

Steve Whitacre

## SESSION 1 | THE PROMISE OF HUMILITY

### I. INTRODUCTION

### II. HUMILITY IS . . . WHAT?

“Nearly all the wisdom we possess, that is to say, true and sound wisdom, consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves.” John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, I.1.1.

“Humility is honestly assessing ourselves in light of God's holiness and our sinfulness.” C. J. Mahaney, Humility, 22.

“Humility entails a right view of self, as created by and accountable to God—and this requires a right view of God, as Creator and as authoritative in relation to his creatures. Humility is not, then, preoccupied with oneself and one's own lowliness, but first mindful and conscious of God and his highness. Humility becomes conscious of self only with respect to God.” David Mathis, Humbled, 11.

“Humility, then, consists in an attitude wherein we recognize our own insignificance and unworthiness before God and attribute to Him the supreme honor, praise, prerogatives, rights, privileges, worship, devotion, authority, submission, and obedience that He alone deserves. It also involves a natural, habitual tendency to think and behave in a manner that appropriately expresses this attitude. In other words, the attitude of humility is always seen in humble actions. It means having a servant's mind-set and always putting self last.” Wayne Mack, Humility, 26.

“Humility is not thinking less of yourself, it's thinking of yourself less.” Unknown.

### III. GETTING GOD'S ATTENTION: (WHY PURSUE HUMILITY)

"Thus says the LORD: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest? All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the LORD. But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word." (Isaiah 66:1–2)

"For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him." (2 Chronicles 16:9)

"[God is] also omniscient. Nothing escapes His notice. He's aware of all things. But though He's aware of everything, He's also searching for something in particular, something that acts like a magnet to capture His attention and invite His active involvement. God is decisively drawn to humility. The person who is humble is the one who draws God's attention, and in this sense, drawing His attention means also attracting His grace—His unmerited kindness. Think about that: There's something you can do to attract more of God's gracious, underserved, supernatural strength and assistance!" CJ Mahaney, Humility, 20.

"For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "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." (Isaiah 57:15)

"For though the LORD is high, he regards the lowly, but the haughty he knows from afar." (Psalm 138:6)

"Toward the scorers he is scornful, but to the humble he gives favor." (Proverbs 3:34)

"But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.'" (James 4:6)

"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.'" (1 Peter 5:5)

“Contrary to popular and false belief, it's not "those who help themselves" whom God helps; it's those who humble themselves. This is the promise of humility. God is personally and providentially supportive of the humble. And the grace He extends to the humble is indescribably rich. As Jonathan Edwards wrote, ‘The pleasures of humility are really the most refined, inward, and exquisite delights in the world.’” CJ Mahaney, *Humility*, 21.

## IV. HUMILITY BEFORE THE LIVING GOD

### A. God is the Creator... Which Humbles Human Pride

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” (Genesis 1:1)

“When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?” (Psalm 8:3–4)

“The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge.” (Psalm 19:1–2)

“Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.” (Revelation 4:11)

“The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.” (Acts 17:24–25)

“[Jesus] is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power...” (Hebrews 1:3)

### B. God is Holy... Which Humbles Human Pride

“And one [seraphim] called to another and said: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!’” (Isaiah 6:3)

"You who are of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong..."  
(Habakkuk 1:13)

### **C. God Saves... Because Sinners Need Saving... Which Humbles Human Pride**

"And Moses said to the people, "Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again." (Exodus 14:13)

"You save a humble people, but your eyes are on the haughty to bring them down." (2 Samuel 22:28)

"Blessed be the Lord, who daily bears us up; God is our salvation. Selah" (Psalm 68:19)

"Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of your name; deliver us, and atone for our sins, for your name's sake!" (Psalm 79:9)

"She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21)

## **V. HUMBLE LIVES BEFORE MEN**

"For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?" (1 Corinthians 4:7)

"Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves." (Philippians 2:3)

"If the foot should say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,' that would not make it any less a part of the body... The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you, nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.'" (1 Corinthians 12:21)

"Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor." (Romans 12:10)

"I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Ephesians 4:1-3)

"One property of a humble soul is this; it will quietly bear burdens, and patiently take blows and knocks, and make no noise. A humble soul sees God through all the actions of men. He looks through the secondary causes, and sees the hand of God. He looks through to the supreme cause." Thomas Brooks, *The Works of Thomas Brooks*, "A Display of the Beauty, Excellency, and Necessity of Humility."

"though if I should wish to boast, I would not be a fool, for I would be speaking the truth; but I refrain from it, so that no one may think more of me than he sees in me or hears from me." (2 Corinthians 12:6)

"While most of us go through life afraid that people will think too little of us, one cannot help but notice that Paul goes through life afraid that people will think too much of him (2 Cor. 12:6). If you grow in your knowledge of sin and of your own heart, and of the matchless grace in the cross, your fear will increasingly run in the same direction as Paul's." D. A. Carson, *The Gospel And The Modern World*, 248.

"For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned." (Romans 12:3)

"However, a good laugh is a mighty good thing, and rather too scarce a good thing; the more's the pity. So, if any one man, in his own proper person, afford stuff for a good joke to anybody, let him not be backward, but let him cheerfully allow himself to spend and be spent in that way. And the man that has anything bountifully laughable about him, be sure there is more in that man than you perhaps think for." Herman Melville, *Moby Dick* 49.

## VI. CONCLUSION

To even get near [humility], even for a moment, is like a drink of cold water to a man in a desert. Do not imagine that if you meet a really humble man he will be what most people call "humble" nowadays: he will not be a sort of greasy, smarmy person, who is always telling you that, of course, he is nobody. Probably all you will think about him is that he seemed a cheerful, intelligent chap who took a real interest in what you said to

him. If you do dislike him it will be because you feel a little envious of anyone who seems to enjoy life so easily. He will not be thinking about humility: he will not be thinking about himself at all." C. S. Lewis, Mere Christianity, chapter 8, "The Great Sin."

"If anyone would like to acquire humility, I can, I think, tell him the first step. The first step is to realise that one is proud. And a bigish step, too. At least, nothing whatever can be done before it. If you think you are not conceited, it means you are very conceited indeed." C. S. Lewis, Mere Christianity, chapter 8, "The Great Sin."



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