



LOVE PEOPLE HUMILITY

SPIRITUAL OUTCOME DEFINED

Thinking rightly about yourself and living in the fullness of who you are in Christ, no more, no less.

“He that places himself neither higher nor lower than he ought to do, exercises the truest humility.”

- Charles Colton

SPIRITUAL OUTCOME DESCRIBED

In Greek mythology, there is the story of Narcissus, a beautiful hunter who was proud, arrogant, and who disdained everyone who cared for him. He fell in love with his own reflection in a pool of water and so he remained there, gazing at himself until he died. This tragic myth is where we get the word, narcissism, which has come to mean an over-inflated view of self. This is not a far cry from the world we see today, especially in the West where individualism is a high value and much of life is all about power and success; where the goal is to climb the corporate ladder, make something of yourself, and pursue your dreams. Humility is not a popular trait in a world like this. The problem is, we just have the wrong idea about what humility is and what it does.

We may think humility is synonymous with insecurity or that being humble will result in people steamrolling us or leaving us behind. But, as with many things about this world, God's ways are upside-down and inside-out from what we perceive them to be. For instance, Jesus Himself said that "those who exalt themselves will be humbled and those who humble themselves will be exalted" (Luke 14:11), "the first will be last and the last shall be first" (Matthew 20:16), and "blessed are the humble for they shall inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5).

Why is humility so important to God? Because without it, we will not see Him for who He is and we will not have an accurate picture of who we truly are. We see time and again in Scripture that those who are prideful and arrogant face inevitable downfall because they fail to fear God; their pride keeps them from acknowledging that God is God and they are not. Pride blinds them from seeing their need for God. As Psalm 10:4 warns us, "The pride of the wicked man does not seek him; in all his thoughts, there is no room for God." Humility enables us to know God and know ourselves in relation to Him. Thankfully, God does not ask us to do anything He hasn't done Himself. In the person of Jesus, we see true humility. God's very act of lowering Himself to take on flesh and become human, and, on top of that, to die for sinful humanity, is the ultimate picture of humility (see Philippians 2:5-11). What we see in Jesus is in the very heart of God. Therefore, we can trust that God, in His very nature, is humble!

When we look at Jesus, we can see that humility is not self-deprecation, but self-understanding. He was able to look to the needs of others because He was secure in who He was and what He was called to do. We don't bring God honor and glory by shrinking back and downplaying who He made us to be. He has created us for a specific purpose to bless His world and grow His Kingdom. Humility, living fully in who we are in Christ, enables us to live abundantly out of security in Him, without the need to have power over others or cower below others. As we better understand who God is and grow in our relationship with Him, we better understand the freedom we have in Him to live fully in who He made us to be and what He made us to do.

If we think rightly about ourselves as image-bearers of God, we will be free to consider the needs of others and seek to build them up. We will be free to welcome and receive critique and correction. We will be free to rejoice in the gifts God has given us and allow room for weaknesses. Like a parent watching their child learn and develop a skill, God takes great joy in seeking out the versions of ourselves He had in mind when He made us. And, when we choose to put on humility, we put on the nature of God Himself, the way we were created to be.

EVIDENCE OF THIS SPIRITUAL OUTCOME IN A PERSON'S LIFE

- Willingly and joyfully embraces and celebrates another's gifts and successes and openly gives credit where credit is due.
- Actively seeks the opinions and input of others out of genuine desire for their insight.
- Receives critique and correction without becoming defensive or insecure.
- Maintains confidence when others disagree without becoming arrogant, insecure, or angry.
- Receives recognition without letting that define them.
- Considers the needs of others above one's own and seeks to build them up.

GUIDANCE

Read each passage multiple times. Then write your observations about the passage and any thoughts you have from the discernment question. What do you notice in the passage, and what does this reveal about your life?

2 CHRONICLES 33:10-13

Observations:

Discernment Question: Consider your prayer life. Do you pray in a manner that is a calling out to God? How are your prayers driven by genuine humility? Or, how are they not driven by genuine humility?

PROVERBS 9:8, 15:12, 15:31

Observations:

Discernment Question: How well do you receive instruction and correction from others?

PSALM 10:4, 25:8-9, 147:6

Observations:

Discernment Question: How well do you relate to authority figures in your life? How well do you relate to God as the ultimate authority figure?

PROVERBS 11:2, 13:10, 16:18, 29:23

Observations:

Discernment Question: How does your current life display arrogance? How does your current life display humility?

LUKE 14:7-11

Observations:

Discernment Question: Are you self-promoting in either practice or heart? How or how not?

LUKE 18:9-14

Observations:

Discernment Question: Do you resonate more with the tax collector or the Pharisee in this parable? How does this impact the way you view others? God? Yourself?

ROMANS 12:3-8

Observations:

Discernment Question: These verses are about thinking rightly of oneself when it comes to spiritual gifts, not too high or too low. Do you compare yourself to others and their gifts in the church, whether you think of your gifts as more important or less? What will it take to think rightly about yourself?

EPHESIANS 5:21-6:4

Observations:

Discernment Question: How well are you handling your familial relationships? Are you operating in them arrogantly or humbly?

PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11

Observations:

Discernment Question: How are you displaying humility — as Christ did — in any positions of authority you have? How have you done this in the past?

HEBREWS 13:17

Observations:

Discernment Question: How are you displaying humility in any relationships where you are under authority? How have you done this in the past?

1 PETER 5:1-6

Observations:

Discernment Question: What kind of example are you to those you lead? Does your leadership inspire others to want to be like you in character? Why or why not?

NEXT STEPS

What are practical next steps you will do based on what you have discovered in this survey of Scripture about humility? Include insights offered from others in your Life Group that could be applied in your own life, as well.

MEMORIZE SCRIPTURE

Philippians 2:3-4, NIV

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

James 4:6, NIV

But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble."



LOVE PEOPLE HUMILITY

"The Man the King Delights to Honor" by Timothy Keller
Listening Outline

Intro:

Concentration on self:

Superiority form of pride:

Inferiority form of pride:

Definition of humility:

All pride is deadly:

Pride makes you a fool:

*Tim Keller: "The Man the King Delights to Honor"
April 29, 2007
Esther 3:1-6, 6:1-10*

Pride makes you evil:

Pride is the one sin that hides itself:

The worst form of pride is religious pride:

The cure for pride:

Haman didn't ask for the wrong thing; he asked the wrong king:

The one-two punch to end the ego:

Tim Keller: "The Man the King Delights to Honor"
April 29, 2007
Esther 3:1-6, 6:1-10



LOVE PEOPLE HUMILITY

This exercise is a Scripture meditation that will guide you through a thorough evaluation of your heart's posture toward humility. It will involve 3 parts: an inward evaluation, an outward evaluation, and an upward evaluation. Before beginning, invite the Holy Spirit to open your heart to receive what He has to show you today.

PART 1

INWARD EVALUATION (Growing in humility through understanding who you are and who you're not):

Psalm 131 is a psalm of David that depicts what humility looks like. The humble person is nothing more or less than who they were created to be.

1. Read slowly through Psalm 131 taking it in and letting the words wash over you. It might be helpful to read through a few different versions to get a full picture of what the Psalm is saying, especially the English Standard Version and the Message.

A song of ascents. Of David.

*¹ My heart is not proud, Lord,
my eyes are not haughty;
I do not concern myself with great matters
or things too wonderful for me.*

*² But I have calmed and quieted myself,
I am like a weaned child with its mother;
like a weaned child I am content.*

*³ Israel, put your hope in the Lord
both now and forevermore.*

2. Read through it slowly again, paying attention to...

What is the attitude or posture of the speaker?

What are the characteristics of the speaker?

Why is this a good picture of a humble person who is sure of who they are and who they are not?

Now, let's walk through the psalm, phrase by phrase, and let it examine our own hearts in regards to humility.

Vs.1a My heart is not proud, Lord, my eyes are not haughty

The heart is the seat of our nature, the center of our longings, desires, and emotions. We must begin with our hearts to find the root of pride in our lives-where pride originates. If pride is there at all, it will manifest in what our eyes are searching for.

- What things do you find your eyes looking toward?

Looking down (superior form of pride): Are you anxious for the approval or praise of others? Are you looking for glory and authority over others? To get credit for your efforts? Are you looking for self-promotion in other ways? How?

Looking up (inferior form of pride): Are you looking enviously at others in authority over you? Are you jealous of others' gifts or status? Is your mind consumed with what others think about you? Are you constantly comparing yourself to others and picking yourself apart for not being good enough or more _____ (fill in the blank)? How?

- Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal what prideful things your eyes are looking to that you may not be aware of.

Vs. 1b I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me.

The humble do not seek selfish ambition. Beyond what may be going on in their heart and what they see with their eyes, the humble are aware of how they spend their time and talents. The humble know who they are, what their limits are and are satisfied with what God has entrusted them. Remember David was a shepherd when he was chosen by God to be king over God's people. He didn't seek it out or fight for that power or position. He didn't rush God's timing, he didn't grab at the Kingdom when he had opportunities. He waited patiently and was content with what God had entrusted to him.

- Many of us may have grown up hearing, "You can do whatever you want to do and be whoever you want to be. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise." How might this advice be more harmful than helpful and breed more pride than humility?

- What talents or roles do you consider to be greater or more valuable in the eyes of God? Why do you view those things as having greater value than others?

- What has God entrusted to you? (Think through relationships, vocation, ministry, time, gifts, etc.)

- What are you striving toward that is beyond what God has called you to or who He has designed you to be?
- In your mind, does serving God only count if it is glamorous and visible? If so, why is that?
- Ask the Spirit where you are missing out on what God has for you because you are reaching for talents, positions, or experiences that haven't been given to you. What is He showing you right now?

“Many through wishing to be great have failed to be good: they were not content to adorn the lowly stations which the Lord appointed them, and so they have rushed at grandeur and power, and found destruction where they looked for honour.” - C.H. Spurgeon

Vs. 2 But I have calmed and quieted myself, like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child I am content.

Growth is not about becoming more autonomous or self-sufficient, but about becoming more and more dependent on God. We will become our true selves the more we seek Him. The humble are secure in who they are and mature in their relationship with God. The process of weaning a child can be painful for both mother and child. A weaned child is no longer fretful and searching for the next meal, but fully at rest in the mother's arms. The child no longer craves his mother's breast but is content, happy, and filled, not because of what the mother gives her child, but because of who she is. The weaned child is purely satisfied with being in her presence. So, when we have weaned from the things of the world, we rest securely in the Lord's loving arms at peace, not in what we've accomplished or produced, but in God and the goodness and delights that His very presence brings. An arrogant, prideful person is the opposite of a content, satisfied person. You cannot be at peace in the Lord and prideful at the same time.

- Is your soul at rest in the arms of the Lord, or is it fussing for pleasure and contentment elsewhere? What is the evidence in your life of one or the other?

- In what ways do you tend to look to yourself to achieve this kind of peace instead of God?

- What things are in your life that you just “can’t give up” -things that feed a false sense of self?
- Ask the Lord to change your taste buds and mature your palate so that you crave Him and are content with what He chooses to do or bring to your life.

"It is a blessed mark of growth out of spiritual infancy when we can forgo the joys which once appeared to be essential, and can find our solace in him who denies them to us." - Eugene Peterson

Vs. 3 Israel, put your hope in the Lord both now and forevermore.

A humble heart weaned of self-sufficiency and worldly comforts has room to hope and call others to the same. A humble heart knows that God is God and he is not.

- When challenges arise in life, do you attempt to take them on yourself, saying, “I got this”? Or, do you whine and complain to God for not doing what you want Him to do in the situation?
- How is each of these scenarios the result of pride?
- What challenges are you facing in your life right now? A challenging relationship, work problem, a parenting issue, health issue, etc.? Where is your hope directed?
- What would it look like to walk through the situation with the same kind of others-focused, mature, peaceful hope in God this psalm expresses?

*"There is room for the largest hope when self is gone, ground for eternal hope when transient things no longer hold the mastery of our spirits."
- C.H. Spurgeon.*

Humanity was not created to reflect self, but to reflect God. This is why we were made to serve God in community and not alone, in order to reflect who He truly is in creation. If we were made in His image, and that image was broken by sin, we need to be reoriented back into that image. This is why we don't seek our identity in ourselves, we pursue the Creator because that is who we were made to reflect. If you continue to seek your own good, your own success, and for your true self in anything other than God, there will be disastrous results (see James. 3:16). If you live a life that says "He is great" instead of "I am great", you will find who you were meant to be and the peaceful fulfillment that all creation longs for.

PART 2

EXTERNAL EVALUATION (Growing in Humility through your secondary responses):

"Humility is not low self-esteem, but low self-preoccupation." - David Brooks

If we want to grow in the character of humility, being more others-focused than self-focused, we must be willing to take the small steps of humility that will work to change our hearts in the big ones. We all struggle with pride and will do prideful things this week. We often aren't aware that we are doing it until it seems too late. But, it's never too late to respond to prideful moments in a humble manner. Make a conscious, prayerful effort to choose a few of these small steps to take this week and record them below.

- Did you lash out at your spouse? Your child? A coworker? Take the step of confessing to that person and ask for forgiveness.

- How did that go?

- Were you unnecessarily competitive with others? Take the step of pointing out ways you see others thriving and excelling.

- How did that go?

- Did you struggle to receive critique or criticism without becoming defensive or bitter? Take the step of asking for suggestions regarding how you can improve.

- How did that go?

- Are you having trouble letting go of an argument or disagreement? Evaluate whether it's because you're feeling insecure (inferior form of pride) or because you need to be right in the situation (superior form of pride). What step do you need to take to either release the argument or seek reconciliation with the person with whom you had the disagreement?

- How did that go?

- To what authorities in your life do you struggle to submit? Take the step of praying for them.

- How did that go?

- Where is pride (whether thinking too highly or lowly of yourself) getting in the way of treating others with equality and love? Take the step of going out of your way to show respect or love to another.

- How did that go?

- What simple needs do you notice around you that you may think are beneath you or not in your job description? Take the step to fulfill it, especially when no one is watching. Pick up after someone, give up your seat or place in line, give money to a friend in need, etc.

- How did that go?

PART 3

UPWARD EVALUATION (Growing in humility through prayer):

Ignatian Prayer of Examen

This prayer is a way of reviewing your day with the Lord in order to draw your attention to His presence in the day and how He is working in your heart, and then preparing your heart to be more aware of His activity in the day to come.

1. Become aware of God's presence.

Settle into a comfortable quiet place where you won't be interrupted. Invite the Holy Spirit to come and bring clarity to your day and to help you see where God was present and at work.

2. Review the day with gratitude.

As you picture your day from beginning to end, note the things that happened. Where did you go? Who did you see? Express your thanksgiving to God for each gift that you come across.

3. Pay attention to your emotions.

What emotions did you experience during the day? Did you feel frustration? Elation? Surprise? Anger? Anxiety? Ask the Spirit to reveal what He is trying to say through your emotions.

4. Choose one feature of the day and pray from it.

What event, interaction or emotion stands out the most for you from the day? Was it positive or negative? Allow your prayer to arise from whatever it is. Does it bring up a prayer of confession and repentance? A prayer of praise? A petition?

5. Look toward tomorrow.

Finally, think about tomorrow. What is coming up in the next day? Ask God to prepare your heart to greet the day. Will you need His wisdom? Will you need patience? Grace? Provision? Invite the Lord to go before you in the day to come that it might be an offering of praise to Him.

*If you would like to listen to an audio guide of the Examen, you can access it on the youversion app,

Notes: