

Humility

Excerpts taken from Andrew Murray's *Humility*

What is Humility?

Humility is not a thing we bring to God. It is also not a thing God gives to us. It is simply the realization of what nothings we really are, when we truly see how God is Everything, and when we clear out room in our hearts so that He can be everything for us. We have to understand that this realization is the only noble thing we can ever really think or do. We must make a choice, with our wills, minds, and emotions, to become empty vessels that God can fill with His life and glory. Then we will see that humility is simply acknowledging the truth about who we are and yielding to God His rightful place.

Most Christians are probably just like me. We knew the Lord a long time without realizing that meekness and lowliness of heart should be the distinguishing feature of the disciple, as they were of the Master. Humility doesn't just happen. We have to want it. It requires faith, prayer, and practice.

Humility in the Life of Jesus

Jesus became nothing, so that the Father could be everything. He submitted His strength and will completely so that the Father could work in Him. What did Jesus have to say about His own power, His own will, and His own glory, about His whole mission with all His works and teaching? "It is not I; I am nothing; I have given Myself to the Father to work. I am nothing. The Father is everything."

In this view it is of inconceivable importance that we should have right thoughts of what Christ is--of what really constitutes Him the Christ--and specially of what may be counted His chief characteristic, the root and essence of all His character as our Redeemer. There can be but one answer: it is His *humility*. What is the incarnation but His heavenly humility, His emptying Himself and becoming man? What is His life on earth but humility, His taking the form of a servant? And what is His atonement but humility? "He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death." And what is His ascension and His glory but humility exalted to the throne and crowned with glory? Christ is the *humility of God* embodied in human nature: the Eternal Love humbling itself, clothing itself in the garb of meekness and gentleness, to win and serve and save us.

In Jesus we discover what humility means. It is because we don't understand or seek after it that our own humility is so shallow and feeble. We need to learn from Jesus how He is so meek and humble in heart. He teaches us where true humility finds its strength--in the knowledge that only God is good, and that our place is to yield to Him in perfect submission and dependence. We must agree to be and do nothing of ourselves. This life is what Jesus came to show us and give us--a life in God that comes from death to sin and self.

Building Humility

It is only by the indwelling of Christ in His humility that we can become humble. We didn't create pride. We can't create humility, either. Pride belongs to us, and we belong to it, because it is who we are—our very nature. Humility must be ours in the same way. It must be our very self, our very nature. The promise is, "as people sinned more and more, God's wonderful kindness became more abundant" (Romans 5:20). All Jesus' teaching of the twelve, and all their effort, were the necessary preparation for His entering into them with power. He had taught them to desire something. Now He had to give it to them and be it for them.

Humility in Our Daily Life

It is easy to think we humble ourselves before God. But humility before people is the only real proof that our humility before God is more than just a figment of our imagination. It is the only true evidence that humility has made a home in our hearts and become our nature. How can we know that we, like Christ, have made ourselves of no reputation? By the reality check of daily life. When in God's presence humility has become more than just a feeling we have when we think about Him or pray, but instead the very Spirit of our lives, it will show itself in the way we treat our brothers and sisters.

This lesson is crucial. The only humility that really belongs to us is not what we try to show before God in prayer, but what we carry with us and live out when we get up off our knees. The insignificance of daily life is the test of eternity. It proves what Spirit really possesses us. It is in our unguarded moments when we show who we really are. To know the humble man, you have to follow him around and watch his daily life.

Why do people who joyfully commit themselves to the cause of Christ find it so hard to commit themselves to their brothers and sisters? Isn't it because we have so little taught that the humility of Christ is the most important virtue and highest goal we can aim for by God's Spirit? But let's not be discouraged. Let the discovery that we lack humility motivate us to expect more from God than we've experienced. Let us look at every difficult, testing situation as an opportunity to grow. Let us look at difficult people as God's instrument for our purification. The life of Jesus is breathing inside our hearts! And let's truly believe that God is everything and we are nothing, so that we may - by God's power - seek only to serve one another in love.

This ends the selections from Murray.

Another thing that should be discussed when the issue of humility is raised is the difference between having a *critical mind* and a *critical spirit*. I hope that when my children encounter a new idea they will have a critical mind. They will discern the new idea for what it is and desire to encounter truth. They will foster a relationship of trust with their authorities and not assume that they, in their few years of life, have discovered the exact "way to do things." I hope they will not have a critical spirit where every time they walk into a worship service, or have a conversation, they assume the worst. They think the worst. They think they have the answers and can't believe people would be so unintelligent as to believe otherwise. This type of pride is one of the worst types. A critical spirit is born out of having thoughts only about self, and one's own self righteousness. While a critical mind can be a value for a discerning believer, a critical spirit is incompatible with the the spirit of humility in the life of the believer.

Relevant Scriptures

Philippians 2:3-7 *Do nothing out of...*

James 4:10 *Humble yourselves...*

1 Peter 5:5 *God opposes the proud...*

Questions for Discussion

- How would you define humility?
- Do you consider yourself to have a critical mind or a critical spirit? How do you process things when you walk into a worship service or have a conversation about spiritual things?
- What strikes you about Jesus' humility and how is that relatable to you?
- What is the true test of humility?
- How can you show true humility this week?
- How can you be humble in your accomplishments?