

WHY BE HUMBLE?

JAMIE MCNAB

30.11.10

There are lots of qualities that we all need in life — integrity ... patience ... diligence — but some suggest the most important virtue as a Christian is HUMILITY — the quality of being humble ... teachable ... meek.

It may not seem the most exciting of topics — but scripture mentions it often ... and it seems to be a quality that God values — and looks for.

If we're humble — it can lead to good things ... good rewards. If we're not humble — we'll face big problems ... potential danger.

Being humble is a key to a happy ... successful life.

Let's see what Jesus' half-brother James has to say about it. I would imagine he knows a thing or two about the subject.

James 4:4-10

4 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. ***(Don't be seduceable to the world's ways)***

5 Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"?

6 **But He gives more grace.** Therefore He says:

"God resists the proud,

But gives grace to the humble."

7 **Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.**

8 **Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.** Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

9 Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.

10 **Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.**

We are to resist the devil — hold back ... push him away!

God resists (actively) ... the proud. But — God gives more grace — to the humble.

We all need grace (favour and power) ... we definitely don't want God to resist us!

The devil's "original sin" was pride. Pride is a satanic ... devilish quality. God opposes pride.

The term "humility" is often misunderstood. It does not mean weak ... low self-esteem ... to grovel in the dirt because you're so unworthy.

Being humble does not mean you're weak or a wimp. That's not Biblical humility.

Matthew 11:28-30

28 Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

29 **Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart**, and you will find rest for your souls. *(This is Jesus speaking about Himself. He was a humble person)*

30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

"Lowly in heart" — "lowly" is the word for humble in James Chapter 4.

Matthew 11:29 NASB/NIV

29 **for I am gentle and humble in heart**

Jesus was not weak. He was strong. He was dominant. He threw the money-changers out of the Temple! He withstood religious leaders of the day to their face! No one pushed the Lord Jesus around.

JESUS IS OUR EXAMPLE.

Numbers 12:3

3 **(Now the man Moses was very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth.)**

Moses was not weak!

True humility is not about seeing ourselves “down in the gutter” ... but is about seeing the greatness and majesty of God. It doesn't matter how talented we are ... what our achievements are ... God is so much greater! And any talents we have ... came from Him anyway. 😊

True humility focuses on God's greatness ... and our complete dependence on Him.

A humble person recognises how much they depend on God. Not full of their own self-importance and self-confidence — “I can manage on my own; I don't need God”.

That's pride. And “God resists pride”.

Someone said: “Pride is your greatest enemy; humility is your greatest friend”.

Continuing with Jesus' example:

Philippians 2:5-8

5 **Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, (the same attitude)**

6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,

7 but **made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.**

8 And being found in appearance as a man, **He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.**

Jesus humbled Himself — that's to be our attitude.

Philippians 2:9-11

9 **Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,**

10 **that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,** of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,

11 **and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,** to the glory of God the Father.

God exalts the humble.

Jesus was strong ... overcame the world — overcame the devil. He is our example.

We are what God says we are: **sons ... daughters ... heirs ... more than conquerors ... the family of God for ever more!**

Of ourselves ... we aren't up to much. But we are ... because we are "in Christ". Being humble is not about low esteem. Our true value is what we are "in Christ".

The true value of something is the price you're willing to pay for it. Think about what God paid for you — what He paid for me. God paid with His Son's life — so that we have the opportunity of eternal life.

Humility is recognising God's love ... and that we're totally dependant on Him.

We saw earlier that God gives "more grace" (power ... gifts ... favour) ... to the humble.

Being humble is good for us!

Psalms 25:4-5

4 **Show me Your ways, O Lord;**

Teach me Your paths.

5 **Lead me in Your truth and teach me,**

For You are the God of my salvation;

On You I wait all the day.

Show me Your ways. Teach me. Proud people aren't teachable.

Psalms 25:8-10

8 Good and upright is the Lord;

Therefore He teaches sinners in the way.

9 **The humble He guides in justice,**

And the humble He teaches His way.

10 All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth,

To such as keep His covenant and His testimonies.

God guides the humble. It may be direct intervention ... but scripture itself has much guidance.

Pride is not just personal arrogance. Rejecting God's instructions ... choosing your own way — is pride.

Proverbs 22:3-4

3 A prudent man foresees evil and hides himself,
But the simple pass on and are punished.

4 **By humility and the fear of the Lord** (*hear and obey*)
Are riches and honor and life.

By humility — riches and honour and life.

Proverbs 3:5-8

5 **Trust in the Lord with all your heart,**
And lean not on your own understanding;

6 **In all your ways acknowledge Him,**
And He shall direct your paths.

7 Do not be wise in your own eyes;

Fear the Lord and depart from evil.

8 It will be health to your flesh,
And strength to your bones.

Lean not on your own understanding.

Proverbs 3:34-35

34 **Surely He scorns the scornful, (*or resists the proud — the same thing*)**
But gives grace to the humble.

35 The wise shall inherit glory,
But shame shall be the legacy of fools.

Quoted by James —> Grace.

A person who is humble is teachable. Knows they don't have all of the answers.

Proverbs 11:2

2 **When pride comes, then comes shame;**
But with the humble is wisdom.

Wisdom for the humble. But — if you rely on your own opinions ... ?

God can dwell ... live closely with ... a humble person.

Isaiah 57:15

15 For thus says the High and Lofty One
Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy:

**“I dwell in the high and holy place,
With him who has a contrite and humble spirit,
To revive the spirit of the humble,
And to revive the heart of the contrite ones.**

Isaiah 66:1-2

1 Thus says the Lord:
“Heaven is My throne,
And earth is My footstool.
Where is the house that you will build Me?
And where is the place of My rest?

2 For all those things My hand has made,
And all those things exist,”
Says the Lord.

“But on this one will I look:

**On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit,
And who trembles at My word.**

Isaiah 66:2 NASB

2 **To him who is humble and contrite of spirit**

If we want God to be near to us ... be humble! That includes submitting to God — since He knows best!

It is worth looking in our spiritual mirror. How are we doing? Are we humble? Or is there a thread of pride — we can do things ourselves — we don't really need God (other than in an emergency) ... choosing to go our own way even if it is contrary to clear scripture.

Does it show in how we interact with other people? Do we feel superior?

Micah 6:6-8

6 With what shall I come before the Lord,
And bow myself before the High God?

Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings,
With calves a year old?
7 Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams,
Ten thousand rivers of oil?
Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,
The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?
8 He has shown you, O man, what is good;
And **what does the Lord require of you (what does God demand of you)**
But to do justly,
To love mercy,
And to walk humbly with your God?

One of the 3 things that God requires — “to walk humbly with your God”. It’s not incidental. It is right at the front — the first quality you need.

Colossians 3:12-15

12 Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, **put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;**
13 **bearing with one another, and forgiving one another**, if anyone has a complaint against another; **even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.**
14 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.
15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.

Humility ... bearing with one another (a humble person doesn’t easily take offence — not defending their “important reputation”).

Ephesians 4:1-3

1 I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,
2 **with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love,**
3 **endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.**

Ephesians 4:2 NASB

2 **with all humility and gentleness**

“Bearing with” or “putting up with”. ☺ We’re not all equally cultured ... polished ... educated ... polite. There can be friction at times. But we’re not to

act like super-important Prima-Donna's — just bear with it. Be humble! Not a snowflake. 😊

Romans 12:3

3 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.**

Don't think more highly than you ought to think.

Be realistic. If you have God-given talents — be honest and grateful about them. No false modesty ... or beating ourselves up (“how poor and unworthy I am”).

Romans 12:6

6 **Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them:** if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith;

Our gifts were given — so pride would be misplaced.

Romans 12:15-16

15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

16 **Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.**

Associate with the humble. (KJV: “condescend to men of low estate”).

1 Peter 5:5

5 Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and **be clothed with humility, for “God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.”**

Be clothed with humility. Very plain. God resists the proud ... but gives grace to the humble.

1 Peter 5:6-7

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.

Humble yourselves (God prefers us to do it ourselves). Then — God can exalt us!

God can certainly exalt us in this life today —like Joseph ... Moses ... David ... Daniel ... Mordecai and Esther.

If not in this life ... certainly in the one to come —eternal life as inheritor of all things.

Matthew 18:1-4

1 At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”

2 Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them,

3 and said, **“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.

Be humble to be the greatest!

Jesus is the greatest — most like a little child in His humility. Most humble. Remember how He washed the disciples feet?!

So. Humility is the way to eternal success.

It can make life a lot easier too! We don't have to work hard —trying to put on a false image ... trying to show we're a big shot. We can be at ease ... it is easier to say sorry ... ask for forgiveness.

We can be comfortable with who we are.

A humble person is a strong person — not weak.

Teachable ... whom God will exalt in due course.

The opposite is pride. Self-sufficiency. Self-importance. It's best not to be there!!

Remember: God actively resists the proud — but gives more grace to the humble!

Humility is our greatest friend. A lesson to us all.