

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

The Fine Art of the Humble-Brag

by: Kris Brewer

A relatively new phenomenon, the humble-brag, has been increasingly exploded by the rise of social media. According to Merriam-Webster's dictionary, *humble-brag* is defined as:

To make a seemingly modest, self-critical, or casual statement or reference that is meant to draw attention to one's admirable or impressive qualities or achievements.¹

As a part of defining the word, Merriam-Webster provided this example:

In the study, college students were asked to write down how they'd answer a question about their biggest weakness in a job interview. Results showed that more than three-quarters of participants humblebragged, usually about being a perfectionist or working too hard.

The idea is that a person can brag in a manner that is not overt. He can act like he is being modest, but his intent

is to draw attention to himself and gain some reaction from those who are listening to or reading his comments. Of course, when one is guilty of the humble-brag, he will insist that he is not trying to brag on himself, and even halfheartedly tell his listeners to not praise his actions.

Christians are certainly not immune to the temptation to be braggadocious, which means they are not immune from the trap of the humble-brag.

God's Call for Humility

Throughout the New Testament, God calls for humility among those that would follow Him. Consider just a couple of examples to illustrate this instruction:

But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble" (James 4:6).

Humble yourselves in the sight of the

¹ Merriam-Webster's online dictionary, *humblebrag*, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/humblebrag#h1>

Lord, and He will lift you up (James 4:10).

In other passages, we can see the idea of humility clearly depicted. For example, we are told to be like Christ, who "made Himself of no reputation" and "humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death..." (Philippians 2:5-8). Humility is at the very heart of our obedience before God. If we are not willing to put aside our own will and desires, then we will never submit to His will. Humility is about selflessness, not selfishness.

Humility requires that we are truly more concerned about others than we are about ourselves:

Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others (Philippians 2:3-4).

Humility will keep us from trying to draw attention to ourselves. When we truly put God first, we won't be seeking to draw attention to ourselves. Even the good that we do is for the purpose of drawing others to Him, not to ourselves. Humility keeps us from seeking to have others take note of our actions so that we can have a pat on the back for what a great job we are doing. Jesus warned that we are not supposed to be doing good things so that men will praise us:

"Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven. Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly (Matthew 6:1-4).

False Humility

A problem arises when we veil our bragging in a false humility. That is, essentially, the idea behind the humble-brag. We begin to brag about the things that we do in such a way as to draw attention to ourselves, but do so in a manner that sounds as if we are shrouded in humility. We treat our service before the Lord much like the example given earlier by Merriam-Webster's Dictionary. We would never just blatantly brag about how great we are, but we will shroud our bragging in false humility. Our true intentions are probably clearly revealed when we become angry when others don't respond the way that we want them to respond!

There are many examples of this type of false humility. Some will boast about what type of charitable work they are doing, but somehow believe that their bragging is to be overlooked because they cover it with, "But all glory goes to God!" In reality, the boasting is designed to draw attention to the individual involved, and that is often evident by the responses to such a one. The focus is clearly placed on the "greatness" of the one who started the discussion.

Another area that we see this kind of humble-brag frequently rears its ugly head is in the facing of challenges in life. There are many who are quick to tell others about just how difficult their lives are, and then how wonderfully they are able to deal with these difficulties. They are sure that their lives are far more challenging than anyone else around them. But, again, they are able to overcome because of "the grace of God!" That this is nothing more than a humble-brag becomes evident when these folks insist that if you ever disagree with them then you just cannot understand because you have never had to deal with things as hard as their lives!

It has become quite popular to use online "crowd sourcing" to ask for advice on some problem or issue in our lives or in our families. It is interesting to note how often these calls for advice are really just another method of employing the humble-brag. When advice is given by godly, older Christians, they are told that their way just won't work for our circumstances because our situation is more difficult than anything they have faced. In the mean time, the original poster is praised by many for their already great handling of the situation, and told how they already know more than anyone else, so they should just ignore those people who would give advice different (or even contradictory) to what they have already employed! This is merely the patting on the back that such are seeking after.

Social media makes it easy to gather people together who will feed our proclivity to draw attention to ourselves. We often surround ourselves with those who will think much like us, which leads to many praising us when we really ought to be reprimanded. It is amazing to see how those who might object to a person's actions are quickly attacked and silenced, while patting the humble-braggart on the back (the very thing he was probably seeking in the first place).

Workers in the kingdom of God are not immune from these problems. We often brag about what we have accomplished, in reality drawing attention to ourselves, rather than truly bringing glory to God. While we act like we are trying to deflect attention away from ourselves, we are really doing all that we can to draw attention. It often becomes about us, and not about the message of the gospel that has

to power to save.

Falling into the trap of the humble-brag is a real danger. The great problem with it is that it reveals what is truly in our hearts. It shows that we are not humble, but instead prideful. It exposes our true attitudes. We are putting ourselves at the center of everything, and expect others to recognize our greatness! Jesus calls for humility. He calls for us to put others before ourselves. He calls for us to be submissive to Him and to our brethren. If we are constantly focused on ourselves and what a great job we are doing in various aspects of our lives, then we will never develop the humility that He demands.

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to learn the scriptures, to develop leadership ability, to grow spiritually, and to live as to gain the confidence of a discerning congregation. One does not qualify for the eldership in one big leap. It comes through daily development.

It is one thing to talk a "good line" on priorities. It is quite another thing to put God first on a daily basis. The devil knows so many ways to test our resolve in these realms. Our intentions are good, but, through his subtlety, he has us selling our souls for a mess of pottage or thirty pieces of silver.

It is one thing to think that we would die for the Lord if our faith were so tested. It is quite another thing truly to live for Him on a daily basis. Egos may be fed on the "big moments," but true spirituality develops through daily prayer, study and meditation.

Our lesson is this. Set your goals for the future, and set them high. But recognize that it's the little, day-by-day moments, the often forgotten moments, accumulated through the years, that truly shape our destiny.

Tomorrow's success depends upon the choices and decisions that are made today. Make them with care.

It's Just Too Simple

by: Doy Moyer

Years ago I spent over 8 hours one day studying with a youth minister from an evangelical church. While there was much to agree on, there were many issues over which we disagreed. We discussed salvation, the church, worship, among other topics, and we did it with a spirit of friendliness. At the end of the day, he said, "I see what you are saying, and I can see what the Bible says. But what you are talking about is just too simple. There has to be more to it than that." With this, he dismissed the conclusions of the study. Years bring deeper perspective, and over the years I have been more impressed with this point of simplicity.

Perhaps it seems too simple for some, but is that a reason to reject it? Some have argued that there is no pattern for corporate worship in Scripture, that nothing has been revealed about what God really wants in worship. Therefore, we are pretty much free to do as we wish as long as we don't violate something strictly prohibited. This assumes, not just that a little has been said, but that virtually nothing has been said about it, and therefore it is entirely up to us to decide how we like it.

What is revealed about worship in the New Testament is simple. It is not non-existent; it's just not complicated. It is not some elaborate, complex system, and this may tempt us to fill in blanks and add more to it. Like Naaman, dissatisfied with Elisha's charge to dip in the Jordan (2 Kings 5), we may want something greater. Surely that's what God wants, right? This is a problem for those who like more elaborate styles of worship (e.g., big production music shows). The fact of simplicity is difficult for some to swallow it seems, so they reject the uncomplicated in favor of more complex avenues. We may use that simplicity as an excuse to make worship conform to the way we really want it. Does it not seem that we find ourselves tending more to the complex things in our religious actions and services? Has it not always been this way?

That answer still rings in my ears after all these years: what the Bible actually says about it is just too simple; there has to be more to it. So we supply that "more," and we feel justified in doing so. We desire more pomp, more ceremony, more show, so we devise worship in ways that would make us happy. At some point we must ask, "Is this really about God or is it more about what I like?"

What has God revealed about His will on corporate worship? Nothing elaborate or complex, but there is revelation on the matter. Has He revealed that He likes singing from the heart (Eph 5:19; Col 3:16)? That He likes His people to pray together (Acts 4:23ff)? For Christians to meet together regularly (Heb 10:23-25)? To partake of the Lord's Supper together (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 11:18ff)? To teach, admonish, and encourage one another through His word (Acts 20:32; Eph 4:11ff)? Of course, He wants all of this to be done from hearts that desire to please and glorify Him. Let's not confuse something is that relatively simple with it not being profound or deep. Sometimes the more profound ideas are the least complicated. We need to learn to think them through and appreciate how the Lord has asked us to serve Him.

Perhaps some may say that I'm just oversimplifying this whole matter. Perhaps. But how so? Where do we read of anything more elaborate or complicated in the New Testament? Where is the pomp and show? Again, it seems to me that the lack of such complexity is what gives rise to the idea that the New Testament says so little about worship. It doesn't need to say much, but it says enough to let us know what pleases God (Heb 11:6). I realize we have some liberties. I know the Bible does not specify every action in particular. But let's make sure that any action we take, especially in worship, is truly geared toward pleasing God His way and according to His word, instead of using that simplicity as an excuse to do what we want. If God left it uncomplicated, isn't that reason enough for us to leave it at that?

Even more, let's make sure we approach God with the proper spirit, and not just in our corporate worship. Micah captured this thought centuries ago (6:6-8):

With what shall I come before the Lord,
and bow myself before God on high?
Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,

with calves a year old?

Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams,
with ten thousands of rivers of oil?

Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"

He has told you, O man, what is good;
and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?

On a Daily Basis

by: Bill Hall

A man, asked recently to describe memories of his college days twenty-five years ago, replied, "A few big moments; many goofs, but, overall, pleasant memories." Would these words not describe our memories of life generally? As we recall our years, there are always the "big" moments, the emotional "highs," that we love to relish. Then there are the "goofs," the embarrassing occasions that just keep coming back to haunt us. But, through it all, the pleasant memories sufficiently prevail to enable us to feel generally good about life.

But, in reality, success or failure in life is not determined by the "big moments" or "the goofs." We will not be eternally saved on the basis of a few great spiritual achievements or eternally lost on the basis of a few gross mistakes (assuming they have been repented of). Life consists of everyday actions and decisions, and it is these that bring ultimate success or failure, eternal happiness or eternal damnation. "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (Luke 9:23).

It is one thing to express concern for our children as we talk of their future spirituality and faithfulness. It is quite another to provide on a daily basis a spiritual atmosphere in the home, a good example of godliness and faithfulness, consistent and loving discipline and a love for God and respect for fellowman that are so essential to the training of our children. It's the little impressions that are made day by day that prove to be so decisive.

It is one thing to dream of someday being appointed an elder in the church. It is quite another thing to put forth the effort on a daily basis

Study Opportunities

Sunday Bible Study: 10:00 AM

Sunday Worship Assembly: 11:00 AM

Meeting At

Homewood Suites of Bozeman

1023 E Baxter Ln,
Bozeman, MT 59715

Everyone Welcome!

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Daily Bible Reading

December 2018

December 3	Zephaniah 3:1-7	December 18	Zechariah 8
December 4	Zephaniah 3:8-20	December 19	Zechariah 9
December 5	Haggai 1	December 20	Zechariah 10:1-11:3
December 6	Haggai 2	December 21	Zechariah 11:4-17
December 7	Zechariah 1:1-11	December 24	Zechariah 12:1-13:6
December 10	Zechariah 1:12-2:5	December 25	Zechariah 13:7-9
December 11	Zechariah 2:6-3:10	December 26	Zechariah 14
December 12	Zechariah 4	December 27	Malachi 1
December 13	Zechariah 5:1-6:8	December 28	Malachi 2
December 14	Zechariah 6:9-7:7	December 31	Malachi 3-4
December 17	Zechariah 7:8-14		

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