

Humble Yourself

Ron Roberts

We sometimes sing a hymn that says, "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up." If you did not know the meaning of "humble" this song would suggest to your mind it is a *lowering of yourself*. It is bringing yourself down and allowing God to raise you up.

The verse is likely drawn from James 4:10. "*Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.*"

1 Peter 5:5-6 contains a similar thought. "*Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:*"

Someone said humility is not thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less. There is some truth in this statement. When we keep focusing on ourselves it makes humility difficult. We wonder if we look humble to others. We ask ourselves will they praise me for my humility. We need to stop thinking about ourselves and the impression others might have of us.

The Bible tells us to *humble ourselves*. This is where the benefit lies. It does us no good if someone else humiliates us or put us in our place. We are blessed if we *humble ourselves*.

Jesus gives us a vivid illustration of humiliation in Luke 14:8-11 "*When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him; And he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the*

lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee. For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

A man takes the highest seat at the wedding because he assumes he is the most important guest there. When greater guests arrive he is ashamed when asked to sit in a lesser seat. It would be so much better if he humbled himself and was asked to move up. In one case he is shamed in the other he is praised.

Many men have mastered phony humility. They will criticize themselves in order to solicit praise from others. They will act shy in order to get others to place them in the center of attention. Their goal of recognition reveals their lack of true humility. The truly humble person does not feel worthy to be praised or elevated among his peers.

A key thought to me is we humble ourselves in the sight of the Lord. To humble yourselves before God is to go before the one who knows all. He knows if we are faking. He knows if we have ulterior motives in our external gestures of bowing. When we actually abase ourselves God sees it. He will lift us up because we are doing the right thing. Most men do not wait for the Lord to lift them *in due time*. They want recognition right now. They are lifted by pride and not by the Lord. They feel they are special and everyone should know it and say so. Such people are headed for embarrassment.

We can only humble ourselves when we see our own self worth before God's greatness. The best thing we can accomplish in this life is to be His servant. I hope you truly are.

The Pathway of the Proud

Prov 16:18 says, "*Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.*" The road the proud travel does not end up at a desirable destination.

Three people come to mind in the Old Testament when we think about pride. The first is Haman. This man was so full of himself that he wanted to destroy an entire nation when one Jew would not bow before him. When the king desired to praise someone proud Haman naturally thought it was himself who the king wished to recognize. The story is found in Esther.

A second person is Abimelech. He was the son of Gideon. Rather than having a number of rulers he persuaded Shechem to make him king alone and he murdered all his brothers to solidify his prominent place. Judges 9 tells his story.

The third man is Absalom. He was a splendidly handsome son of King David. He was lifted with pride and gained the favor of the people through deceit. He attempted to steal the kingdom away from his father and to kill him (2 Sam. 15-18).

Haman was hung on a gallows he built to hang another. Abimelech was killed by a millstone cast on his head by a woman. Absalom was caught by his hair in a tree and was run through with darts. None of these proud men saw the humiliating way they were going to die. They did not know the pathway of the proud. Do we? Do we heed God's warning of the fall and destruction that pride leads to? Can we see what lies ahead of us or are we blinded by our own self importance?

One of our recent presidents was concerned about his legacy. He wanted people to remember him after he was gone. We should serve Christ and forget about our image before men.