The Power of Humility

Mt 23:5-12 "Everything they do is done for people to see: They make their phylacteries[a] wide and the tassels on their garments long; [6] they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; [7] they love to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces and to be called 'Rabbi' by others. [8] "But you are not to be called 'Rabbi,' for you have one Teacher, and you are all brothers. [9] And do not call anyone on earth 'father,' for you have one Father, and he is in heaven. [10] Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one Instructor, the Messiah. [11] The greatest among you will be your servant. [12] For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.

Humility is one of the most underrated virtues. It is underrated in our understanding of its benefits. It is also underrated in our understanding of its significance. Humility is central to Christlikeness.

Matthew 11:29 "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."—

Jesus described himself as having humility as a core characteristic. There is heart humility and behavioural humility. Jesus was humble in heart.

Philippians 2:5 "In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:"

Philippians 2:8 "And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!"

If Jesus wasn't humble, He would have never gone to the cross. There are things in this life that we would never do without humility. **What is God calling you to do but you are resisting primarily because of pride?**

The Bible warns strongly against pride, but it is still so prevalent in our lives. We promote people who are proud. It is something God detests so much yet we entertain in our lives and the lives of our children.

Proverbs 16:18 **"***Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall."*

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

Proverbs 16:5 "The Lord detests all the proud of heart. Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished."

We need to hate what God hates. We need to hate it when our children boast or are haughty in spirit.

God's glory is very important to Him and He won't share it. We are prouder than we think because we often want to share the glory with Him. I was counselling someone who has to now go to rehab. His mother said God will be glorified in all of this. I responded saying, yes, because he will be away for many months, you won't be able to say he was set free because of your great environment at home. I won't be able to say it was because of my great counselling. We will have to relinquish control and only God will get the glory. When you have a revelation that God is your source of all good things, it helps you to be humble. *2 Corinthians 4:7 "But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us."* **God entrusts His extraordinary treasure to ordinary people so**

that the power is clearly recognised as His. Our weakness does not prevent Him from working; it makes our dependence on Him evident.

*Deut 8:17-18 17 You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.**18** But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today.*

*Ps 75:6-7 No one from the east or the west or from the desert can exalt themselves.**7** It is God who judges: He brings one down, he exalts another*

Pride is so deceitful, so humility is something we have to seek.

"Seek the Lord, all you humble of the land, you who do what he commands. Seek righteousness, seek humility; perhaps you will be sheltered on the day of the Lord's anger."— Zephaniah 2:3

1 Pet 5:5 "In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, 'God opposes the proud but shows favour to the humble.'"

Humility is a posture I have before God and man. It's an act of the will. I can clothe myself with it. In the movie, Cars, Lightning McQueen gives up his opportunity to win the Piston Cup so that he can help an injured rival finish his final race. It is an emotionally engaging picture of putting another person's dignity ahead of personal glory. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=95fAH-zYIzg

"Humility asks more than, 'How can I finish first?' It asks, 'Who can I help finish?'"

Maybe we need to ask ourselves, "what does true success really look like?"

The Benefits of Humility

1. **God will lift up those who humble themselves under His hand.**

James 4:10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

1 Peter 5:6 "Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time."

Note that it is an act of your will to humble yourself before the Lord. **"Humility is taking your rightful place before God and trusting Him to determine your place before people."**

"Our responsibility is to humble ourselves; God takes responsibility for the lifting."

2. **Humility is tied to the fear of the Lord and precedes riches, honour, and life.**

Proverbs 29:23 "Pride brings a person low, but the lowly in spirit gain honour."

Proverbs 22:4 "Humility is the fear of the Lord; its wages are riches and honour and life."

3. **God guides the humble in what is right and teaches them His way.**

Psalm 25:9 *"He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way."*

If you are struggling with God's guidance perhaps it is because of a lack of humility. As long as you look to yourself you will not hear God.

We become better learners when we are humble. You don't have to be the expert of everything. Can you say, "I don't know."?

Prov 12:15 "The way of fools seems right to them, but the wise listen to advice."

Prov 26:12 Do you see a person wise in their own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for them.

4. Grace and favour are released to the humble.

James 4:6 "But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.""

Psalm 138:6 "Though the Lord is exalted, he looks kindly on the lowly; though lofty, he sees them from afar."

There are degrees of being noticed by heaven. Favour is not random.

Isaiah 66:2 *"Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?" declares the Lord. "These are the ones I look on with favor: those who are humble and contrite in spirit, and who tremble at my word."*

Humility is seen primarily in how we relate to God and His Word. It is about humbling ourselves before Him. It is closely linked to the fear of the Lord.

Biblically, "contrite" means deeply sorry and humbled over one's sin before God. It describes a heart that stops defending wrongdoing, acknowledges it honestly, and turns towards God for mercy.

The Hebrew words behind *contrite* carry the idea of being **crushed or broken**. Spiritually, this points to the breaking of pride and self-justification—a heart softened towards God.

David expresses it after confronting his own sin:

"My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise." Psalm 51:17

Contrition involves:

- **Honest acknowledgement:** "I have sinned."
- **Sorrow over the sin itself:** more than regret about being caught or suffering consequences.
- **Humility before God:** receiving His correction without making excuses.
- **Willingness to turn:** sorrow that leads towards repentance and changed behaviour.

It does **not** mean believing you are worthless or remaining trapped in shame. A contrite person acknowledges their sin while trusting God's mercy. **"A contrite heart is a heart that has stopped arguing with God about its sin."** Humility says, **"I need God."** Contrition says, **"I have sinned against God, and I need His mercy."**

5. God's manifest presence is with the humble

Isaiah 57:15 "For this is what the high and exalted One says— he who lives forever, whose name is holy: "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."

6. Humility is a key to answered prayer

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

Humility must precede prayer otherwise the prayer is a waste of time.

There can be a lot of praying, seeking His face etc but if there is no humbling of ourselves before God, then He won't hear our prayers.