certainly don't find our commonality in our employment, finances, sport or past history. We find it in Jesus and it is through this commonality that we grow.

Pride brings division (:3). It always brings disunity, pain and more self-righteousness. The Body of Christ is not the place for pride. We are to do NOTHING out of selfish ambition.

Consider the following passage; Num. 12:1-10

- :1 Miriam & Aaron were Moses' sister & brother
- :2 They turned on Moses out of envy (pride)
- :3 Moses was the most humble person – anywhere
- :7b **Moses humility expressed faithfulness**
- :8a The Lord was uniquely intimate with Moses
- :8b A failed conscience exposed
- 9-10 Pride was negatively rewarded by God

Miriam and Aaron were walking in the desert after God rescued them from slavery in Egypt. They moaned and belly-ached at God about the lack of food. So He provided manna. Not long after this, they began to moan and belly-ache some more, so God, in His mercy, provided Quail. A LOT of Quail. They covered a distance of several kilometers and the ground was thick with them. What sweet juicy meat! However, they began to grumble again not long after this. They grumbled at Moses, their brother, and blamed him for their troubles. The Lord was incensed by this and made it clear that Moses was the most humble man on earth. So humble in fact, that God chose to talk with Him face to face. He then proceeded to punish Miriam with a case of leprosy (and subsequent isolation), for her pride. She experienced the pain that comes from having a hard in compliant heart towards God.

Warnings from the O.T. against pride

Pro. 8:13 *To fear the LORD is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behaviour and perverse speech.*

Pro. 16:5 *The LORD detests all the proud of heart. Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished.*

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

Pro. 13:10 *Pride only breeds quarrels, but wisdom is found in those who take advice.*

Pro. 21:24 *The proud and arrogant man - "Mocker" is his name; he behaves with overweening (conceited) pride.*

Psa. 31:18 *...for with pride and contempt they speak arrogantly against the righteous.*

Psa. 56:2 *My slanderers pursue me all day long; many are attacking me in their pride.*

Psa. 101:5 *Whoever slanders his neighbour in secret, him will I put to silence; whoever has haughty eyes and a proud heart, him will I not endure*

The proud person will mock a humble person. They will belittle, criticize and back-stab. They actually think they are superior to them. But God abhors Pride!

3) The Source and Results of Humility & Pride

Consider Jas. 3:13-18

- :13 A godly life is expressed through humility coming from wisdom
- : 14 Envy & selfishness in your hearts – don't deny it
- :15 The source of envy etc is: earthy, unspiritual, of the devil
- :16 If envy etc. You will find disorder & every evil practice

James, was the brother of Jesus so he had inside knowledge. He had lived with Him for years!

A truly godly life expresses itself through humility. Consider very carefully the wording in :14. Don't boast and skite about having anger and bitterness towards someone else. This is unforgiveness and as a Christian you are not entitled to be unforgiving! Don't deny your guilt. Such bitterness doesn't come from Heaven. It is earthly and unspiritual. It's not of God. It does not have His stamp of approval. It is in fact, of the devil. It is demonically approved anger, bitterness and unforgiveness. An unforgiving, bitter spirit says that you think you're better than they are. You think they are unworthy of your forgiveness. THAT, my friend, is pride. We are ALL sinful people, and if a holy God can forgive us, then we certainly should forgive others.

7 Evidences of Godly wisdom

- ✓ :17 **1st** Heavenly wisdom is PURE
- ✓ :17 **2nd** then its peace-loving
- ✓ :17 **3rd** its considerate
- ✓ :17 **4th** its submissive Gr. Good for persuasion, compliant
HUMILITY
- ✓ :17 **5th** its full of mercy and good fruit
- ✓ :17 **6th** its impartial
- ✓ :17 **7th** its sincere

The Result

- ✓ :18 Peacemakers (The humble) reap a harvest of righteousness

Jonathan Edwards said: *"Nothing sets a person so much out of the devil's reach as humility."*