



Walking Humbly

Matthew 23:10-12 -- *And do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, that is, Christ. But the greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted.*

Introduction:

1. There are two ways to measure a day's work - by the number of hours put in, or by what has actually been accomplished. A person may be quite busy, work hard, and still accomplish little.
2. We often spend so much time and effort trying to understand and interpret accurately the scriptures and then, once having gotten to the truth, walk away to discover some other truth without applying what we've learned. [Read Matthew 23:1-12]
3. Working hard at being a Christian is not just studying the word, but looking into and training one's self to acquire the attributes, attitudes and characteristics, the very nature of a godly personality.
4. At the very heart of this is the aspect of humility. In this lesson we will see what the Scripture has to say about it, but this is just the first step, it must still be assimilated through daily practice and training.

A. The Command in Scripture

1. To begin, humility, although a prize in itself, is also a means to greater things. First (as per the passage immediately following), it is part of our nature that God jealousy desires, He stands opposed to us when we do not display it, but once achieved God will grant us grace in greater form.
2. Not only grace but exaltation from God is a natural consequence of proceeding humbling in our relationship with God and men.

James 4:5-6 -- *Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: "He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us"? But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble."*

James 4:10 -- *Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.*

1 Peter 5:5-6 -- *You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time.*

Ephesians 4:1-2 -- *I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one another in love...*

Colossians 3:12-13 -- *And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.*

B. The Scripture Defines the term

1. Like other borrowed Greek terms, the word *tapeinos* describes a physical state that is not good, but becomes so in the realm of the spirit.
2. In the Greek world it was used of those low socially, the poor, those of little social influence, those not free, the despondent and downcast.
3. Yet even in a religious sense it had a good connotation of "unassuming, obedient, conforming one's behavior to the righteous laws of the gods."
4. Thus Jesus could be described as "lowly in heart" (Matthew 11:28) because He was "submissive before God, completely dependent on Him, and devoted to Him, and at the same time humble before men whose servant and helper He became." [DNTT]
5. We see the term fleshed out as one who has childlike qualities, one who looks to help others before themselves, and does not return evil for evil, but rather a blessing.

Matthew 18:4 -- Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

Philippians 2:3 -- Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

1 Peter 3:8 -- To sum up, let all be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kind-hearted, and humble in spirit; not returning evil for evil, or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.

C. Application in Scriptural example

1. Paul points to his own example of conduct before the congregation at Ephesus. He served God despite all the problems he had to face.
2. In no way did he flinch from telling the congregation everything they needed to know about their salvation and building their relationship with God.
3. Even when he knew he was going into danger, he did what had to be done for the sake of others.
4. In all ways he imitated [mimicked] his Lord. As true disciples (those who are like their master) we must learn to do no less.

Acts 20:18-23 -- And when they [Ephesian Elders] had come to him [Paul], he said to them, "You know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, how I was with you the whole time, serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials which came upon me through the plots of the Jews; how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house, solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. And now, behold, bound in spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me.

Philippians 2:8 -- And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

D. Review & Invitation

1. "Humility" is commanded by God. This means that we should not only assume an attitude of humility, but in that attitude, seek to understand why humility is superior to haughtiness or arrogance, and take it on in a spirit of joyfulness.
2. It is necessary to receive Grace in order to be "exalted." This is because we need to leave exaltation to God and not take it upon ourselves to exalt ourselves. The result is only emptiness and delusional.
3. "Humility" is defined as:
 - a. Being Open as a Child.
 - b. Looking out for others interests.
 - c. Returning a blessing for evil.
4. It is doing what has to be done no matter what.
5. It is being obedient.

How much have we accomplished this evening?

Has our worship been acceptable?

Have our souls been secured?

Has our course of living been changed?