



## WEEK 2 - Humility

*We seek You for whatever glimpse of Yourself You will give us. We don't seek you for power. We don't seek you for happiness. We don't seek you for successful evangelism. We seek You for Yourself. "Show us Thy Glory, O Lord."*

**"It is the manner of God before he bestows any signal mercy on the people, first to prepare them for it." (Jonathan Edwards)**

**In other words, before God sends His people a blessing, He's going to prepare them for the blessing. We have to be ready to receive what God wants to send. As I mentioned last week, preparation for revival (if God so**

chooses to send it) is the removal of obstacles.

And today we're going to look at the antithesis of one of our greatest obstacles — pride. For just as pride is the root of all manner of sin, so “humility is the root, mother, nurse, foundation, and bond of all virtue,” as John Chrysostom once remarked.

## TWO VIEWS (MINDSETS) NEEDED FOR HUMILITY

### I. AN ACCURATE VIEW OF GOD

What brings a proper view of humility is our view of God. As it has been rightly said, “Humility is understanding who we are in light of who God is.” But that's only half the equation, as we'll see.

## Isaiah 57:15

15 For thus says the One who is high and lifted up,  
who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy:

From this single verse we learn four things about God.

1. First, He is high and lifted up. High is not referring to location, but to God being

above all or what we refer to as transcendent, which simply means He surpasses everything. He is above and beyond all things, because all things originated with Him. And He is lifted up in relation to everything He created. He is the great I am who can do as He pleases in the heavens and the earth. God says, “I am,” and, “I can.” Because He is the Great I Am, He is the Great I Can.

2. Second, He “inhabits eternity.” To inhabit something that is unending says a lot about who God is — the One who created an eternal place for angels and redeemed humanity called heaven. But He is beyond eternity. Eternity is unending, but God is infinite — no beginning and no end. That's why He can create an eternal heaven. Of course, heaven, God's chosen dwelling, has the same characteristic He does — it is holy.
3. God is morally perfect, completely holy, never erring in His judgment, His evaluation or His will.

This is where God dwells, in a high and holy place. But then it says something astounding.

“I dwell in the high and holy place,  
and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit,  
to revive the spirit of the lowly,  
and to revive the heart of the contrite.

#### 4. **God is near the humble. He is near the brokenhearted.**

You will find that when you are utterly broken, that's when you will find God the nearest. Maybe you've experienced this personally. When you look back on one of the worst times of your life, you remember it as one of your best times spiritually.

“Revival doesn't come to respectable Christians... The basis of revival is men and women shattered by their failures — aware that all is not well, helpless to do anything about it.” (*A God-sized Vision*, p. 133)

When you find yourself utterly broken, that's when you will find God nearest. He dwells with the person who has a humble and broken spirit. He dwells — this means He occupies the same space you're in. We're talking again about the manifest presence of God in our lives and that only comes to us in our brokenness.

So, we must know God accurately, but the only way to be contrite of heart is to know yourself. The second thing that's needed for humility is an accurate view of self.

## II. **AN ACCURATE VIEW OF SELF**

Your view of yourself is continually corrected by the word of God.

And often more painfully, others applying the word to what they see in you. It's very hard on our pride when someone else says there is something wrong us, something we are doing or something we think, or something about our point of view on a matter. But we should always take a step back and reexamine any criticism, even if we think it unjust. There is generally a gain of truth in even the most unjust criticism.

Because we have two types of sin in our lives — sins we are ignorant of and sins we are aware of.

## **Psalm 19:12-13**

12 But who can discern their own errors?

Forgive my hidden faults.

13 Keep your servant also from willful sins;

may they not rule over me.  
Then I will be blameless,  
innocent of great transgression.

There comes a point when you're desperate to be other than you are — that's when God can revive you. God lifts us up after we are broken.

## 1 Peter 5:6

6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you,

He doesn't lift up people who are already lifted up in their own minds.

A proud church or a proud people will not experience a revival of God's felt presence. As a matter of fact, God won't just withdraw from the proud, but He will actively work against the proud. It's a frightening thought. This is why the Apostle Peter writes:

## 1 Peter 5:5

5 Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

James, the half-brother of Jesus, says exactly the same thing that Peter does — that God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.

## James 4:6-7

6 But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

Peter also emphasizes that humility has to do with how we see ourselves.

## 1 Peter 3:8

8 Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind.

Humility has to do with how you think of yourself. Humility is not thinking less of yourself. It's thinking about others more than yourself.

## Philippians 2:4

4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

The Apostle Paul reminded the church in Ephesus to:

## Ephesians 4:2

2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

He probably reminded them of this, because it was one of their recurring faults. This has been my life verse for the last two years, because I'm exactly like the church in Ephesus. I need a daily reminder because it's not my natural state of mind.

What does Jesus say to this same church later?

## Revelation 2:4-5

4 But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first.

They thought less of Christ and more about themselves. That's why worry is often a sin of pride. It's all about you and your problems and the issues in your family. That's what your mind's on. It's not meditating on the Great God who Can.

5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.

Removing the lampstand. That's a church that needs revival.

They had become self-reliant. They depended upon themselves. They looked to themselves.

"Man is naturally exceeding prone to exalt himself and depend on his own power or goodness, as though from himself he must expect happiness." (Jonathan Edwards)

### III. CONTRASTS BETWEEN HUMILITY & PRIDE

Let's turn to Luke now and see how self-reliance or trusting in the goodness of self is the opposite of humility.

## Luke 18:9-14

The Pharisee and the Tax Collector

9 He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt:

to some who trusted in themselves

Let's begin there. Here's what pride sounds like in present day culture: "Feeling good' is your way of telling yourself that your last thought was truth." (*Conversations with God, Book 2, Neale Donald Walsch*) Feeling good

is how you determine truth. I'm shocked that it's so cliché. He is basically saying, "If it feels good, do it." He's just modified it to say, "If it feels good, it's true."

In cultural spirituality, if you feel a certain way about something, that means it's true. In short, this makes your feelings the measure of truth. "Some people trusted in themselves." This is the basic cultural motto of "follow your heart." God is unnecessary. You have your heart. Don't listen to anyone else.

If you follow your heart, which is basically following your feelings, you have succumbed to the cultural standard of the day. And you will not like people who tell you the truth about yourself. And again, until you gain a more accurate view of yourself, you will not actually be humble.

who trusted in themselves that they were righteous

When you believe yourself to be righteous you simply lack a biblical view of self.

Jonathan Edwards said of himself, "And it is affecting to think, how ignorant I was, when a young Christian, of the bottomless, infinite

depths of wickedness, pride, hypocrisy and deceit left in my heart."

If you can't look back upon last year and say, "Ah, I see things differently now..." If you can't say that about some attitude or situation or response you had, then pride may be blocking your perspective.

Pride blocks the blessing of God in your life. Pride says, "*You're wonderful. Why do you even need God's blessing?*" That is the nature of pride.

So, if you're proud — you trust in yourself as the final authority.

If you're proud — you believe you're a good person that God would never judge.

And if you're proud —

treated others with contempt:

Pride looks down on others. Pride looks at others with a critical eye. That's what contempt is — "you are below me. This is beneath me. I'm too good for this."

But what else does pride do? It compares yourself to others and then feels bad about yourself because you're not as good as so-and-so. But that too is pride... masked as low self-esteem. So much of the low self-esteem talk is simply pride.

10 "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.

They both went to worship. They both went to pray. Proud people can be very religious. They secretly think, "This church is so blessed to have my gifts. The things I can do for God. Boy, you just wait."

The proud person can also consider themselves very spiritual. This is the nonreligious spiritual person of our day. They consider their personal brand of spirituality, which is based upon following one's heart, to be superior to religion.

I would say — if your heart is so trustworthy, you should really start a religion. Seriously. If following your heart is a reliable standard, then why shouldn't others follow your heart?

The problem is — no one can tell you the truth about yourself, because when you

adopt that point of view you insulate yourself from truth.

- The final verdict is not left with the hearer, etc.

11 The Pharisee, standing by himself,

Proud people are often aloof. They stand alone, because no one is good enough to stand with them. This again is a sign of that independent, self-sufficient spirit.

prayed thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.

Proud people tend to trust in their morality. And they are proud because they are moral. In a recent survey by the Pew Research Center only 67 percent of Protestants say that faith in God alone is needed to get into heaven. And when all evangelicals are included the number drops to 57 percent, while 43 percent say that both faith and good deeds are necessary to get into heaven.

This is nothing less than salvation by self-righteousness. This is why they look down on others. They are often morally superior. "I'm as good as any Christian." I'm sure you are.

## **Galatians 2:15-16**

**15** We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; **16** yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.

**Proud people do things. They get things accomplished, but they're proud of the things they do. This is the positive proud person.**

**12** I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.'

**Pride often has to do with our demeanor.**

**Snooty, short, rigid, know-it-all. You ever been accused of any of those things? When someone calls you rigid, it probably has more to do with your demeanor than with your convictions. It is a sign that you have some layers of pride that need to be peeled back and discarded.**

**The negative proud person reacts against the positive proud person by saying, "I don't fast and I don't tithe because I don't trust in my morality."**

**But this is only the opposite of the positive pride. It is simply negative pride. It is the person who misapplies grace. Grace in this person's life is not the freedom to pursue obedience to Christ. It is freedom from obedience to Christ.**

**So, both the positively proud person and the negatively proud person are both opposed by God. Don't be fooled because you don't make a show of your religion.**

**13** But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!'

**Now, let's be clear about something. We often assume quite a lot when we read this. So, let's make a note of this — the only thing the text makes central is that this man, this tax collector, was acutely aware of his own sinfulness.**

**The text doesn't say this tax collector didn't do any of the things the proud man did. After all, he was at a worship service. He was praying. He was doing the same things as the proud person. We're not told he doesn't fast**

or tithe. This is where we tend to imply more than the text tells us.

The difference between these two worshippers is not what they did or didn't do, but how they thought about themselves. One was aware of how sinful he was. And he wasn't just aware of it, but he was troubled by it. He beat his breast.

14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”

That is the exact opposite of the culture we live in today.

- End with a list of contrasts between pride and humility or with the story of Norman Maclean.

The exaltation we are looking for in revival is the outpouring of God's Spirit.

The only thing that could bring these two people together, people who are worshipping under the same roof, the only thing that can bring them together is humility. Humility is the basis of unity.