

"True Humility"

Allan Pole on Sunday morning September 15th, 2019



Theme: Look at yourself through God's eyes.

Text: Proverbs 11:2

Here's a thought: C.S. Lewis said, "Humility is not thinking less of yourself, it is thinking of yourself less."

John C. Maxwell writes in "The Complete 101 Collection: What Every Leader Needs to Know", page 538:

Some people's egos are so huge that they have to be either the bride at the wedding or the corpse at the funeral. They think other people exist only to serve them in some way or another. Adolf Hitler was like that. According to Robert Waite, when Hitler was searching for a chauffeur, he interviewed 30 candidates for the job. He selected the shortest man in the group and kept him as his personal driver for the rest of his life; even though the man required special blocks under the driver's seat so that he could see over the steering wheel. Hitler used others to make himself appear bigger and better than he really was. A person consumed with himself never considers spending time raising others up.

I would like to contrast two Biblical characters who demonstrated the truth of Proverbs 11:2:

When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom. NIV

As C.S. Lewis said, true humility:

**Is Not Thinking Less of Yourself
Is Thinking of Yourself Less**

Is Not Thinking Less of Yourself



As the prophet Samuel declared to Saul that he would be the first king of Israel, his reply in 1 Samuel 9:21 sounds impressive:

Saul answered, "But am I not a Benjamite, from the smallest tribe of Israel, and is not my clan the least of all the clans of the tribe of Benjamin? Why do you say such a thing to me?" NIV

Saul wondered aloud why the Lord would choose him to be the nation's first king. Surely God would want someone from a more impressive family background to be the man.

When the time came to recognize Saul as the king publicly, however, his self-appraisal was embarrassing in 1 Samuel 10:20-22:

20 When Samuel brought all the tribes of Israel near, the tribe of Benjamin was chosen. 21 Then he brought forward the tribe of Benjamin, clan by clan, and Matri's clan was chosen. Finally Saul son of Kish was chosen. But when they looked for him, he was not to be found. 22 So they inquired further of the LORD, "Has the man come here yet?" And the LORD said, "Yes, he has hidden himself among the baggage." NIV

Saul, in false humility, hid among the baggage or supplies when the people were going to promote him to leadership. Not only did he carry baggage, he hid among it. Humility does not cause a person to run from a task that needs to be done. Saul knew that the Lord wanted him to be king, but he ran from the position. Humility neither seeks the lime light nor hides from it when it is necessary to accomplish God's work.

I used to suffer from a tremendous inferiority complex. I felt so insecure that when a football team went into a huddle, I was sure they were talking about me.

We see later that what King Saul had was not humility, but insecurity. This insecurity became evident when Saul felt threatened by a young upstart named David. Immediately after David killed the giant Goliath the Israelite women sang, "Saul has slain his thousands and David his tens of thousands." From the moment Saul heard this he resented the attention that David was getting. Someone who sees himself through God's eyes - in true humility - does not

mind someone else getting the attention.

Insecurity is pride in disguise. Insecurity sets your appraisal of yourself above God's appraisal of you. It refuses to believe what God says about you. When you think less of yourself than what God thinks of you, you call God a liar. How much prouder can a person get?

C.S. Lewis, author of *The Chronicles of Narnia*, called pride "spiritual cancer," which eats up love and contentment. It is actually a sign of our own insecurity and feelings of inferiority. The famous preacher, Charles Spurgeon, poetically warned us not to be proud of race, face or place.

American philosopher Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862) concluded, "What a man thinks of himself, that is what determines, or rather indicates, his fate."

This pride, disguised as insecurity, eventually led to Saul's disgrace - before his son and before his nation. Saul's life certainly proved Proverbs 11:2, "When pride comes, then comes disgrace."

Chuck Swindoll talks about true humility:

When our children were small, three kids sat in the back seat of our car, and the youngest, Chuck Jr., sat between Cynthia and me. We had learned that was the safest place, so we could control his body. One day as we were driving along I said, "Hey, let's play what if? What if you could be anybody on earth, who would you like to be?"

One of the girls said, "I want to be the Bionic Woman." The others said who they would like to be, but Chuck never said a word. I pulled up to a stop sign. And as I stopped I looked at him and I said, "Chuckie?" "Yes sir?" "Who would you like to be?" "I'd like to be me." "Why do you want to be you?" "I like me." Boy, that is so good. You know, he was more settled than anybody in the family. He didn't want to be anybody else. He likes who he is. And you know what? He's the most refreshing of the whole bunch. He's just who he is.

When you look in the mirror, what do you think? Do you like you? There might be flaws in your character that you don't like but which can be changed by the Lord, but other than these issues of character, He wants you to like you because *He* likes you and He doesn't make any junk!

True humility:

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When David persuaded King Saul to let him fight the giant Goliath, Saul tried to recreate David in his own image in 1 Samuel 17:38-40:

38 Then Saul dressed David in his own tunic. He put a coat of armour on him and a bronze helmet on his head. 39 David fastened on his sword over the tunic and tried walking around, because he was not used to them. "I cannot go in these," he said to Saul, "because I am not used to them." So he took them off. 40 Then he took his staff in his hand, chose five smooth stones from the stream, put them in the pouch of his shepherd's bag and, with his sling in his hand, approached the Philistine. NIV

David knew he could not wear Saul's armour. David knew who he was in God - he faced Goliath and his enemies. It would have been tempting for a person who did not know himself and his abilities to try to squeeze into the mould that Saul had in mind for him. It is this "identity crisis" that often hits teens as they struggle to come to grips with who they are. Unfortunately, some people never grow out of this - struggling for the rest of their lives to be who other people want them to be rather than who God has made them to be.

David's humility is verbalized in 2 Samuel 7:18:

Then King David went in and sat before the LORD, and he said: "Who am I, O Sovereign LORD, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far? NIV

By this time David had ascended to the throne of Israel and enjoyed peace within and around his kingdom. He sat down and reflected on God's goodness to him, wondering why this had happened to someone who did not deserve such good fortune. The power that God had given to him could have easily corrupted him. Instead, David never forgot his roots and his humble beginning.

David's life certainly proved Proverbs 11:2, "With humility comes wisdom." His unselfishness, gratitude and high regard for those who served him shines through in 2 Samuel 23:13-17:

13 During harvest time, three of the thirty chief men came down to David at the cave of Adullam, while a band of Philistines was encamped in the Valley of Rephaim. 14 At that time David was in the stronghold, and the

Philistine garrison was at Bethlehem. 15 David longed for water and said, "Oh, that someone would get me a drink of water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem!" 16 So the three mighty men broke through the Philistine lines, drew water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem and carried it back to David. But he refused to drink it; instead, he poured it out before the LORD. 17 "Far be it from me, O LORD, to do this!" he said. "Is it not the blood of men who went at the risk of their lives?" And David would not drink it. Such were the exploits of the three mighty men. NIV

David could have taken advantage of the complete loyalty his soldiers had for their commander. Even though he was thirsty, he refused to drink the water brought to him by men who risked their lives for him. A selfish man would have guzzled the water right there and then. Instead, he poured it out as an act of dedication to the Lord. Selfishness and pride are inseparable twins. If you have one you have the other.

A young boy was asked, "If your mother gave you a large apple and a small one and told you to share with your brother, which apple would you keep?"

He replied, "Do you mean my *big* brother or my *little* brother?"

This is not recorded in the Bible, but a story is told of Jesus and His disciples walking along a stony road one day. Jesus asked each of them to choose a stone to carry for Him. John, it is said, chose a large one while Peter chose the smallest. Jesus then led them to the top of a mountain and commanded that the stones be made bread. Each disciple, by this time tired and hungry, was allowed to eat the bread he held in his hand, but of course Peter's was not sufficient to satisfy his hunger. John gave him some of his.

Sometime later Jesus again asked the disciples to pick up a stone to carry. This time Peter chose the largest of all. Taking them to a river, Jesus told them to cast the stones into the water. They did so, but looked at one another in bewilderment.

"For whom," asked Jesus, "did you carry the stone?"

When you are assured of how loved and valued you are by God, you will not be driven to prove it. You will be free to love and to affirm others for their value.

The Apostle Paul declared in Philippians 4:13, "I can do everything through Christ who gives me strength." Was this pride? No, it was confidence in who He was in Christ and confident in the realization that Christ lived within him.

Here is how God looks at you:

- You are fearfully and wonderfully made.
- You are corrupted by sin, unworthy of His grace and mercy, yet loved deeply by the God of the universe.
- If you have Jesus Christ living within you, He now sees Jesus when He looks at you.
- If you have the Holy Spirit living within you, you are capable of doing all things through His strength.

Some children worked long and hard on their own little cardboard shack. It was to be a special spot; a clubhouse where they could meet in solemn assembly or just laugh, play games and fool around. As they thought long and hard about their rules, they came up with three rather profound ones:

1. Nobody act big.
2. Nobody act small.
3. Everybody act medium.

Not bad theology! As we consider the ground rules for our relationships with the Lord, ourselves and one another, let's commit ourselves to thinking no more or less of ourselves than what God thinks of us.

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