

## Humility

By T. Sean Sullivan

What does it mean to be humble? There are many opinions in response to this question. There are many extremes to the idea of humility; some of which are only disguised pride, and others are so extreme that they would not even allow one to respond to the question. Needless to say, there is a lot of confusion on this matter. Is there a way to know for certain? We know that humility is an expectation of God; therefore there must be a way of gaining the proper knowledge. We will learn in life that humility affects every part of a person's life: their honesty and integrity, their friendliness, and even their effectiveness as a servant of God. Let's see if we can come to some defining conclusions about humility. Let's consider the purpose of humility, then some things that are "not" humility, and finally true humility.

**What is the Purpose of Humility?** Without humility we have no hope of direction. The wisdom of the Proverbs, teach us to acknowledge God and only then will He direct us (Prov. 3:1-18). The willingness to admit we need Him is the beginning of the relationship that God desires with us.

The humble know they need; the proud refuse help. The proud say, "Who is God to teach me?" Or, "Why should I listen to you?" The humble say, "Who am I without God?" and "I need God's help". The proud will not listen and therefore will never find the rewards of God's word but the humble know they need to do God's will (James 1:22-25).

We need to be humble because we have nothing without God. His rewards are for those who are humble enough to submit to Him. As we are told in James 4:6, "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble." Then also in 1Peter 5:6, "Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time..."

**Not Humility:** Self-loathing is not humility. Some have come to the conclusion that we are to hate our life to prove our humility. This is an unjustifiable conclusion. God's word does not call for us to hate ourselves or this life. We should not hate what God has given us (Acts 17:24-27). We should not refuse His advice—to be joyful (John 15:11; Gal. 5:22; 1Thes. 5:16).

Denial of one's abilities is not humility. Some are afraid to claim their talents—denying their own abilities. This is not what God expects. God wants us to do what we can do, the best we can do it (Rom. 12:6-8). When we use our abilities well, it is not for our pride, it is in recognition of what God has provided—to Him be the glory (1Peter 5:11; 2Peter 3:18)

Empty words are not humility. Talking great swelling words about our humility is not humility. Neither is being hyper-critical of self. Rather we should understand that humility is truly better seen than heard. Some pray and say that their righteousness is as "filthy rags" or that they are "worms". This is a misuse of Isaiah 64:6 that refers to man's attempts to justify himself under the Old Covenant— not our current redemption under the New. By saying these things they are denying the great value God has placed on us. God paid a great price to ransom us from our sins (Matt. 20:28; John 3:16). We are not "worms" we are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb (1Peter 1:18-19).

**True Humility:** Humility is knowing who you are. A real part of God's creation (Acts 17:26-27). You are the creature—God is the Creator (Psalm 100:1-3). We must

know that we need God (Prov. 14:12; Jer. 10:23). This attitude was definitely missing in Pharaoh—when he refused to submit to God (Ex. 10:3). His great confidence was in self, saying, “Who is the Lord, that I should hear His voice...?” (Ex. 5:2). This teaches us that true humility is full submission to God.

True Humility is willingness to do God will. If we are going to submit to God and be a doer of His will we must admit our abilities and use them (Eph. 2:10; 2Tim. 3:16-17). We must strive to meet God’s expectations with the highest limits of our ability—this is active humility (Matt. 13:8). The pursuit of active humility is not personal glory—it is willingness to use your abilities for the cause of Christ (Gal. 2:20).

True humility is remembering God. Knowing that without His blessings we could not live (Matt. 5:45). Knowing that without His hope we are lost (Rom. 5:6-10). Knowing that without His direction we cannot make our way home (John 14:6). All that we are; all that we are capable of; is because of God—to God be the glory (1Peter 5:11)

Conclusion: Humility is a trait of character not easily owned. We must work our way toward humility in order to receive the promised rewards of God’s instructions. There are many things that people do, supposing them to be acts of humility. These things cannot take the place of truly acknowledging our need for God. Many are too proud to submit to God’s expectations. Many have prided themselves on coming up with a better way than God. Humility tells us, there is no other way. Today do you know who you are and what you need? Right now is the time to know you are a valuable part of God’s creation and you need to acknowledge your Creator. Will you seek Him now? The opportunity to obey the gospel plan is yours today.

### An Alarming Death Notice

We are sorry to announce the passing of Mr. Midweek Services. He died recently at the Neglected Church on Ho Hum Avenue. Born many years ago, he was once strong and healthy. He grew as he was fed on zeal and Bible study. His influence was felt worldwide, and he has rightly been considered as the most influential member of the Church's family. However, in recent years Mr. Midweek Services had been in failing health, wasting away until rendered helpless by stiffness of the knee, cooling of the heart, and a lack of spiritual sensitivity. He was quoted as having whispered some last words about the absence of his loved ones.

We have also been informed that Midweek's wife, Mrs. Sunday Evening Services, has just been admitted to the local hospital. Preliminary tests by Dr. I. M. Unconcerned reveal that the same disease that struck her husband down has now infected her, and has greatly diminished her strength. At this point her disease also appears to be terminal. Her recovery depends upon care and concern. (Author Unknown)

### The Passing of Someone Else

The church was bowed in grief this week to learn that one of our most valuable members, Someone Else, had passed away. This death creates a vacancy that will be difficult to fill. Someone Else has been with us for many years. During all of these years, he did far more than a normal person's share of the work. Whenever leadership was

mentioned, this wonderful person was looked to for inspiration as well as results. Whenever there was a job to do, a class to teach, a meeting to attend, one name was on everyone's list: "let Someone Else do it." Someone Else was among the largest givers in the Church. Whenever there was a financial need, everyone assumed that Someone Else would make up the difference. This beloved member was a wonderful person, sometimes appearing super-human; but a person can only do so much. Everyone expected too much of Someone Else. Now Someone Else is gone. Who will pitch in and do the things that Someone Else has done? If you are asked to take a job in the church, we hope you won't reply, "Let Someone Else do it." Now YOU need to pick up where Someone Else has left off. (Author Unknown)

#### A Moments Wisdom

God planned to make us creatures of character, not of comfort.  
God's promises are always greater than our problems.  
What we receive in time we wear in eternity.  
Some folks don't look up until they are flat on their backs.  
Daily prayers lessen daily cares.  
Lending a hand will make it harder for you to borrow trouble.  
The highest reward God gives to us for good work is the ability to do better.