

Jesus, the Humble Servant

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In the person of Jesus Christ one can see the meaning of true humility. It is unfortunate that some have a wrong concept of this admirable virtue. Humility is not an inferiority complex that causes one to shrink from action. It is not being shy or embarrassed in the presence of others. Nor is humility a reflection of weakness in one's character; rather, it is a sign of strength. It is not the lack of firmness in addressing an issue.

Yet its firmness does not exhibit the arrogance and pomposity which sometimes accompany dealing with others.

In Jesus we can see that humility is a lowliness of spirit that is deliberately adopted, taking a subordinate position voluntarily when an opportunity for service appears. Lowliness of spirit and the willingness to serve cannot be found in one whose vision has been blurred by a distorted sense of his own importance. Pride and ego are the opposites of humility

Jesus Describes Himself

The Savior declared to his disciples, "I am in the midst of you as he that serveth" (**Lk. 22:27**). "I am meek and lowly in heart," he stated in **Matthew 11:29**. The majestic Lord and Master of all, the Creator of the universe, the eternal God in human form casting himself in the role of a humble, lowly servant! It seems incredible that the king is serving his servants! This is the One who came "not to be ministered unto, but to minister" (**Mk. 10:45**). His entire life and teaching show those words not to be hollow expressions, but true descriptions of his ministry.

Humility Manifested

In the New Testament portrait of Jesus one can easily see the many indications of humility and service.

1. Observe the total absence of the pomp, splendor, and glitter which human pride would have used to impress the world. He was of humble circumstance in his birth (**Lk. 2:7**). He was brought up in the home of a carpenter (**Mk. 6:3**). He was some-times even without a place to call home or a place to lay his head (**Lk. 9:58**). Our Lord willingly accepted such a lowly position. It may be in our day that the trappings of affluence and the desire to make a display before worldly men get in the way of our being like Jesus in serving others.



2. Note the Savior's willingness of talk to the "untouchables" about spiritual concerns. Many would not have condescended to teach such individuals. Jesus was not too proud to teach the Samaritan women something that the self-righteous would have avoided at all costs (**Jn. 4:7-9**). Jesus had time for conversation with the women taken in the act of adultery when certain hypocrites brought her to him (**Jn. 8:3-11**). He was not ashamed to be found eating with publicans and sinners (**Matt. 9:11,12**). Let us learn from the lowly Jesus not to be so selective about those whom we are willing to teach. Let us learn from him that "the blessed gospel is for all."

3. Consider the fact that Jesus could make time for little children, even when his disciples considered it something of an imposition on his time (**Matt. 19:13,14**). Earlier he had called to him a little child, using him as an example of that humility essential for anyone who would enter the kingdom (**Matt. 18:1-4**). A self-seeking person on the lookout for things to promote his own interests has no time for those who cannot do any-thing for him.

4. Think of the kind of person Jesus described in the Sermon on the Mount as being "blessed." Notice how much relates to the disposition we are discussing. The truly "blessed" (happy) man Jesus envisioned included "the poor in spirit," "those that mourn," "the meek," "the merciful," "the pure in heart," "the peacemakers," and such like (**Matt. 5:3-12**). Only lowly-minded individuals would be concerned with those qualities. Those who promote today's culture of self-love, self-esteem and "do-you-own thing philosophy are not comfortable with the humble servant attitude Jesus required of his disciples.

Paul Uses Jesus as Our Example

When Paul urged the saints at Philippi to develop righteous attitudes toward one another, he said, ". . . in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself, not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others" (**Phil. 2:3,4**). Immediately he cited the "mind" of Christ as an example of one who humbled himself to do what was in the best interest of others. He "humbled himself... even unto death, yea the death of the cross" (**Phil. 2:8**).

When the apostle was seeking to stir the Christians at Corinth to perform a service toward their needy brethren in Jerusalem, he reminded them of what Jesus had done for them. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich" (**2 Cor. 8:9**). The mind of this humble servant moved him to act in behalf of lost men. The "richest" Being in the universe voluntarily became "poor" to bring "true riches" to those whom sin had rendered destitute.

What Should This Mean to Us?

Jesus has set the example. His disciples follow him in manifesting a servant attitude. Let us never be too proud to serve where we are needed. Let us avoid the self-righteousness that would prevent our counting "other better than himself." Let no lost person be deemed so far beneath our dignity that we will exclude him from the number who need to be taught the saving truth. If the King of Kings and Lord of Lords could humbly serve others, how can his followers do otherwise?