



Empowering People to Change the World

Humility – The Cardinal Virtue Part 1

Steve Holt

Humility: The Cardinal Virtue

Part 1

There is only one place in Scripture where Jesus describes His own character. It's the only place where Jesus speaks of the main virtue of His heart.

Matthew 11:25-30

- We must learn from Jesus. This is the only place in scripture where Jesus identifies His character.
- He says He is “gentle and lowly in heart.” He promises that if we will “learn from [Him]” we will discover “rest for our souls.” What a beautiful promise!

Jesus is teaching us about true humility, true surrender to the Father. Jesus is saying, “look at Me; watch My life and I will show you a better way to live. Live surrendered completely to God and you will find the true rest you long for.”

Do you want happiness? Everyone wants happiness.

Blaise Pascal wrote, ““All men seek happiness. This is without exception. Whatever different means they employ, they all tend to this end. The cause of some going to war, and of others avoiding it, is the same desire in both, attended with different views. The will never takes the least step but to this object. This is the motive of every action of every man, even of those who hang themselves.”

But for most, happiness is illusive...

Matthew 11:25

²⁵ At that time Jesus answered and said, “I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes.

- It's interesting that we do not really find happiness by looking for it.

- The way of humility; the way of gentleness and humility is “hidden.” It’s a secret to joy. It’s a secret to rest for our souls.
- Might it be said that the character of Christ—what He identifies as “gentle and lowly”—the only place in Scripture where He shares the character qualities of His life—that it is hidden?
 - Men want power,
 - Men want position,
 - Leaders want influence,
 - Leaders want vision.
- Jesus is saying: “I have hidden these truths to the wise and prudent, to the powerful and influential. I want to reveal Myself to those with child-like faith; child-like humility.”

Deuteronomy 29:29

The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law.

Matthew 11:26-27

²⁶ Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. ²⁷ All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.

- We cannot know the Father without knowing the Son. **John 14:6 “I am the way, the truth, and the life, NO ONE comes to the Father but through Me”**
- The way to eternal life—in this life and the life to come—is only through Jesus!
- Drink deeply from this truth. Drink deeply. Drink deeply. We cannot know God, the Creator of the universe without knowing Jesus.
 - All the virtues flow through Jesus!

- All the great virtues of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, and gentleness flow through Jesus.
- When we learn of Jesus, we learn our true nobility.
- We cannot become great without Jesus becoming great in our life.

Matthew 11:28-30

²⁸ Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am [f]gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

- For example, I have been in the church all my life. Even 9 months before I was born, I was in the church. Baptized at 6 weeks old, confirmed at 16; Born again at 19. My whole life has been lived in the Church—liberal, mainline, evangelical, fundamentalist, charismatic, Pentecostal, American and Japanese. I’ve worshipped with Asians, Latino’s, Africans, African Americans, Europeans, believers in the Middle East.
- And I can say with some experience that the one quality, the one virtue most missing in the Church is the key character trait of Jesus, humility.
- But Jesus is saying here that it is His most important character quality—gentle and lowly/meek—summed up with one word: HUMILITY.
 - I would argue that the Cardinal Virtue of the Jesus disciple is humility.
 - I believe that the root from which all other virtues flow is humility.
 - It is the indispensable condition of true intimacy with God.
- Andrew Murray writes, “Humility is a loud call to all earnest Christians, whatever truth there be in the charge, to prove that meekness and lowliness of heart are the chief marks by which they who follow the Lamb of God are to be known.”

- Charles Spurgeon: “Humility is the proper estimate of oneself.”
- The opposite of humility is PRIDE.
 - Pride is the way to hell.
 - Pride is what filled Satan as an Angel.
 - Pride is the fastest way to hell, joining Satan and the demons.
 - Pride—the loss of all humility—is the root of every sin and evil.
 - It is when Satan and the angels began to look upon themselves as self-complacent that they were led into disobedience.
- Jesus came to bring humility back to the earth!
- Let me define humility: I will begin with what humility is NOT:
 - I’m not talking about a low view of yourself.
 - I like what CS Lewis said, “Humility is not thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less.”
 - It is not self-denial, like in Martial Arts or Jenny Craig.
 - It is denial of self.
 - Humility is not becoming a push over, a doormat, a nothing little worm, that everyone can just walk all over.
- Humility is:
 - 1) **Jesus**. Let’s be real here; Jesus is the only perfect example of Humility. He said of Himself “I am gentle and meek in heart.” Humility is Jesus! That means the life Jesus lived, the way Jesus talked and walked is humility!
 - ♣ This is why we call this study of Matthew, “A Kingdom of God Revolution.”
 - ♣ We are looking at the life of Jesus! Jesus IS the Kingdom. If we truly want a Kingdom revolution, we must live like Jesus, pray and walk like Jesus, love like Jesus.

- 2) **True Humility is Entire Dependence on God.** This is the highest virtue. This is the soil that grace grows in our lives; humility is the soil. Peter said it well, “He gives grace to the humble.” The soil is humility, grace grows there!
 - ♣ On the other hand, the soil from which all sin grows is pride.
 - ♣ In our passage, Jesus says first, “Come to Me...then He says ‘Learn from Me.’”
 - ♣ True Humility is entire dependence on God.

- 3) **True Humility is Death to Self.** This is a tough one because we are trained from a child to watch our back, take care of ourself, discipline ourself, fight for our rights.
 - ♣ The way of all humans: Me, me, me.
 - ♣ Jesus came to break off the power of Me and replace it with the power of Him!
 - ♣ It’s all about Him!!
 - ♣ Death to Self...Life found in Him!
 - ♣ Death to self cannot happen without Christ.
 - ♣ As I’ve called it “the power to be out of control.”
 - ♣ Giving the Holy Spirit your life, your desires, your struggles, even your victories.
 - ♣ Jesus is the one who said, “***And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. ³⁹ He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.***
Matthew 10:38-39

In the book of Philippians, Paul describes the attitude of Jesus and the mindset we are to have:

⁵Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, ⁷ but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. ⁹ Therefore God

also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name (Philippians 2:5-9)

- When Eve took the poison from Satan, she was tempted by pride, to know good and evil, to have power to be like God.
- When she bit into the fruit, pride entered into her soul and humility was forever marred.
- She lost her dependence on God for everything.
- Her everlasting happiness and joy was destroyed.
- All the wars, all the rapes, all the abuse, all the greed, all the selfishness find their origin in pride.
- Jesus came to the earth to reintroduce the human race to humility. He lived it, He modeled it.
- Christ became the humility of God within a man. The Perfect Man.
 - Made Himself of no reputation—not seeking any personal glory.
 - Became a servant—came serving, not Himself, but others.
 - Death on the cross—He gave himself completely for our redemption.
- Why is our life often fruitless and our joy so shallow?
 - Might it be that this virtue is often missing?
 - It's in dying to ourselves and living fully to Christ that we find life and joy!

Paul said, ***“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”***
Galatians 2:20

- True Humility is death to self and life to Christ.
- Have you given your heart to Christ?

- That's just the beginning. Have you given your life to Christ—everything to Him?