

# Humility

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[0:00] Did you hear about the minister who said he had a wonderful sermon on humility?! He kept putting it off because he was waiting for a large crowd before preaching it.

! We've got a big crowd here tonight.! He voted the most humble pastor in the nation. And the congregation gave him a medal that said to the most humble pastor in Australia. Then they took it away from him on Sunday because he wore it. We can get proud of being humble even, can't we?

Humility. It's such a vital, essential characteristic. It's been called the key to God's heart that unlocks his mercy. Humility.

To be humble. To humble ourselves. God commands humility. He commands us to be humble. A humble people with a humbleness, with a humble spirit. With humility of mind and heart.

[1:13] And so humility is something we should seek after and earnestly pursue. In James 4, you might want to turn to James 4 from verse 6. It tells of humility.

It tells of the proud and it tells of the humble. From James 4 and verse 6. It says, James 4 verse 6. But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. God resists the proud, but he gives grace unto the humble.

Have you ever prayed for that? Lord, more grace. More grace. It reads on verse 7.

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you.

[2:12] Cleanse your hands, ye sinners. And purify your hearts, ye double-minded. Be afflicted and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to heaviness.

Humble yourselves therefore in the sight of the Lord and he shall lift you up. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord and he shall lift you up.

It says, God gives grace to who? The humble. God gives grace to the humble. It says, submit to God. Resist the devil.

Draw near to God and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands. Purify your hearts. Don't be double-minded. Be afflicted and mourn and weep. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God.

And he shall exalt you in due time. Being humble. Humility. Being lowly. Being meek. And coming under God's control and God's hand is commended to us.

[3:20] To be humble is a blessing. Why? The Bible says God saves the humble. God esteems the humble. God sustains the humble.

God gives grace to the humble. God lifts up and exalts the humble. Question is, are we humble or arrogant? They're contrary, aren't they?

They're opposite. Pride. Think of pride for a minute. Pride can be a big obstacle. We can get proud. You know, I can get proud of all kinds of things.

If I could reckon I might be proud about the country I was born in. Proud about my family. Or proud about my learning. Proud about my career.

My credentials. Proud about you name it. We can get proud about our status. Pride. Pride.

[4:17] Can be a real problem, can't it? Can be a big obstacle. It gets in the way of what God wants to do. Being proud. There was a preacher called Harry Ironside. He was a man of God.

A preacher of old. And he got convicted one day about a lack of humility. And a friend suggested to him as a remedy what to do. He said, Harry, go and march down the streets of Chicago wearing a sandwich board, which has got scripture verses on it, and shout those Bible verses out for everyone

to hear.

So this was pretty humiliating for this big preacher man to put on this sandwich board and to go broadcasting these Bible verses.

And he thought, okay, if that's going to make me humble, if that's going to help me have humility, I'll go and do it. And so he went through this humiliating experience, as it were, a pretty kind of confronting kind of thing to do, to go down the street with a Bible verse hanging around your neck on a sandwich board.

And he returned home to his study, and he removed the board, and sat down, and he said, I'll bet there's not another man in town who would do that. Now, he was proud about being humble again, because he'd done this humiliating thing, and he says he was proud even of doing that, which was a humbling experience for him.

[5:44] So even when we do something humbling, we can get proud about that too, can't we? Or we can have a false humility, where we're kind of putting on a show of humility and still even being proud of that.

So another preacher used to say, humility is something we should constantly pray for, yet never thank God that we have.

We can't ever kind of claim that we've achieved humility, because then we might be proud even of our humility. So what hope have we? You know, God hates pride.

We need to avoid it. Proverbs 16, 18 is a familiar proverb. Proverbs 16, 18, pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.

It makes me wonder when you see these pride rallies, when people are proud about something that the word of God says is utterly sinful and abominable, that they would say that they are proud of such a thing.

[6:57] Surely pride goeth before destruction. Pride goeth before destruction. I don't know whether Sodom and Gomorrah had pride marches, but you can imagine, can't you? Pride goeth before destruction, and we should never certainly not get prideful.

Not get prideful about anything, but certainly not of something that's sinful. Now think about pride for a minute. What is pride? Someone has said these things about pride. Pride refuses to listen. It always interrupts others. It's just got to have its own way. Pride likes to talk about itself all the time. Pride has an intense desire to be noticed. Pride believes that it deserves everything it gets. Pride is not thankful. Pride cannot be corrected. Pride does not like to follow instructions. Pride exalts itself in the presence of others. It brags.

Pride criticises and tries to make itself look better by putting others down. Pride thinks of its own needs first. You know, pride is detestable, isn't it? We see it was really one of the sins of Lucifer, wasn't it?

[8:02] Satan. As he said, I will, I will, I will. I will ascend to the throne of the Most High. You know, and I suppose it was a factor in Adam and Eve's downfall.

And they thought they could be as gods. There was pride that was manifested there, wasn't it? The pride of life, as it were. Proverbs 18.12, likewise tells of destruction.

It says, Before destruction the heart of man is haughty. So all high and mighty and prideful. And before honour is humility.

So there's a sense where humility leads to honour. But pride leads to destruction. So pride is a problem. And we ought to seek after God to rid us of pride and to realise humility.

To seek after that which is a humbleness before our God. And God esteems humility. God applauds it. He commends it. Our Lord wants us to have that humility of spirit, that humbleness of heart, as we depend upon God, as we lean upon Him, as we submit to His will.

[9:19] Come under His charge, His control, His domain. Humility. It means having a proper idea of our own ego. Micah 6 verse 8.

The prophet captures really the core of life's purpose. Micah 6 verse 8.

He hath showed thee, O man, what is good. And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God.

To do justly, to love mercy, to walk humbly with thy God. Draw nigh to God. Be thankful to Him. Let's nurture that heart of humility, that humbleness.

Let's keep short accounts with God. Confess our sins to Him. Get things sorted when we're out of sorts. Give glory to God. Rest in Him. Trust in Him.

[10:23] Submit to Him. Come under the mighty hand of God. It's realising ourselves in perspective with the mighty hand of God over us, as we were, as if it were dust or as we were, as if we're a worm, that we are just under His mighty hand.

It gets things in context, doesn't it? In perspective. Our boasting is not in us. In our flesh. It's in the Lord. The man who glories, let him glory.

In the Lord. Glory in Him. He has called us to have a spirit of humility. Now, just because I'm preaching on humility doesn't mean I've arrived.

That's for sure. I'm not... It's almost a trap for a preacher to preach on humility, as if I'm an expert training you in what I have achieved and realised, because I know for me, I'm very much on the journey.

You know, I've not apprehended yet. You know, we're still... I'm learning that. I trust. To learn to develop humility, to develop that closeness with our Lord, that spiritual maturity, that true greatness that humility is.

[11:35] And it will bless you to nurture this, to nurture that quality, that characteristic. We see humility at work in people throughout the scriptures.

When we see God moving in mighty ways, it was oft with the man, the woman of God, that was humble. Humble enough to come under his mighty hand.

For example, we see, as with Moses, Numbers 12, verse 3, of the word that describes Moses. Now the man Moses was very meek above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.

Moses was meek. Moses was humble. It was really that outstanding quality of Moses that made him great in God's usefulness.

Moses was very meek. He was gentle. He had humility. We see humility at work as with Paul. Paul, the name Paul means little.

[12:45] Paul was small enough for God to use. Paul knew humility. In Acts 20, verse 19, we see of Paul, Acts 20, verse 19, serving the Lord with all humility of mind.

And with many tears and temptations which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews. In many tears and temptations, serving the Lord with all humility of mind.

Paul had to be humble, didn't he? He was of the school of, what's the Jewish teacher's name? Some of you Bible students.

Galilee. Gamaliel or something, yeah. Yeah, Gamaliel. He was schooled by the professor of the day of the Hebrew ministry, teaching of the day.

He was of the stock of the tribe and had all those credentials behind him. Was he of the tribe of Benjamin?

[13:48] Yeah, he had all the lineage, didn't he? He had all the credentials that would qualify him to be, I suppose, an outstanding Pharisee of the day or such.

He had those things that he could brag on, that he could claim. But he says, I count it all as loss. I count it but as dung, that I might win Christ. He kind of disdained that.

That was his heritage. That was his CV, his credentials, if you like. And he says of himself, I am the least of all the apostles.

That's 1 Corinthians 15, verse 9. He says, I'm the least. He says, I am the very least of all the saints. Ephesians 3, verse 8. He said, I'm the very least of all the saints.

And then what's more, he says, I am the chief of sinners. Paul was so humbled and humbling of himself that he would say, I am the chief of sinners.

[14:53] 1 Timothy 1.15. That's humility, isn't it? We see humility at work. As I say in Moses, very meek above all the men.

Paul, serving the Lord with all humility of mind. Another man of God, Gideon. We see humility in Gideon. As with Gideon in Judges 6, verse 15.

Where it says, And he said unto him, O my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? Behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.

God says, you mighty man of God. You mighty man of valor. Doesn't he? And here's Gideon saying, my family is poor.

I'm the least in my father's house. You know, I've got bigger brothers than me. I'm the least. And we are poor. We see humility at work in Gideon.

[15:54] We see humility at work in Isaiah, the prophet Isaiah. In Isaiah 6, verse 5. As we see, he beholds the king of glory.

He sees the train filling the temple. And he sees the angels. And he cries out, Woe is me, for I am undone.

This is Isaiah 6, verse 5. Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the king, the Lord of hosts.

Isaiah didn't big note himself. He didn't brag on about any claim of his own standing. He said, I am unclean.

I am undone. We see humility at work, don't we? Through the scriptures, and this is a repeated theme, we could count many further examples and cite many others to show this truth, that humility is a quality we should seek after.

[17:04] We see humility at work. In the lives beyond scripture, the lives of men and women of God, down through church history, revivalists and reformers of old, the men of God that served on the mission front.

For example, men like Hudson Taylor. Hudson Taylor, the great missionary leader, he once said when someone asked him how he was chosen for the work in China, that God chose a little man so that men might see what a great God we have.

Hudson Taylor said, God chose a little man to show how great, big a God we have. Amen. And Hudson Taylor, one day, he came to a church service.

He was invited to speak at some large church in Melbourne, and he was introduced as this outstanding missionary, which he was, in these eloquent and glowing terms, and they gave him a big kind of intro to say what an accomplished man he was.

And the introducing person said to the large congregation what Taylor had accomplished in China, and then he presented Hudson Taylor, our illustrious guest.

[18:28] Taylor came to the podium, and he stood quietly for a moment, and then he opened his message by saying, Dear friends, I am the little servant of an illustrious master.

He put the credit to Christ. I am a little servant of an illustrious master. He put the glory on God, on Christ. Hudson Taylor.

Another missionary great is William Carey. William Carey, he's been called by son the father of the modern missionary movement. And Carey was a brilliant man.

He came from a very humble beginning though. Carey, in his early manhood, worked as a cobbler, a shoe repairman. So if you had a hole in your shoe, you had your sole coming off of your shoe, you'd go to Carey and he'd put some glue and tacks and fix your shoes.

That was a pretty humble kind of job that William Carey had. And it's reported that William Carey translated parts of the Bible into as many as 24 Indian languages.

[19:44] It's an outstanding achievement. An amazing linguist was William Carey that he would translate into 24 different languages. You know, I have enough trouble with English, don't you?

And when he first went to India, some regarded him with this amazing dislike and contempt. They thought it was an inappropriate thing to go to other lands in this way.

They disliked him. He just wasn't fitting their idea, I suppose, of what a missionary should be. And there was a dinner party one day and Carey was there as one of the guests and a distinguished guest wanted to humiliate Carey.

He wanted to have a bit of a jibe, a dig at him and kind of humiliate him, humble him. And so he said in a loud voice, I suppose, Mr Carey, you once worked as a shoemaker.

And Carey responded humbly, know your lordship, not as a shoemaker, only a cobbler. I was only a mender of shoes.

[21:01] I didn't make shoes. So he didn't even claim that profession of being a shoemaker. He was just a shoemaker. He just fixed them. He didn't make the shoes. And so again, he took that place of humility, that

even that which was really a humiliating remark, he made himself even more humble than what he was made out to be.

So humility was a character trait of men and women, prophets of God and the word, and these mighty missionaries of old.

Humility. We should seek after it, shouldn't we? It's been truly said that many of the failings in church history and the provocation that caused church conflicts come because of fleshly pride and the lack of humility.

At times pastors can lose lack humility and all of us can fail in that department. It's true that contention happens often because of pride.

In Proverbs 13.10 it says, Only by pride cometh contention, but with the well-advised is wisdom. The prideful will provoke contention. Proverbs 13.10.

[22:24] If only the church of God would have more humility, we wouldn't see such things happen. So how should we respond to our great God?

Should we come under his mighty hand? Look at what the people of Nineveh did in the book of Jonah. When Jonah entered Nineveh with that message of repentance, with that message of God's coming judgment, the king of Nineveh, this sinful city, the king of that city proclaimed a fast and that all the people humble themselves under God's mighty hand.

This is Joshua chapter 3, first eight verses. The sinful city, the sinful king of Nineveh called for a humility.

He called for the people to clothe themselves with sackcloth. He called for a fast. There's a picture of humility there, isn't there? Again. The ultimate example of humility is, of course, our Lord, isn't it? Our precious saviour, our very Lord. And we're exhorted. The word tells us to follow in his steps, to walk in his steps, to adopt, to walk in his steps to adopt the mind of Christ.

[23:55] Look at Philippians 2, that familiar passage, where it tells us that Christ, the greatest example of humility, this very special quality. It's really a vital presence of our Lord, isn't it?

That he would be such a humble servant himself to model for us this special quality that was evident in full measure in his life, humility.

We see Philippians 2 from verse 3. Paul tells the Philippians, Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory. Don't work from pride, in other words, but in lowliness of mind.

Let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation. And took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man. Of course, we know it goes on further. It took him to the very cross. Humility of our Saviour.

[25:14] What can we learn from his perfect example? How can we learn of this absolute, perfect role model, our precious Lord? The life of a servant.

We see him in John 13, bathing the disciples' feet, even Judas' feet. The love of God, of our Lord. The life of a servant. Humility. It's the work of Christ. And he commends that to you, to me. That humility. It's getting a right opinion of ourselves.

And sometimes we can get prideful, and we need to get in check. And we could give worldly examples of this.

There's a couple here. For example, Winston Churchill. Of course, he's not necessarily an example, per se, of a Christian. I don't know that he was one. But Winston Churchill was once asked this.

[26:12] He says, doesn't it thrill you to know that every time you deliver a speech, the hall is packed, overflowing with people? And Winston said this, it's quite flattering.

But whenever I feel that way, I always remember that if instead of making a political speech, I was being hanged, the crowd would be twice as big.

You know? A crowd can come for all kinds of reasons, can't they? And of course, we know with politicians, they can be 75% appreciation rate, and then whatever it is, and then a couple of weeks later, they can be out of a job.

You know, it's very fickle, isn't it? And so let's not overrate ourselves, even, to keep our pride in check. Another example is a man called Ulysses Grant.

He was a great military commander in USA. He became a president of the United States. Ulysses Grant was very famous. And one day there was a reception held in his honour.

[27:18] So there's people going to this big celebration, this big event. And it was raining at the time, Grant was on his way to this reception.

He got caught in a shower. And a stranger was walking the same direction, and Grant offered to share his umbrella with this stranger, who was going in the same direction to the same event. But he didn't recognise who Grant was. And the man said he was going to Grant's reception out of curiosity. He had never seen the general, and he said this, I've always thought that Grant was a much overrated man.

And Grant replied, that's my view also. He's an overrated man. He was talking of himself. So he didn't try to defend himself or try to big note himself.

He said, yeah, I can agree with you that some people can be overrated, including myself. So may we learn humility such that we keep our pride in check and we don't think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, but to think of others instead.

[28:31] And we can really apply that in a church situation, can't we? When we get together in fellowship, to keep that spirit of humility amongst ourselves. In 1 Peter 5, verse 5, it says, Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder.

Yea, all of you be subject one to another. It's a mutual submission. There's a mutual brotherly, sisterly fellowship it's saying there.

And it says, yea, all of you be subject one to another and be clothed with humility. For God resisteth the proud, but he giveth grace to the humble.

It's another blessed example, isn't it? Be clothed with humility. And when you get dressed in the morning, put the humility on. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.

So humility is our spiritual clothing. So when we go about our day by day, to always have that sense that we're all on an even par, aren't we?

[29:39] It's like one preacher said, the foot is level. The ground is level at the foot of the cross. We've all got to come there, don't we? We're all in the same boat.

And humility, it helps us to realise that brotherly spirit, that brotherly love, that we're all got that heavenly spirit.

It's the spirit and atmosphere of heaven, is humility. And our Lord commends humility. He says in Matthew 18, 4, He's saying humble yourself.

He's talking about a little child. The Lord Jesus sees a little child there. And he says, Whoever therefore shall humble himself like a little child. The same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. If only we could adopt that child-likeness to strive after the example of Christ.

[30:44] Again, what is the opposite of humility? Pride. Pride. Guard against that. We see pride evidenced in, as someone has put it, prayerlessness.

It's been truly said, prayerlessness relies on self. And the resources self-produces and refuses to lean on the Lord Jesus alone.

Now, when we fail to pray, and look, I need to pray more. I really do. Prayerlessness is pride, really, isn't it? To think we can do of ourselves what we need to depend on him to do, what we need him to do through us.

And, of course, that scripture we know so well in 2 Chronicles 7, 14, if my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, humble themselves, humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways.

Then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land, if my people shall humble themselves and pray.

[32:03] Pride will stop you from praying, won't it? Pride will make you think you don't need to pray, but humility will drive you to prayer. It will urge you to prayer.

It will help you to hunger after him, not self-importance or self-reliance. You know, this world would big note and big rate be self, doesn't it?

Self-esteem. It's almost like, and you get preachers preaching this stuff. It's all about your self-esteem, lifting yourself up by your own bootstraps, as if you've got to have some very self-centered view of life.

But it's not about the self. Self-importance, self-reliance, it's about Christ. Christ-importance, Christ-reliance. That's what we need, not self, self, self.

And when we see problems in the church, when we see problems, even in Christ's ministry, the Lord's disciples argued, who was the greatest? Christ.

[33:11] They had this kind of, almost a, I don't know, got to fisticuffs, but there was this kind of jostling going on, wasn't there? I want to be the top dog. I want to be sat next to the Lord Jesus when he comes on his throne.

I want to have the throne next to him. They were kind of this, there's this vying for position, this pridefulness to, this self-seeking.

When really humility is what our Lord commands. And it's the key to revival. Some have said humility is the key to revival. It's having that right attitude.

It's saying, I depend on you, Lord. I depend such that I want to pray, I want to ask you to work in me, to have your way. To let go of self-conceit and position and praise of others.

And what is the obstacle? Self. And we heard some about that on Thursday night, talking about the pride of life, you know, the self, the flesh, isn't it?

[34:26] Can get in the way of God working in us. We've got to deal with the self. How? Self-denial. Taking up our cross.

Yielding to the Lord in what he would have us to do. It's our surrender to him. And we'll come to that place as in John 15, 5, where our Lord says, I am the vine, ye are the branches, he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, for without me you can do nothing.

And when we get too self-reliant, we'll do nothing. Because without Christ, we can do nothing. And our self-will must be brought under the mighty hand of God.

It means dying to self. Friends, the world would gear you in the opposite direction to assert your own rights. But it's the opposite in Christ, isn't it?

Paul let go. He denied himself. He counted it dumb. He counted it loss that he might win Christ. And in Christ, we consider others before ourselves.

[35:45] Humility is not thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less. It's becoming as a little child. Our Lord pictured it in Luke 18, as we see two men went to the temple to pray.

One a Pharisee, the other a Republican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself. He had his own little prayer meeting with his own self. God, I thank thee that I am not as other men, not as other men are extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican over here.

I fast twice in the week. I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

And of course, the one commended was the one who was humble. And friends, one preacher said, be humble or you'll stumble. When we are truly humble, all praise is to God.

Now let's be like that publican, the tax collector, the one who is kind of seen as an outcast.

[37:01] He humbled himself and he prayed. He prayed to the Lord. And true people will live by grace, the unmerited favour of God.

And we merited eternal death, God, grace gave us eternal life. We merited hell, God gave us heaven. We merited condemnation, God gives us eternal salvation.

Keep humble, keep in the word. And just to wrap up, Isaiah 66, the Lord says, to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit and trembleth at my word.

He that is poor and of a contrite spirit and trembleth at my word. Having that realisation, I'm poor, I'm needy, I need him.

I'm contrite, I reject my sin, I let it go, I yield myself. I pray for him to forgive, I tremble at his word, I take this book 100% to be what it is and says to me to be, to do.

[38:15] I tremble at the word of God, I take this book vitally to be true. and it's taking this new path, the humble walk with God.

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God that he may exalt you in due time.

Friends, just to note here tonight, are you saved?

Are you saved? It's so important that your faith is not in self but in Christ. It's in Christ. It's like Paul, he had to let go of all his credentials, all that he could brag on, all of the things he could big note about himself and he said that I may win Christ, that I may be found in him, not having my own righteousness but having his righteousness and the only way is to humble yourself, is to let go of self and to lay hold of Christ, lay hold of Christ.

Know that he saves those who will come in simple faith, trusting, receiving his grace, his forgiveness, his new life, trusting entirely in him and that's the ultimate humility isn't it?

As we let go of self-reliance and it's all about relying upon him, coming under his mighty hand. It's letting go of our own self-direction, our own self-will and knowing his direction, his will and most importantly his salvation and then as a believer without him you can do nothing.

[39:59] It's that reliance continues doesn't it? We rely on him entirely to do anything that's of spiritual value, of any of any good. It's without me he says you can do nothing.

So let's be reliant upon him, on his power. Enter in, into the school of Christ, into that school of humility. Let's pray.

Lord we thank you that you are the ultimate example of that humble servant as you step down from that throne of glory that you took upon yourself the form of a servant.

Lord that you were made in the likeness of man. Lord that you came as the perfect man as well as God of very God. Lord that we can know your saving power because at the cross you paid it all that we might put our trust in you.

And Lord help us to be a people that lives and walks humbly with our God. That we'll do justly, we'll love mercy and we'll walk humbly with our God.

[41:04] Lord help us to have that heart, that spirit, that mind that is humble to serve, to love, to live and dwell under your mighty hand Lord because we know without you we can do nothing.

To learn to pray, to learn to depend upon you, to walk in faith, help us Lord we pray. We pray you'd guide each one here present Lord that we might trust you for salvation and we might walk in your spirit in that school of humility to know you as our Lord.

In Jesus name, Amen.