

Leaning Into Humility

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“It’s hard to be humble when you are as great as I am.”

So said Cassius Clay, Nebuchadnezzar, Adolf Hitler, Ozymandias, the Pharisee in Luke 18, Pharaoh, and a host of others. How close is this to saying, “It’s hard to be humble when you are as great as I AM”? “*God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM.’ (Exodus 3:14a)*. We may not feel as prideful as those mentioned, but, if we’re being honest, excessive pride can certainly be a stumbling block in our lives.

So how can **we** learn to cast aside our arrogance, tame our ego, and become humbler in our Christian walk?

#1 - Realize that the gifts and abilities you have come from God.

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows (James 1:17).

We need to always remember that the talents that we have **aren’t** of our own making but are a gift from God. To Him be the glory!

#2 - Always remember that God is God, and you are not.

Spoiler alert! – You are not in charge!

#3 - You are not above menial labor.

Mundane, daily activities, such as house-cleaning, etc. are good ways of developing humility for both men and women. No job is “beneath you.” Observe the people that you see who work at menial labor or who belong to different churches or different religions. Do you feel superior to them? Does God love you more than them? What about those who have not found God yet or those who reject Him entirely? Are you superior to those?

#4 - Affirm areas of meaning.

The way that we see the world fashions our sense of meaning. We believe that **our** reality is the **only** reality – an attitude that leads to judgment. Other viewpoints can be threatening to us. But if we can find **new** ways to bring meaning into our lives, we can loosen our defensiveness.

By reflecting on our core values (what do I believe in?) or on a cherished relationship (Why do I love this person?), we find meaning that gives us the security to accept differences and open our minds to change.

#5 - Acknowledge your limitations.

Realize and accept that you might be wrong on some things. “*Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?*” (**Matthew 7:3**). It’s a mark of humbleness to accept that somebody else’s opinions have validity. If we are in the habit of always mentally defending our own “truth,” while hearing something different, or in the habit of cutting someone off with our own comeback before they’ve even finished talking, then we need to think deeply about how disrespectful that is.

An open mind leads to an open heart. Mutual edification means we **can** and **should** be able to learn from each other.

#6 - Diversify your social investments.

Who do we allow into our lives? Most of us choose those who share our beliefs and interests because being with them feels comfortable. But being with **comfortable** people and avoiding people who are different creates insular echo chambers where we form one-sided opinions. Again, this is stepping away from humility.

And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" (Matthew 9:10-11).

Who did Jesus hang with? Just the apostles and disciples? Hardly. But He WAS criticized for mixing with these "others." And we may be as well.

Mixing with "different" people helps us become less prejudiced. Our empathy and compassion grows as we become accepting of them as we learn from them, and grow

ourselves.

As a church, we need to stay in touch with the world, as Jesus did, so that we may be relevant to it.

#7 - Prove yourself wrong.

We have a natural tendency to seek out information that will confirm the beliefs and attitudes that we already have. This is called confirmation bias. If something happens that runs **counter** to our bias, we tend to ignore or discount it.

Again, this is **not** acting out of humility. It is helpful to **intentionally** challenge our prejudices.

#8 - See and treat others better.

Some people are easier to like and treat well. As far as irksome people, if you find that it's hard to treat **them** as well as your friends, then ask God for help. Christ humbly served everyone, even those who were His enemies. He washed the feet of ALL of his disciples, even the feet of the one who was to betray Him.

Meditate on His humility to help yourself. Realize that every human being alive is created in God's image, so **all** people have innate value.

#9 - Continuously be willing to see your sin.

Do you consciously agree that sin is a part of your life? *"If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8).* Of course, endlessly dwelling on our shortcomings is not healthy – we just need to acknowledge our **complete** selves and grow.

#10 - Don't boast about what you do for God's kingdom.

If you find yourself finding ways to make known that you are an officer in the church, then you might want to examine why you do that. Of course, some are better at singing or giving sermons or teaching than others, but is that them, or is that a spiritual gift from the Holy Spirit? Are we singing, "How Great I Am" rather than, "How Great Thou Art?"

But, again, **any** spiritual gift is from God; it is not of our own doing, so there is no room for boasting.

Do we serve God to be noticed by others, or do we serve God just to serve God?

But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you" (Matthew 6:3-4).

#11 - Never seek to please other people, especially not the powerful or rich self-serving people.

Our actions and attitudes should be based on love, not on the need for others' approval. Only and always seek to please the Lord and Him alone. *"Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ"* (**Galatians 1:10**).

And how do we please the Lord?

*He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? **To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God*** (**Micah 6:8**).

Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up. (**James 4:10**).