

# HUMILITY'S "VIEW" OF SELF

## INTRODUCTION:

Last week in our series on "Attitudes to Have in the New Year—and all Year Long"—we began to look at the attitude of **humility**. I would argue that humility is actually underneath the first two attitudes we looked at.

--The proud heart says, 'I **don't need to listen to God**,' but the humble heart has a **hunger to hear** God because it recognizes that **God has the answers**—not men!

--The proud heart also says, 'I will hope in what **I can do**—or in what **people can do**,'—but the humble heart **hopes in God** because we are in His hands—and He is in control!

We know from **II Chron 7:14** that God wants us to **humble ourselves**: "If my people, which are called by my name, **shall humble themselves**, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

As was mentioned before, humility—and its polar opposite pride—is a "**thread**" that is woven throughout the Bible. There is not just one place to turn to—there are many. So to better help us understand this extremely important attitude, I've attempted to break it down into smaller "chunks" and focus on them one at a time.

Last time we looked at **humility's view of sin** and saw these four correlations between the humble heart and sin: --Humility is seen in **sorrow** for sin. Pride enjoys sin; humility does not.

--Humility acknowledges that sin **hinders the blessing of God**. Pride boasts that God does not see sin... or care about sin...or hold us accountable for our sin. Humility recognizes that willful sin withholds blessing.

--Humility agrees that sin must be **forsaken**—it must be **turned from**—not hung onto!

Lastly --Humility asks that sin be **pointed out**. If we were convinced of how harmful and horrible sin is **to us**, we would welcome people pointing it out in our lives. Instead, we get defensive.

This morning, we are going to look at **humility's view of self**. Once again, I want to share with you the quote from E.M. Bounds because it reminds us of the view that the humble person has of themselves: "*Humility is just feeling little because we are little. Humility is realizing our unworthiness because we are unworthy, the feeling and declaring ourselves sinners because we are sinners.*"

So how does the humble person view himself? We see in Bounds' definition—and more importantly in God's Word—that... **1. Humility views self as unworthy**

Unworthy of what?

A. Of forgiveness and mercy from God

**i. Example of the prodigal son**

Please turn to Luke 15. We are going to be moving around a bit this morning, so we obviously can't dig too deep in any one passage.

--In vs 11-13 we have the intro. "...wasted his substance on riotous living."

Got hungry...wanted to eat the food he was feeding to the pigs... "no man gave unto him" it says in end of v16.

--Now vs 18-19. "And am **no more worthy** to be called thy son..."

The picture, of course, is of a **sinner coming to God** and being forgiven. Just as this son was not worthy of being forgiven and having mercy extended to him by his father, we are not **worthy of being** forgiven by God.

--The **humble** person understands their unworthiness and looks to God for **mercy**.

--The **proud** person believes they **are worthy**—and that God "owes" them.

We have another familiar—and very vivid—picture of this truth in Luke 18. Please turn there....

## ii. Example of the Pharisee and publican

Luke 18:9. Luke tells us **why** Jesus told the parable—because there were those who **trusted in themselves** that they were righteous. The **self-righteous** ones didn't see the **need** for God's forgiveness or mercy because they **were fine**—so they thought!

--v 10. Two men went to pray—the “Pharisee”—an outward “religious” man; and a publican—considered a sinful man.

--In vs 11-12, the self-righteous—and extremely proud—Pharisee reminds God how **good** he was!

--In v 13, we see the humble one admitting he is **not** good—he is a sinner—with a **request** from God.

What did he **ask** God? To have **mercy** on him!

--In v 14, we have the verdict from Jesus Himself—the **humble** sinner went home **forgiven**—and eventually to heaven! The proud Pharisee—unless he repented—heard these dreadful words from Christ after he **died**: “Depart from me, I never knew you.”

The humble person acknowledges that they are unworthy of God's forgiveness and mercy. But we are not **just** pardoned criminals, are we? God not only withholds **judgement** we deserve—He **makes us His children** and “loadeth us with benefits” the Psalmist says.

And just as the **humble** person realizes that they are unworthy of God's **forgiveness and mercy**, they certainly understand they are not worthy of God's **blessings** in their lives.

B. Of blessing and kindness from God. Turn now to I Chron 17.

--Look at v 1. David tells Nathan the prophet that he dwells in a **nice** house—but God dwells in a **tent!**

--In v 4, we see a message from God to David through Nathan: “Thou shalt **not build** me an house..”

--Now v 11. God is saying that after you die, I will establish the kingdom of one of your sons.

--In v 12, **they** will be the one to build God a house—and God would establish his throne **forever**.

**Solomon**, David's son, would build the temple—but **Jesus Christ**, a descendant of David, will someday sit **on the throne in Jerusalem!** What was David's response?

--v 16 “And David the king came and sat before the LORD, and said, “**Who am I**, O LORD God, and what is mine house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?”

‘I'm from a poor, insignificant family, and have this amazing privilege of being made a king!’

Do you do that from time to time? Oh, how we should just sit in the presence of God and say, ‘Who am I, that I should be taken **by you** to be a child of God Himself, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords!’

The humble person does that. Do you?

Now v 17. “And yet this was a small thing in thine eyes, O God; for thou hast also spoken of thy servant's house for a great while to come, and hast regarded me according to the estate of a man of high degree, O LORD God.”

‘You not only made me king **now**; you have promised to make **my name**—and **my lineage**—great for a long, long time.’ Consider this—David spoke these words in approximately 1000 B.C.—meaning God's people having been talking about David for 3000 years!

May I remind you that we are not **just** God's children now—we will be **forever!** Oh how we should **bask in** and enjoy the blessing and kindness of God! What an incredible privilege—and future—is ours!

How do humble people view **themselves**? Unworthy of the forgiveness and mercy—as well as the blessing and kindness—of God!

There is yet a second view that the humble person has of self and it is this:

### **2. Humility views self as unwise**

In other words, the humble person recognizes that in-and-of themselves they are **unwise**—they **lack** wisdom.

Let's consider first an... A. Example of humility desiring wisdom

We're in I Chron 17; let's turn back to I Kings 3, beginning with v 5.

--v 5. Imagine God coming to you and saying, "Ask what I shall give thee." In other words: 'What would you like for me to give you?' Your answer would reveal what you really **valued**, wouldn't it? Think of the **possibilities**! God actually gives us some of them in vs 11: long life, riches, and the defeat of your enemies!

What king **wouldn't want that**?! That's not what Solomon asked for, though.

--v 7 "And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in."

--"I am but a little child..." Was that true? Not in **age** because Solomon was probably 20!

--"I know not how to go out or come in." **Clarke wrote** "I am just like an infant learning to walk alone, and can neither go out nor come in without help." 'I don't know how to handle the task before me.'

--Let's not miss that Solomon said God was **his** God—and that he was God's **servant**!

--v 8 "And **thy servant** is in the midst of **thy people** which **thou hast chosen**, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude."

--'You have made me king over an incredibly large amount of people.'

There certainly was awe over the **number**, but I believe there was also an awe over the **responsibility**—these are **God's people** that God **chose for Himself**!

And based on the sense of awe over his **responsibility**, Solomon asked for **wisdom**.

--v 9 "Give therefore thy servant **an understanding heart** to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?"

--Solomon desired—and asked for—wisdom. He knew that this job was "over his head," so to speak.

--He knew there would be times that he wouldn't know **what** to do!

--He knew there would be times that it would be hard to tell which was the **right** thing to do...or the **best** thing to do!

Is that not true of us? We don't always know what to do, do we?

--We don't know how to advise someone...or comfort someone...or counsel someone

--We don't know what **to do**—or not do; what to **say**—or not say...

--There are times we don't even know how **to pray**!

We should be like Solomon, then, and ask God for **wisdom**. V 10 reminds us, "And the speech **pleased the Lord**..." God was pleased with Solomon for asking—and He will be pleased **with us**!

We not only have Solomon's example, we also have... B. Exhortations from God to look to Him for wisdom

God tells us to look **to Him** for wisdom, doesn't He? It is hardly surprising that God used the man He gave an incredible amount of wisdom to—**Solomon**—to write Proverbs—the **book of wisdom**!

--**Wisdom should be something we desire**: Cry...lift up our voice...seek...search

**Proverbs 2:3-6** "Yea, if thou **criest** after **knowledge**, and liftest up thy voice for **understanding**; <sup>4</sup> If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; <sup>5</sup> Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. <sup>6</sup> **For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of His mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.**" Solomon could vouch for this, couldn't he? He asked for wisdom—and the Lord gave it! **James 1:5** reminds us of this truth as well: "If any of you lack **wisdom**, **let him ask of God**, that **giveth** to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

--God does not **upbraid** us—He does not **reproach or scold** us for asking for wisdom. Instead, He delights in our asking—and gives it "liberally"—meaning **abundantly**!

How about you and me? Do we sense our **need for wisdom**—and look to God for it? We are not kings over God's people, but we have people under **our care** that we are to influence for God. God has entrusted to us children...or grandchildren...or nieces...or nephews...or even neighbors...that we are to influence for God!

Oh how we need to be humble enough to sense that we are **unwise**—and in need of God's wisdom!

How does the humble person view himself? First, he sees himself as **unworthy**—unworthy of forgiveness and mercy; and unworthy of the blessings and kindness of God. 2nd, he sees himself as **unwise**—lacking wisdom.

### **3. Humility views self as unpowerful**

Yes, unpowerful is a word! Want to know what it means? Brace yourself—it means **not** powerful; weak!

--The proud person doesn't like to **be weak**—but the humble person accepts weakness as a reality.

--The proud person doesn't like to **admit he can't do** something—but the humble person admits there are things he can't do.

--The proud person **digs in** and tries harder—the humble person **gives in** and turns to God.

Speaking of “digging in,” I remember digging some holes for 4 x 4 posts that I was going to use to make front steps. Abbey was probably 6 or 7 and hadn't quite learned the secret that if you **hang around** with Dad, you're liable to be put to work! The **boys** seemed to learn that quite early and were **off playing!**

I'm “digging away” and Abbey says, “Can I try?” She could hardly lift the **empty** shovel—much less one with **dirt in it**—but I decided to let her try. She put the shovel in the hole, got a little dirt in it, and tried to lift it out of the hole. She couldn't, then turned to me and said, “**I can't**—you do it!” It didn't take her long at all to admit that she wasn't powerful enough to do the job!

Too many of us—especially **men** (or maybe only **me**)—are **so slow** to get to that point.

--We don't like to ask for **directions** 😊...or help in general!

--We don't like to admit that we **can't do something**.

--We don't like to acknowledge that this situation is **too much for us**.

And too often times we are too proud to ask for help from others—even from God!

I'm slowly—and I mean **slowly**—learning that God purposely **overwhelms me** with things to do so that I look to Him more. I am a doer—I like to get things done and “cross it off the list,” so to speak.

But being a doer...and a hard worker...and not smart enough to **know my own limits**...often has me **trying harder** instead of giving up sooner and looking to God for help! God delights in us realizing our powerlessness —and our need for Him!

Notice on your sheet a verse I've mentioned a couple of times before. In the way of a quick background, a king of Judah by the name of Jehoshaphat had just been informed that an army from Moab and Ammon were coming against him and his people. Jehoshaphat responds by praying and ends his prayer with these words: **II Chron 20:12b** “...for we **have no might** against this great company that cometh against us; **neither know we what to do**: but our eyes are upon thee.”

We don't **like** to be in that spot—but God likes to **put us there** so we look to Him! Paul reminds us of that truth in **II Cor 12:9a** “And He [God] said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for **my strength** is made perfect in **weakness**.” ‘When you are weak,’ God says, ‘My strength will be what lifts you up & helps you!’

And then Paul declares: “Most gladly therefore will I rather **glory in my infirmities**, that the **power of Christ** may rest upon me.” (II Cor 12:9b). In other words, ‘I will rejoice in my weaknesses because that is when Christ's power helps me.” **Phil 4:13** “I can do all things **through Christ** which strengthen me.”

How does the humble person view themselves?

1. They see themselves **unworthy** of forgiveness—and heaven—and come to God asking for mercy.

2. They see themselves as **unwise**—lacking wisdom—so they come to God and ask Him for it.

3. And they see themselves as **unpowerful**—unable to **handle the tasks and trials** that come their way—so they come to God, the All-Powerful One, who delights in showing us that His grace is sufficient.

So how about you? Are you humble? God **resists** the proud—but **gives grace** to the humble. If you want God's **assistance**, humble yourselves. If you don't, you will have God's **resistance**—and that will not turn out well for you!

So what does God want us to do in light of what we have heard from His Word today?

1. First, are you saved; are you a child of God? The **humble** person says, “God be merciful to me a sinner!” The **proud** person says, “Look what I have done to deserve heaven!”

Which are you? Has there been a time in your life when you’ve come to God like the prodigal and said, “I have sinned against you and don’t deserve heaven? And although I don’t **deserve** mercy, you provided a payment for my sin and I now ask Jesus to be my Savior.” Have you done that?

2. Child of God, you **started** out humble—how is it going now?

Do you recognize your lack of wisdom—and go to God for it—or do you depend on yourself?

Do you recognize your lack of power and go to God for it—or do you depend on yourself?

God wants us humbly dependent on Him. Are you?