



The Hugeness of Humility

Philippians 2:1-11

Objectives

- To explain how and why God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.
- To change our thinking about ourselves and take steps toward becoming more humble people.

Overview

God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.

Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

This word “humble” is one of the true biggies of the Bible. God digs humility but He hates pride. In fact, in Proverbs 6 there’s a list of seven things that God finds detestable...haughty eyes—pride—is numero uno. We need to understand that pride is much more than one of God’s pet peeves. God isn’t just annoyed by pride. He can’t stand it! God opposes pride with everything he’s got.

Why? Because proud people are glory thieves. Pride says, “Look at me! Ain’t I something?!” It claims glory, honor, and praise for itself. The problem is, God is the only one who deserves glory, honor and praise. He’s God for goodness sake! He’s the Creator; we’re just creatures. We’ve got nothing he didn’t first give us, so every ounce of glory, honor, and praise belongs to the source.

So proud people...glory thieves...get opposed by our righteous, just, and holy God. If you’re a little proud, you face a little opposition. If you’re a lot proud, you get a lot of opposition.

And that’s not fun. Just ask Nebuchadnezzar. He was king of Babylon during the time of Daniel. Once he walked around on the roof of his palace, surveying the city. He proclaimed, “Isn’t this the great Babylon that I have built for myself, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?” *Look at me! See me! I’m something else!* Dumb!

No, not dumb—insane! God instantly opposed that pride and took Nebuchadnezzar’s sanity from him. The king grew his hair out into a long straggly mess and allowed his nails to grow out until they looked like the claws of a bird. Then he went out and grazed like a cow in the palace backyard. God opposes the proud!

But the great news is God gives grace to the humble. He saves us by grace (Eph. 2:8-9). He enables us to live by grace (2 Cor. 1:12). He empowers us with grace (2 Cor. 12:9). He gives us gifts of grace (Eph. 4:7-8). He even blesses us with an identity in him through grace (1 Cor. 1:15). In other words, every spiritual blessing we could ever want or need comes through grace, and to the humble.

If you’re a little humble, you taste a little grace. If you’re a lot humble, you receive a lot of grace. Humility is the pipeline of grace.

How’s yours? Is it clogged by pride or clean and free-flowing? Are you swimming in grace or barely tasting it? This week we’ll talk about humility and see how we can open the floodgates of God’s grace in our lives.

“Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus... who humbled himself.” Philippians 2:5,8



Outline

Becoming humble is not pleasant, but the results are pure pleasure! This teaching outline identifies four progressive steps to achieving true humility.

How to be Humble

1. **DESTROY the lie in your self-concept.**

Here's the lie: "I'm a good person! I'm special! I'm good enough, smart enough, and doggone it, people like me!" The truth is this: We're all pretty ugly people. Sin stains us to the core of our being. And if people could see our inner thought and motives, they wouldn't like us at all.

You see, the world says we're all essentially good. The Bible says we're all essentially bad. If we want to taste true grace, we need to adopt the right mindset. Instead of being high-minded, we need to be low-minded—which is the exact meaning of the word "humility." The Apostle Paul invented this word...it didn't even exist until he made it up. And he did it to help us receive the grace we need. Until we grieve over our sin and come to God in repentance, we never taste true grace.

"Jesus did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing." Philippians 2:6

"Wash your hands, you sinners and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn, and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up." James 4:8-10

2. **DISCONTINUE your program of self-advancement.**

It's pretty foolish to let our lives revolve around our own egos when they're so sinful. We've got to stop trying to make ourselves look so good! Stop promoting SELF! You might be stuck with yourself, but you don't have to be stuck on yourself. Most of us have "Me" at the center of our lives. God gives us a new word: YOU. He tells us to stop looking inward and start looking outward.

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves." Philippians 2:3

3. **DEVELOP a strong and healthy pride in God.**

When a person starts tasting the grace of God that comes through humility, they begin to realize just how awesome he is! They begin to reorient their lives around giving him glory, instead of stealing it for themselves. They become PROUD of God. They're so proud that he's their God and Father. They're so proud of his great power and love. They become fans, cheerleaders, promoters, and players on God's team.

"Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom, or the strong man boast of his strength, or the rich man boast of his riches. But let him who boasts about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord." Jeremiah 9:23-24

4. **DISCOVER the exaltation of servanthood.**

Jesus does not need to share his high position with us, but he promises to, if we follow his path. He says greatness in the kingdom can be achieved through servanthood. Exaltation comes through humility. "Lifting up" results from bowing down. Those who serve in the style and spirit of Jesus know this to be true. Even this side of heaven there's nothing like the feeling that comes from serving others. It's the path to fulfillment in life.

"He made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant...He humbled himself and became obedient to death—even on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place." Philippians 2:7-9

"Whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant." Matthew 20:26

"Whoever humbles himself will be exalted." Matthew 23:12



Discussion Guide

Open

- Who in your world would you describe as “huge” right now? Who has a big presence or persona?
- Who in your world would you describe as “humble”?
- Do you know any huge people who are humble?
- Given a choice, would you rather be huge or humble?

Dig In

1. **Transition** into your Bible Study time by explaining that each of us can actually be huge and humble! It’s an incredible promise of God...we can be “huge”(great, exalted) by being humble. The catch is that we have to try to be humble and let the hugeness come. (It’s like Solomon, when he was offered one wish. He could have asked for wealth, but he asked for wisdom instead. God gave him both!)
2. **Read Matthew 20:26-27; Matthew 23:12; and Philippians 2:3-11.**
3. **Discuss humility** in light of these verses:
 - What do you think is the hardest thing about being humble?
 - The word “humble” didn’t even exist until Paul coined it. It means “low-minded.” What do you think it means to be low-minded?
 - How low-minded do you think we should be? How low should we go?...How low did Jesus go?
 - How does the world sometimes get us thinking “high-mindedly” about ourselves?
 - What do you think was the most extraordinary thing about Jesus’ humility?
 - Philippians 2:3 says we should do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. What is selfish ambition and vain conceit? What are some examples of each?
 - The Bible says God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Why do you think God loves humility and hates pride so much?

Close

1. In what ways do the demands of humility call you to change your thinking about yourself?
2. What selfish ambitions or vain conceits do you sense God’s Spirit convicting you about?
3. How can you make servanthood a greater part of your life this week? Who, what and how can you serve?