



Humility: Thinking of Yourself Less

Small Group Guide

Teaching by Rev. Billy Cervený

How to use this guide. It is here to help your group move from hearing the sermon to living it out together. Work through the sections at whatever pace fits your group. You don't need to answer every question, so choose the ones that spark the best conversation.

Key takeaways

The big ideas from the sermon, to keep in view as you talk.

1

Pride is an operating system, not just a bad habit.

Pride is not something we occasionally pick up. It is a foundational self-orientation woven into who we are. Like a car with a bad alignment, our eyes drift back to ourselves unless something intervenes.

2

Humility is not thinking less of yourself. It is thinking of yourself less.

Humility is not self-hatred, lowered self-esteem, or behavior modification. It is the removal of self from the center of your focus. True humility is not a performance. It is a reorientation.

3

Jesus is the engine of our transformation, not merely the object of our imitation.

We cannot manufacture humility through self-effort. Philippians 2 calls us to work out what God has already worked in. The humility of Christ is something He pours into us, not something we produce for Him.

4

Dependency on God is not a defect. It is by design.

Our desire to go it alone is the defect. We were created to be in continual relationship with God, filled by Him, not wound up and sent off on our own.

5

The path to humility is becoming enamored with Jesus.

As 2 Corinthians 3:18 teaches, beholding the glory of the Lord is what transforms us into His image. The more we fix our eyes on Jesus, the less we find ourselves staring in the mirror.

Warm-up question

Use this to get the group comfortable and talking before going deeper.

Rev. Billy opened with a memory of bodybuilders spending as much time in front of the mirror as they did lifting weights. Can you think of a moment, funny or honest, when you caught yourself more focused on how you appeared to others than you expected to be?

Discussion questions

On pride

1. Pride was described as an operating system that works behind the curtain, something we are often unaware of in our own lives. Where do you find it hardest to spot pride in yourself? What makes it so difficult to see?
2. Religious pride can be especially dangerous because it hides behind the mask of devotion or commitment. What does religious pride look like in everyday life? Have you ever caught yourself there?
3. The pastor said, "If you don't know how you contend with pride, that should scare you a little bit." Why might a lack of awareness about our own pride be more concerning than openly struggling with it?

On humility

4. The sermon distinguished between thinking less of yourself and thinking of yourself less. What is the difference in practice? Why does it matter?
5. Self-hatred and insecurity were described as forms of pride, because they reveal how much we love ourselves and how high our expectations for ourselves are. How does reframing insecurity as a form of pride change the way you think about it?
6. Philippians 2:6 describes Jesus as secure in who He was before the Father, and that security freed Him to live humbly. How does a proper understanding of who you are before God free you to stop defending or promoting yourself?

On transformation

7. Recall the story of the millipede who, once he started analyzing how he walked, fell over, and was set free again when he became captivated by the sunrise. What does that story reveal about how humility actually works in a person's life?
8. "Jesus is not merely supposed to be the object of our imitation. He is the engine of our transformation." What is the difference between trying to imitate Jesus and being transformed by Him? What does that look like in daily life?
9. 2 Corinthians 3:18 teaches that beholding the glory of the Lord is what transforms us into His image. What practices in your life right now are helping you behold Jesus? What is getting in the way?

On community

10. Near the end of the sermon, the pastor talked about whispering the truths of the gospel into each other's ears, in small groups, at lunch, on the water together. Why is community essential to the work of humility? What does it look like for your group to do that for one another?

Reflection moment

Invite group members to sit quietly for one to two minutes and consider this question before sharing.

What is one area of your life where pride has been quietly running in the background? What would it look like to surrender that specific area to God this week?

Practical applications

Choose one or more to put into practice before your group meets again.

Name it

Spend five to ten minutes in private prayer asking God to show you one specific way pride is operating in your life right now. Write it down. Don't try to fix it yet. Just name it honestly before the Lord.

Ask someone who knows you

If you are unsure how pride shows up in your life, your spouse or a close friend probably knows. With humility and genuine openness, ask someone who knows you well to tell you one area where they see pride in you. Listen without defending yourself.

Shift the focus

Identify one relationship or situation this week where you tend to manage how you are perceived. Make a deliberate choice in that context to ask questions and listen rather than speak and be noticed.

Behold before you begin

Before you start your day this week, spend five minutes reading or meditating on who God says you are in Christ. The goal is not to feel better about yourself, but to anchor yourself in truth so you don't spend the day managing your own significance.

Whisper the gospel to someone

Reach out to one person in your group or church community this week with a specific encouragement rooted in the gospel. Skip the compliment about their personality or performance and remind them of who they are in Christ.

Closing prayer focus

As you close your time together, pray along these lines.

- Confess the specific ways pride has kept you self-focused.
- Thank God that Jesus did not cling to His position but emptied Himself for you.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to do the work of transformation that you cannot do on your own.
- Pray for one another by name, that each person would become more enamored with Jesus this week than with their own reflection.

Key passage for the week: Philippians 2:5–8

Read it slowly each morning this week. Let the picture of Jesus emptying Himself and taking on the form of a servant sit with you throughout the day.