

# Proverbs: Skillful Living - Humility

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] If you're a guest with us today, we are in the book of Proverbs looking at what it is to be a wise person. The book of Proverbs implores us to be people of wisdom who love the Lord with their whole hearts, soul, mind, and strength.

And someone who is wise is one who is skilled in living. And so far we've been looking at what does it look like to be a person who is skilled at life? And so far what we've found in the book of Proverbs is various virtues and aspects of a person's life that would give us an indication that individual is wise.

Because they are found to be kind. They are found to be cheerful. They're found to be a diligent person, one who is content. And then today we come to this topic of humility. Andrew Murray in his book calls references humility as the seedbed from which all other virtues are found.

That if one wants to be a virtuous person, one has to be humble to begin with. And on one hand, humility is one of those things that the minute you think you have it, you've lost it all together.

On one hand, humility is an extremely desirable trait. Most of us would say we want to be humble, or at least minimally, thought of as humble.

[ 1 : 3 6 ] And at the same time, few of us have given much attention as to what it is to be humble, and few are still what it is to grow in humility.

We find our first text that I want us to look at today, because humility is a beautiful, wonderful virtue.

And one of the things about humility that it does is that it captures the eye and the attention of God. We read in Isaiah, this is the one God is speaking. This is the one to whom I look.

He who is humble and contrite in spirit, and one who trembles at my word. What's interesting is to find this verse in its context in the book of Isaiah.

We find it in the context that the greater context is that God is addressing the people of Israel. The people who have this very unique identity of all the peoples of the face of the earth God has chosen.

[ 2 : 3 8 ] He's chosen Israel. And of all the people on the face of the earth, He's given them the gift of having the temple in Jerusalem to be a place where God dwells with His people. And even more than that, God has given them the Torah, the God's word. He's given them the very word of God.

And yet they had all of these people, all these benefits being God's chosen people, the temple in Jerusalem, having His word of all the people that should be the most humble with all of those privileges, and all those benefits would have been Israel. And yet they weren't, and they rejected it.

And they rejected the Lord, and He was sending armies, foreign nations to use as a tool of discipline to Israel. And God is lamenting here to the people of Israel, says, this is the one whom I look.

This is what I would have expected out of you, Israel. One who is humble and contrite, and one who trembles at my word. If you will, the one who is humble and contrite can be found, or the one who is humble and contrite is found as one who trembles at God's word. But Israel did not exhibit that.

But humility, the main point I want us to see is that humility, there's something about humility and that it catches the attention of the Lord.

[ 4 : 11 ] So what I want to do today is we're going to look at four aspects of how one grows in humility. Some of these principles are going to be found in the book of Proverbs as we indicated.

But the four things that you can anticipate hearing is that humility. We're going to first see that it comes from seeing God's greatness and goodness. Second, humility comes from seeing our sinfulness.

Thirdly, comes from this, a fast from self and abstaining from selfishness from self. And then fourthly, humility comes, if you're going to fast from something, let's feast on something.

So humility comes from a perpetual feast on Christ. And that's where we're headed today to give you a broad overview. But let's look at the first one.

Humility comes from seeing God's greatness and God's goodness. I've heard a definition of humility that is one who rightly responds to the Lord.

[ 5 : 17 ] And I think this is a good definition and yet it could go a little further because we first need to understand who the Lord is that we're even speaking of. I've been enjoying recently the new city catechism that is being written or has been written.

And it answers the question in this way, who is God? So if humility begins with seeing God's goodness and his greatness, well, who is he? Well, God is the creator, the sustainer of everyone and everything.

He is eternal, infinite, unchangeable in his power and perfection, goodness and glory, wisdom, justice and truth. Nothing happens except through him and by his will.

That gives us a hint at what who God is. And what is incredible is there's never been a time when God could not say, I am. For example, I am...

There's never been a time when God could have said, if anything of his attributes, I am goodness. There's never been a time when he could not have said that. I am just, I am loving.

[ 6 : 28 ] There's never been a time when God could not have said anything of his attributes. He is the great I am. David's blessing, he is blessing the Lord.

And in Chronicles, this is the way he blesses the Lord. But look at who God is and his greatness that how David sees the Lord. He says, blessed are you, O Lord, the God of Israel, our Father, forever and ever.

Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty for all that is in heaven and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head above all.

Both riches and honor come from you and you rule over all. In your hand are the power and might. And in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all.

And now we thank you, our God, and our praise and praise your glorious name. This is how David esteems the goodness and the greatness of our Lord, of who he is.

[ 7 : 41 ] God is, in his attributes, is superlative. That is, he is the highest degree or standard of each virtue. So God is superlative in power.

He is the highest degree of strength and power. He is superlative in his goodness. You could not get any more good than God. He is superlative in his greatness.

He is superlative of glory. He is superlatively just. He is the superlative of truth. In him there is no shadow of turning.

He is the superlative of mercy and kindness and grace and we could go on and on. He is the highest degree or the standard of all of these things.

God is so good. He is so great. And humility begins with seeing the greatness and the goodness of who he is. He is altogether different than his creation.

[ 8 : 46 ] He is altogether different than you and me. He is God and we are not. He is the Creator and we are the creature. I am grateful for Dottie's reading of Philippians chapter two.

Speaking of the greatness and the goodness of who he is, that one day every knee will bow and tongue confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of the Father.

In part it explains why we do what we do here at fourth. And any church that maybe you had belonged to previously, that we proclaim the goodness and the greatness of God when we preach.

Why do we sing songs that we do that proclaim the goodness and the greatness of God? Because it is a fuel for our humility. It is one of the fuels for our humility among other reasons.

It is why we encourage everyone to come at nine o'clock. Would you come and study God's word with us as we learn what it is to see the goodness and the greatness of God? It is why we encourage men and women to be in women's groups and men's huddles that we are doing.

[ 9 : 59 ] Why would we ask people to live in community to study God's word to, because we want to remind ourselves again and again the goodness and the greatness of God?

Because this is where humility begins. Secondly, humility comes from seeing our sinfulness and our depravity.

While mankind was created with dignity and was upright in humanity, we fell. Rebellion against God, Adam and Eve's sinned.

And as a result, we were deserving of God's wrath and separation from God had us incurred and everything fell into ruin.

After the fall, the distinction between God and humanity increased all the more. And Proverbs contrasts humility with pride.

[ 10 : 59 ] The one Hebrew word that we have for pride is, it means to rise up and to be exalted.

The term often is associated with arrogance and insensitivity that goes beyond the reality as a result of the fall. Pride overstates one's self-worth and underestimates the worth of others.

It's just the nature of pride. And so we read in Proverbs this rising up and this exalting, it says this, the fear of the Lord is the hatred of evil.

Pride and arrogance and the way of evil, the preferred speech. God says, I hate it. I hate. Notice what the fear of the Lord hates and it hates evil.

And we looked at the beginning of this sermon series as to what the fear of the Lord is, this reverential awe for the Lord. What is one who has a reverence and a reverential awe for the Lord do?

[ 12 : 03 ] They hate evil. That's what the fear of the Lord does. And then pride and arrogance, this rising up and to be exalted, this pride.

And he mentions four things that he hates, pride, arrogance, the evil way and perverted speech. The Lord says, I hate it. I hate. Adam and Eve in their pride, they thought they shall be like God.

They thought perhaps God did not have their best interest in mind. They thought God command not to eat the fruit of that tree was withholding something good. They thought God cannot be trusted.

They thought think of all the things that Adam and Eve had to convince themselves of doing before they ate of the fruit. They thought God didn't mean what he said and so doing you shall surely die.

God didn't mean that. And on and on we could go, but Adam and Eve's heart rose up and was exalted in taking the fruit and eating. They exhibited pride and sinning against the Lord and upon eating they immediately regretted it.

[ 13 : 11 ] They hid from God. They covered themselves. They lied to God. And they were blamed God and others for their action. Humility comes from recognizing our sinfulness and our depravity.

In Romans that we read that how sin and human depravity and death spread to all of Adam's descendants.

It says, therefore, just as sin came into the world from one man, that is Adam, and death is sin, so death spread to all men because all have sinned.

So we all have this sin nature now. Those apart from Christ that spread to all of humanity. So then we read in Isaiah this, even sin tainted the heavenly realm because we read about Satan that says this, God speaking to Satan, he says, and you said in your heart, what is Satan?

Now look at how pride wants to be exalted and wants to rise up. Listen to what God is saying to Satan. And you said in your heart, I will ascend to the heavens above the stars.

[ 14 : 27 ] I will set my throne on high. I will sit on the mountain of the assembly in the far reaches of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds. I will make myself like most high pride.

It affected Adam and Eve, affected the heavenly realm. Notice the God defying arrogance in Satan's heart. The most honored above angels possessing beauty and glory far beyond comprehension, yet arrogantly desires recognition and status equal to himself with God.

And Adam and Eve were puffed up and they rose up and they wanted to be exalted. So too did Satan. And the result was a swift judgment in both cases.

Pride not only appears to be the earliest of sin, but I also say it's the core of all sin or the essence of all sin. This helps us appreciate the clarity and the hatred that God has toward pride.

Everyone who is arrogant in heart is an abomination to the Lord. Be assured he will not go unpunished, says the book of Proverbs. So says Solomon in this wisdom literature.

[ 15 : 48 ] Everyone who is arrogant in heart is an abomination to the Lord. Abomination. It's an atrocity. It's an anathema. It's an obscenity to the Lord.

One who is arrogant in heart. Let's think it for a moment what it would take for someone to lie.

I assume all of us in here have lied at some point in time in our life and think of all the things we have to convince ourselves to tell just a lie. And this, I thought of six things.

I'm sure you could go home today and say, oh, Scott, I think you forgot at least five more. And that may be true. But listen to how I would say it this way.

I learned of a phrase that I thought this is good because I think of pride and all the baggage that that comes with.

[ 16 : 51 ] And I think sometimes I did not feel the conviction I ought to of my own pride. And then I was reading a book on pride and humility and it defined pride as one who contends for supremacy.

So think about the ways in which Adam contended for supremacy, the way we see in Satan that he contended for the supremacy. And God is saying, listen to one who is arrogant in heart.

The one who contends for supremacy is an abomination to the Lord. So going back to the lying, think about all the things that we have to convince ourselves and how we contend for supremacy just to excuse ourselves in a lie.

What do we communicate when we lie? That I can freely operate independent of God in his ways. Think about how we contend for supremacy.

I can retell the truth of what happened regardless of what reality is. I get to determine what truth is.

[ 18 : 04 ] I think I'm superior to another because I have the right to deceive them. I can determine what right and wrong is for myself.

And sixthly, I have the right to revise history, what really happened. And I get to choose regardless of whom it may harm.

And that's just one sin of lying. But do you see how even in lying how we contend for supremacy, our heart wants to contend for supremacy?

Because I was not sufficiently convicted of my pride in a season of life and when I was reading some of these things and I found that phrase, one who contends was supremacy.

It changed the way I began to confess the sin of pride in my life to the Lord. And whereas before I would say, Lord forgive me of the pride that I have in my life.

[ 19 : 11 ] And again, it lost some of the conviction weight in my life just to that confession. Although that should have been more than enough, my heart did not feel that sufficiently.

And so I began to then pray, Lord forgive me for the way in doing that deed, it demonstrated in my life the ways in which I contend for supremacy with you.

Forgive me. And if that can be something that you tool you utilize for a season to say, Lord, replacing the word pride while that's a beautiful word to describe something very ugly.

If the tool of saying, Lord forgive me for contending for supremacy. And even when you sin against another, you could also say that forgive me for I contended with God and supremacy and when I did this with you and I hurt you.

If that can be a helpful tool, you're welcome to utilize that. But the Lord hating this thing of pride, I don't think I like to hate many things.

[ 20 : 18 ] I don't like cottage cheese that I don't like. But I hate also more serious things like child abuse and racism, murder, the effects of drugs that have on people's lives.

And I hate it when people take advantage of others. But my hatred of anything pales in comparison of God's hatred toward pride. Anytime one contends for supremacy, God hates that.

And it makes pride loads them, the sheer arrogance of it and how the Lord feels about it. And we read in 1 Peter that God opposes the proud.

Both in James and in 1 Peter, we read this phrase, God opposes the proud. And he gives grace to the humble. God opposes the proud and he gives grace to the humble. I did a little work on that this week and I found that the word oppose is a verb that's in the present tense.

It's an active present tense verb. So it's as if God, when someone who is prideful, God is always actively working to be in opposition with that person.

[ 21 : 29 ] That's prideful. And I stand against you. And now I, if there was one enemy that I would not want to have in opposition to me, it would be the Lord.

There's no way on earth I could win that battle every time. But I'm grateful the Lord is a friend and he stands opposed to me when I am prideful.

But what's amazing is that same tense of the verb, present tense, active. What is he actively doing for the, for the humble?

I give grace to the humble. I oppose the proud actively, constantly, continually. I'm always doing that to the proud. But what is he also always doing to the humble?

I'm giving grace to the humble. You'll find favor to the humble always, actively doing this. This is the Lord. This is his heart.

[ 22 : 33 ] And we come to Proverbs 16, 8. Part of what pride makes pride so devilish is its potency.

Pride goes before the destruction and the haughty spirit before the fall. This is, this is what is so horrific about pride is its potency.

It always leads to destruction and always will lead to someone falling. That brings us to our third point. So we, we see that God, humility comes from seeing God's greatness and his goodness.

We see that humility comes by seeing our sinfulness and depravity. Thirdly, humility comes from a fast from self. And this is my wife who edits my slides to make sure they're readable.

And I don't look terrible every Sunday. We wrestled with this phrase fast from self. And I'm grateful for my wife for doing that.

[ 23 : 39 ] But this, this fasting from self, this, this desire to be recognized, this desire in us to be someone and something, this, this, this thing that can rise up and cause us to sin, humility comes from a fast from that, a fast from that, just abstaining from selfish driven life is kind of what I'm implying here.

We read in Proverbs this, this scenario. And this is kind of a longer section that's found in Proverbs on this topic. It's a little bit of a story says, my son, if you have put up security for your neighbor and have come to pledge your pledge for a neighbor, and if you've been snared in the words of your own mouth, caught in the words of your own mouth, then do this, my son, and save yourself for you have come into the hand of your neighbor.

Go hasten and plead urgently with your neighbor. Give your eyes no sleep and your eyelids no slumber. Save yourself like a gazelle at the hands of a hunter, like a bird in the hands of a fowler.

The scenario is painted in verses one. This person finds himself having pledged security, it says. So has in our English vernacular, this would be akin to someone maybe who has co-signed for a loan.

And this person who has done this deed, we are told that this pledge was given, whether it was written, or in he says, but also you could have done this by the words of your mouth, like I will put up security, I promise to do this.

[ 25 : 20 ] And so my mouth has obligated me to an oath. And so this is the problem verses one and two, give you the picture of the problem. And then he says, then do this, my son, save yourself for you have come into the hand of your neighbor.

And then I'm going to leave the rest of that verse for now. But when he says go hasten, that word hasten is one of the English, you could be translating that word humble, humble yourself and plead with your neighbor.

That's why hasten is in blue. That word for it's coming from a word to mean to trample or to prostrate yourself is to humble yourself.

And then notice the expediency. This person is supposed to do this. Give your eyes no sleep and your eyelids no slumber. Don't don't fall asleep tonight. You need to go rectify this.

You need to get out of this pledge that you've you've you've obligated yourself to and and even to emphasize it any further. He says like a gazelle in the hand of a hunter and a bird in the hand of a fowler.

[ 26 : 23 ] Have you ever seen the Discovery Channel and like a gazelle and a cheetah? I mean, I don't know about you, but that little gazelle is running for its very life and it is darting to and fro.

It is it is like that. And then a fowler, a bird that's just about to be trapped live in a trap. That bird is flapping its wings for its very life.

And he says it's with that expediency, you need to get out of this obligation with your neighbor. That's the that's the picture you have. So then in verse three, he says, go.

Humble yourself and plead with your neighbor to to prostrate yourself. Think about how humiliating this would be to admit you look at all the things this person has to do with this.

This person has to do with this neighbor in order to get out of this obligation. First, you have to admit wrong. I was wrong to put myself up for security for that possession that you have.

[ 27 : 29 ] I was wrong. I have to admit that I never should have been in this agreement. Thirdly, he admits that no longer he wants to continue in that financial and legally binding relationship and think about how eager this neighbor is.

He never needed your security for that possession of mine. And so if you get out of this obligation, either I'm going to have to find another person who will obligate themselves that way, or I have to give up this possession.

I have to give up my house. I have to give up my car. I have to give up that property. I have to give up my donkey, whatever it was in that day. I don't know. But this person is not very eager to let you out of that agreement.

And so he says, humble yourself, hasten, go. So humility, if you will, is the courage to sacrifice personal dignity.

Think about the amount of personal dignity that this person is having to display to get out of this arrangement.

[ 28 : 38 ] I remember hearing an account of a woman who was at an airport who saw a man in a wheelchair, obviously older in years.

And his hair was kind of greasy and not well kept. He himself was not well kept. And he was just kind of slouched over and his face was downcast.

And this woman, the account of this woman was that she noticed him and felt like the Lord was saying, go brush his hair.

So she went over to the man and said, go brush his hair. So he went over to the man and said, sir, I know you may find this highly whatever, but I feel like the Lord is wanting me to brush your hair.

Would you mind if I brush your hair? And he broke into tears and he was on his way to see loved ones and he for whatever reason got separated.

[ 29 : 41 ] I think he was like on a vacation and his health failed and so he had to stay back, but his family had to go. And he was about to see his family that he had not seen for some time and it had been a while and he wanted to look his best.

And this woman moved of the Lord. Imagine the amount of personal dignity she had to lose.

She said, I felt the eyes of everyone sitting around that boarding area of that flight looking at me, looking at this woman combing this man's hair.

But that's what humble people do. That's what humility does. It's courageous to sacrifice personal dignity. And that's what this man has to do to get out of this loan he should have never been in.

There's a security, this form of security that he never should have been in. There's another word in the Hebrew language that we find in the book of Hebrews that means to push down or to bring low.

[ 30 : 43 ] It says pride. One's pride will bring him low, but he who is lowly in spirit will obtain honor. And then we find in Psalm 138 we read that though the Lord is high, he regards the lowly.

Those who are pushed down are brought down low. But the haughty he knows from afar. So what do we see?

I think about one who brought himself low, those who bring themselves low, that take a fast from themselves, if you will, from self.

When I first came to Fourth Memorial Church four, nine years ago, I originally was doing some work with the young adult ministry, college young adult ministry. And I asked Gail Ecker and team to help me put together a dinner so that the college students would have something to eat as we studied after the meal to do things, to study God's word and have an evening together.

And there was a man who was 80 years old at the time. His name is Wayne Lucas, and I didn't ask him permission otherwise he wouldn't give it to me, so you don't ask. But Wayne was 80 years old at the time, and he came to me and he said, and keep in mind, 80 years old and the evening was seven to nine o'clock at night, college ministry.

[ 32 : 25 ] And he asked me, hey, do you think I could come and wash dishes? And if you know anything about Wayne Lucas, his reputation precedes him. Wayne Lucas at any church event for years can be found doing dishes for the young at heart ministry.

And he's still to this day, and now he is, sorry Wayne, 89 years old. 89 years old. I pray when I'm 89 years old, should I live that long, the Lord would allow me to do dishes.

But this is Wayne, someone who brings himself low to serve others. Humility is often the overlooked path to honor. Look at this verse.

But he who is lowly in spirit will obtain honor. Think about all the ways that we think, oh, I want to obtain honor. And so it's often about self promotion. I need to make sure they know who I am. They need to know what my experience has been.

They need to know, and I'm going to self promote so that everyone knows so I can get that position of honor. And lo holiness, humility is this overlooked path to honor.

[ 33 : 44 ] Oh, I pray, humility would define us as a people of God. Fourthly, I want to conclude with this, humility comes from seeing God's greatness and goodness.

Humility comes from seeing our sinfulness and depravity. Humility comes from affasting for himself. And so then if we're going to fast for himself, let's feast on Christ. That's our last point.

And if you will, I want to move quickly through this point. But if you have your Bible, could you please turn to Mark chapter nine? We're going to conclude in Mark chapter nine, verse 33, we're going to begin with.



And this is a talk about this humility being this pathway to honor. I want to conclude this way. In Mark nine, we find an unfortunate dialogue going between the disciples, and the story is going to go from bad to worse.

From Mark nine, verse 33, we read this, and they came to Capernaum and he was in the house and he asked them, what were you guys discussing along the way? Now, verse 34 reads, but they kept silent.

[ 35 : 02 ] They kept silent for on the way they were argued with one another as to who was the greatest. Can you hear the dialogue? And so notice they didn't answer the question. They kept silent.

Hey, Jesus asked the disciples, hey, I heard you guys chatting on the way to Capernaum here. What were you guys talking about? Crickets. Silent.

Because they knew the discussion was about who is the greatest. Can you imagine John and Andrew, hey, the discussion. I'm presupposing some things. So this is not in scripture. This is just Scott's imagination.

So this is not an errant. Okay. John and Andrew, hey, we were the first disciples chosen by Jesus.

I mean, we must be something because we were the first Judas. Well, I'm the one trusted with the treasury. I've got the purse. James and John, have you ever noticed that when Jesus goes aside, he often takes us and Peter and Peter, then he pipes up because now he was included. He says, well, at least I walked on water for a while.

[ 36 : 11 ] And they're vying for who was the greatest. And they didn't answer. No doubt they were likely embarrassed, even now perhaps ashamed.

These men who received intense training from the Lord Jesus, the ultimate example of humility and servanthood, they were embroiled in a full scale dispute about their relative superiority to one another.

It's hard to see the disciples like this, but I'm grateful this is recorded. Verse 35. And he sat down and he called the twelve and he said to them, if anyone would be first, he must be last of all and a servant of all.

He radically redefines greatness. So if anyone wants to be first, there's that greatness. He must be last of all and a servant of all.

And the situation gets worse. And in apparent agreement with one another, James and John about their own greatness, they approach Jesus, apart from the other ten disciples, and they think that Jesus must share their own lofty assessment of themselves.

[ 37 : 26 ] And so we pick up the story and mark chapter 10. Turn the chapter, mark 10, 35 through 37. The text reads this. And James and John, the sons of David, came up to him and said, teacher, we want you to do whatever we ask of you.

And he said to them, what do you want me to do for you? And they said to him, grant us one at your right and one to sit on your left when you enter into glory.

Mark earlier told us that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem, so James and John understood that when Jesus establishes his kingdom, they would want to be in the most prominent positions with Jesus when he reigns.

They undoubtedly assumed such prominent place for them is the appropriate in light of their obvious superiority to the other ten.

They must be thinking to themselves, let's settle this issue of greatness right now. Hey, Jesus, right and left, what do you think? Let's do this right now. We could get into an agreement. Let's do this, because obviously we're pretty good.

[ 38 : 34 ] They were not asking for the privilege of supporting Jesus when he would suffer. They were not asking for the faith to endure to the end.

They wanted to be famous. They wanted others to recognize their own greatness, their positions of power, and the titles that go with it. Oh, yes, please and thank you. They want respect. They want acclaim. They want importance.

And Jesus is the means to their end for them to achieving their greatness. In Jesus's response in chapter 10 verse 41, again, it goes from bad to worse.

And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John. What a train wreck of a story. It gets worse.

Sadly, the other ten were no different. Somehow they learned James and John's request and they became indignant toward them, revealing their own presence of their own hearts, not only of selfish ambition, but self-righteousness.

[ 39 : 39 ] I should be the one to be there. They feel qualified to sit in the seat and to judge James and John. Can you see yourself in this story?

We may not argue about who is the greatest, but don't we engage in the same debate every day in our private thoughts. We sinfully compare ourselves to others and we look for opportunities to claim greater importance.

We may do this on social media. We may do this in a boardroom. We may do this in the office or at school. We do this amongst ourselves, perhaps even when we gather here on Sunday.

How does Jesus continue to redefine greatness? And we read in verse 42, Mark 10 verse 42.

And can you capture the Lord's patience with me, with His disciples? And Jesus called them to Him and said to them, You know that those who are considered great rulers of the Gentiles, I'm sorry, great rulers of Gentiles, lorded over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them.

[ 41 : 00 ] For the disciples, it would not have been hard to understand what Roman occupation of Israel was like. They were very familiar how the rulers of this world, the Gentiles, lorded it over, lorded authority over them.

And misused. And the animosity between the Jews and Rome was palpable. How they exploited the Jews through taxation and subjugated in Israel.

They conscripted their youth for military and financial gain, all for self-serving purposes. And so then Jesus says in 34A, But it shall not be among you. It shall not be so among you.

What I find especially fascinating and instructive about this, Jesus' words, is Jesus is not categorically criticizing or forbidding the desire for the ambition to be great, but instead is he is redirecting it, he is redefining it, and he is purifying it, for then he says, and for 35, 30, I'm sorry, 43B, 44, But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all.

We want to pay special attention whenever the word must appear. It points to something that is required, it points to something that is indispensable. So you want to be great, what is required? You must be a servant of others and a slave to everybody.

[ 42 : 32 ] This is that upside-down kingdom principle that the Lord uses often. It's the reversal of human thinking, it's the reversal of human experience, yet this is what happens.

This is what must occur. This must be true of anyone who wants to truly be great in the Lord's eyes. And this is what the book of Proverbs is communicating.

For we read in, let me go back to 29, 3rd, 23, One's pride will bring him low, but one who is lowly in spirit will obtain honor.

Sinfully and culturally, we are pursuing greatness, this is what it looks like. One who by self-interest and by self-indulgence, and with a false sense of self-sufficiency, and with the pursuit of selfish ambition for the purpose of self-clarification, that's how you get ahead in life, in our culture.

But the pursuit of biblical greatness requires humility, one who is low in spirit, that frees himself or herself up to serve others for the glory of God.

[ 43 : 47 ] What does humility look like? And then we will close. I'm grateful for the many examples in the church, and I desire for all of us to grow in our humility, and grow in humility. It could be the godly son who honors his parents and cares for his younger siblings.

It's the godly single woman who after working a full day and selflessly serves her children, thinks of others who she may bless.

It's a godly man who has a successful in business, who is successful in business, who prepares a lesson to teach third graders on Sunday morning to share the beauty of who the Lord Jesus is.

It could be a young mom who in her home tirelessly serves her husband and her children. It could be a man who works hard and lives simply to ensure that he can financially support the Lord's work among the most unreached.

It is a man or a woman who leads a men's group or a small group, in addition to selflessly serving their spouse and their children in their church.

[ 45 : 03 ] It could be a colleague who selflessly serves their coworkers and desires their best and their promotion and rejoices when others succeed and have success.

It could be a single college student who works and maintains friendship, yet finds time to also teach others.

And to serve others through the act of teaching like of children Sunday school or something like this. It could be two working parents who love their neighbors and host community neighborhood gatherings for the purpose of sharing the gospel.

Greatness begins with one who is lowly in heart, one who is humble, who envisions themselves as a slave to all, serves others that others might benefit from their life.

And in so doing God may receive glory, and these are the truly great ones. Would you pray with me? Father, we thank you for this day and this opportunity to read your word.

[ 46 : 14 ] Lord, I thank you that we are not altogether different from those disciples who argue, we're arguing amongst themselves, comparing themselves to one another.

Lord, free us from that sin of comparison and may we discipline our mind to honor you with every thought that we have.

May we be low in spirit and excited to serve you and ensure that others benefit with our life.

Lord, may we be a servant of all, a slave to all. We love you Lord and it's in your name Jesus we pray.