



Appendix 1. Participant Handouts

If you are working with a class or small group, feel free to duplicate the handouts at no additional charge. If you'd like to print 8-1/2" x 11" or A4 size pages, you can download the free Participant Guide handout sheets at:

www.jesuswalk.com/humility/humility-lesson-handouts.pdf

Discussion Questions

You'll typically find 5 or 6 questions for each lesson. Each question may include several sub-questions. These are designed to get group members engaged in discussion of the key points of the passage. If you are running short of time, feel free to skip questions or portions of questions.

Suggestions for Classes and Groups

Individuals who are studying online can probably complete one full lesson per week, though they'll need to be diligent to do so. But some of the chapters just have too much material for a one-hour class discussion. You may want to be selective, or to extend your weekly class sessions beyond the number of lessons in this material.

Feel free to arrange the lessons any way that works best for your group. Because of the length of these handouts – and to keep down the page count so we can keep the book price lower – they are being made available at no cost online.

www.jesuswalk.com/humility/humility-lesson-handouts.pdf

8/20/2024 1:09 PM

1. The Basics of Humility

1.1 What Is Humility?

Humility is generally defined as the quality of being humble, having a modest view of one's own. The teachings of Jesus on humility involve a two-fold understanding of humility:

1. Humbling oneself in submission before God so he, not self, is the center of our lives, with
2. Humble service of others, especially those in need.

Moral philosophers Nadelhoffer and Wright use non-religious language to describe **humility as a low self-focus combined with a high other-focus.**

1.2 Selfless Love Is the Central Theme of Christianity (Matt 22:36-40)

Love God	Humble yourself before God and he will exalt you.
Love your neighbor	The greatest disciple is the one who humbly serves others.

Q1. (Matthew 22:36-40) How does a two-part definition of humility correspond to the two greatest commandments? In what sense is humility "a low self-focus combined with a high other-focus"? What does that look like in a disciple?

1.3 Blessed Are the Meek (Matthew 5:3-10; Psalm 37)

We've begun to look at New Testament humility. Who then are the meek of the Old Testament? In Jesus' Beatitudes, all these terms describe traits of the humble followers of the Lord and are closely related to humility. Cf. Psalm 138:6; Proverbs 3:34; Isaiah 2:17; also vss. 11-12; Luke 1:51-53)

1.4 What True Humility Is *Not*

1. Meekness Is Not Weakness. "Meek" is Greek *praus*, meaning "pertaining to not being overly impressed by a sense of one's self-importance, gentle, humble, considerate, meek" in the older favorable sense.
2. Humility Is Not Timid, Passive, or Servile
3. Humility Doesn't Require Self-Abasement or Low Self-Esteem (Ephesians 2:4-6)

1.5 Character Traits that Orbit around Humility (Colossians 3:12-14)

<p>NONASSERTIVE Weak Docile Passive Servile</p> <p>PATIENT Forbearing Long-suffering</p> <p>RESPECTFUL Courteous Considerate Kind Esteem Thoughtful Understanding Nonjudgmental</p>	<p>GOD-FEARING Devout Pious Reverent Repentant Penitent</p> <p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; color: red;">Humble</p> <p>COMPASSIONATE Altruistic Empathetic Gracious Merciful Tender</p>	<p>GENEROUS Serving Welcoming Receiving Hospitable Magnanimous</p> <p>GENTLE Lowly Meek Mild Patient Modest Unpretentious Temperate Self-control Cooperative Submissive</p>
--	--	---

© 2024, Ralph F. Wilson <pastor@joyfulheart.com>

Character traits that cluster around humility. You'll notice that some are greyed out. This because traits of passivity, non-assertiveness, and servile behavior are sometimes falsely ascribed to humility (Lesson 5.4 and Lesson 6.5).

Q2. (Matthew 5:3-10; Colossians 3:10-12). Why do you think that virtues flow from humility and vices flow from pride? Why are humility and pride so central to character?

1.6 Four Basic Insights about Humility

1. Everything We Have Is a Gift (1 Corinthians 4:6-7; Deuteronomy 8:11-18)

Q3. (Deuteronomy 8:17-18; 1 Corinthians 4:7) What happens in our heart when we attribute success to our own strength and abilities? How does a realization that everything we have is a gift affect our ability to humble ourselves?

2. Humility Requires an Accurate Self-Assessment (Romans 12:3-5)

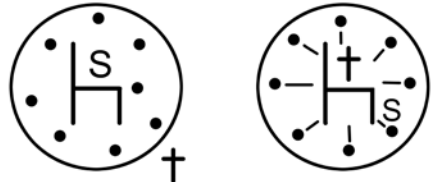
Q4. (Romans 12:3-5) Why is an accurate self-assessment of our spiritual state so important? Why is discovering our spiritual gifts so important? How might pride and anger arise if we imagine we fit somewhere that God didn't design us for?

3. Humility Is Compatible with Healthy Pride (Galatians 6:3-5)

There is a healthy pride we can take in developing competency, the ability to meet established standards of behavior and skill. "Pride, in itself, isn't innately sinful. It's a natural human emotion that can be seen as a healthy sense of self-worth and accomplishment. However, pride becomes a sin when it takes on a different nature – when it changes from a sense of accomplishment and self-worth into an excessive desire for recognition, a pretentious spirit, and an attitude of self-sufficiency that excludes God."

4. Humility Gives Priority to Others' Concerns (Philippians 2:3-5)

- Recognizing Selfish Pride in Ourselves (Philippians 2:3).
"Which circle best represents your life?" "Which circle would you like to represent your life?"
- Acting In Humility (Philippians 2:3b)
- Prioritizing Others' Interests (Philippians 2:3b)
- Caring about Others' Needs (Philippians 2:4-5)



Q5. (Philippians 2:2-5) How can we rationally consider others' concerns more important than our own? Does

agapē love for others make good sense? What does adopting this viewpoint do for humility in us? What aspects of Christ's example of humbling himself (verses 5-11) should be instructive for us?

"Chair Illustration" from the "4 Spiritual Laws" by Bill Bright, © 1965-2013, CRU.

2. Examining the Humility of Jesus

2.1 Jesus Points to His Own Humility

1. The Gentle and Humble Jesus (Matthew 11:25-30)

"Gentle" (KJV "meek" *praus*, "humble in heart" (*tapeinos*) "unpretentious, humble." (Isaiah 57:15; Philippians 2:5-8; Matthew 9:3)

Q6. (Matthew 11:28-30) In what sense is Jesus "gentle and lowly in heart"? What does this tell us about him? How does this make him comfortable for struggling people to be around?

2. The Son Can Do Nothing by Himself (John 5:19, 30)

Q7. (John 5:19, 30) In what sense is Jesus powerless on his own? What is the key to Jesus' power and effectiveness? How does this demonstrate his basic humility? How can we emulate Jesus in this? How does that demonstrate our humility?

3. Jesus' Washes His Disciples' Feet (John 13:1-17)

4. Jesus' Call to Serve as a Ransom (Mark 10:45 = Matthew 20:28)

"Ransom" translates the Greek word *lytron*, "price of release, ransom" especially also the ransom money for the manumission of slaves.

5. Jesus Doesn't Seek Man's Praise (John 5:41, 44; 7:18; 1 Thess 2:6)

Q8. (John 5:41, 44) How is Jesus' refusal to seek men's praise an example of humility? How does this free him to do God's will? How can seeking approval of others cripple our discipleship?

2.2 Humility in the Way Jesus Treats People

1. Jesus Is Moved by Compassion, a Close Cousin of Humility

(Matthew 9:36 = Mark 6:34; Matt 14:14; Matthew 15:32 = Mark 8:2; (Matthew 20:34; Mark 1:41)

2. Jesus Seeks to Limit Crowd-Size (Mark 1:44-45)

3. Jesus Is Tender with Weak, Wounded People (Matthew 12:20; Isaiah 42:3)

A bruised reed is figurative for a weak or wounded person. A faintly burning wick is figurative of a person who has exhausted whatever supply or hope he or she once had and is about ready to give up.

4. Jesus Heals the Sick and Oppressed

(Matthew 4:23-25; Mark 1:32-34; Luke 7:36-50; John 8:3-11).

5. Associating with Tax Collectors and 'Sinners' (Lk 5:30b-32 = Matt 9:10-13 = Mk 2:15-17)

Q9. Which of Jesus' examples of ministering to the hurting stands out to you the most? Which shows the greatest degree of humbling?

2.3 Tenderness at the Cross

1. "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).
2. "This day you will be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43).
3. "Woman, behold your son" (John 19:26-27).

2.4 Challenges to Stimulate Faith

Jesus the Disciple-Maker

Think of a football coach trying to prepare a team to function together to win on the field (Matthew 16:23; John 21:15-19).

From Ralph F. Wilson, *Humility: Disciple's Guide to a Humble Life* (JesusWalk, 2024). © 2024 Ralph F. Wilson. All rights reserved. Permission is granted to make copies of these participant handouts, one set for each member of a local group, at no charge, provided that this copyright information remains intact. www.jesuswalk.com/humility/

Q10. Does being in a place of authority, such as a rabbi, police officer, or parent prevent you from correcting with humility? How does Jesus use rebukes to form disciples?

The Woman Taken in Adultery (John 8:1-11)

The Man with the Demon-Afflicted Boy (Mark 9:14-29)

The Syrophenician Woman (Matthew 15:21-28 = Mark 7:24-30)

Since Jesus shows no racial prejudice towards the Gentile centurion (Matt 8:10), his hesitancy towards the Syrophenician woman isn't real prejudice, but a test to stimulate her faith.

2.5 Jesus and the Pharisees

The Pharisees prided themselves on strict observance of the commands in the Torah, and extended this strictness to the so-called Oral Law or "traditions of the elders." The Oral Law can be visualized as a kind of fence or "hedge" around God's law – a fence of rules. (Matthew 15:1-20; 12:1-2, 9-13; 23:3-5; 6:1; 21:12-17). Nicodemus (John 3:1-8). The Expert in the Law (Mark 12:28-34)

2.6 Jesus Humbles Himself to Death (Philippians 2:6-8)

Q11. (Philippians 2:5-11). In which two ways does Jesus humble himself according to this passage? Why did Jesus humble himself? What is his motivation for humbling himself? What is the result of Jesus' humbling of himself?

3. Humbling Ourselves and Being Exalted

John: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." (Matthew 3:2)

Jesus: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." (Matthew 4:17)

3.1 Pride as Self-Exaltation

God rightly inhabits a place of exaltation. (Exodus 15:7; Isaiah 2:10; 6:1; Psalm 93:1). The noun is *gā'ôn*, "exaltation" or *gē'ût*, "majesty," both of which derive from the verb *gā'â*, "rise up, be exalted." It shouldn't surprise us that the Hebrew word often translated "pride" is also *gā'ôn*, "exaltation." (Proverbs 16:18; 29:23; Isaiah 13:11b; 14:12-15; Genesis 3:5)

"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." (Matthew 4:17) = "Humble yourself before God."

Q12. What is the basic sin that drives all other sins? Why is it so important who is truly in charge of your life? Why are repentance and humbling so vital?

Jesus' Two Core Teachings about Humility

1. God will humble those who exalt themselves and exalt those who humble themselves (this lesson, repeated at least 3 times).
2. The greatest in the Kingdom of God are those who humbly serve others (Lesson 4, repeated 4 times).

3.2 Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector (Luke 18:9-14)

Q13. (Luke 18:9-14) How does the Pharisee in this parable exalt himself? How do comparison and looking down on others reflect pride? How does the tax collector humble himself? Jesus says that the tax collector is "justified before God." Is deep repentance or humbling oneself before God necessary for salvation? Does repentance have anything to do with faith or "believing in Jesus"?

3.3 Jesus' Rebuke of Grand Titles (Matthew 23:11-12)

Q14. (Matthew 23:7-12) Why do the Pharisees love to be called "Rabbi." How can titles and recognition exalt our pride? When people fail to recognize our work or accomplishments, why does it hurt? How much of our motivation is to puff up our ego? In the area of seeking recognition and praise, how can we meaningfully humble ourselves?

3.4 Parable of Places at the Table (Luke 14:7-11)

3.5 The Parable of Becoming Like Children (Matthew 18:1-4)

1. Becoming like children by humbling ourselves (Matthew 18:1-4),
2. Welcoming and receiving the least important in society as an act of humility (Mark 9:35), and
3. Allowing the little children to come (Matthew 19:13-15)

Q15. (Matthew 18:1-4) In what way does "becoming like little children" require us to humble ourselves before God?

3.6 Jesus' Teaching about Welcoming Low-Status People

1. Jesus' Acted Parable of Welcoming Children (Mark 9:36-37)
2. Allowing the Children to Come to Him (Matthew 19:13-15)
3. Parable of the Sheep and the Goats (Matthew 25:31-46)

Q16. (Mark 9:36-37; Matthew 19:13-15; Matthew 25:31-46). What does welcoming and associating with low-status people have to do with humbling ourselves? Where do the people in your

community live who are the poorest economically? Who are somewhat isolated from the rest of the community because of their language or national origin? How do you and your church reach out to them? What could you do?

3.7 Trusting God to Exalt Us

(Matthew 23:12b; Luke 14:11b; 18:14b; James 4:10; 1 Peter 5:6b)

Old Testament Expectant Hope (Isaiah 40:31; Psalm 27:13-14)

New Testament Hope (Luke 1:52-53; Matthew 5:3, 5)

Ugly Jealous Pride

3.8 Humility and Submission to God (James 4:6-10)

Q17. (James 4:6-10) In what way does pride make God your opponent? (vs. 6)? What does submission to God have to do with humility? How do we “wash our hands and purify our hearts”? (vs. 8b) What does that require us to do? Why does humbling have to precede God lifting us up?

Walking Humbly with our God (Micah 6:8)

4. The Greatness of Humble Service

"If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all." (Mark 9:35)

4.1 Non-Domineering Servant Leaders (Mark 10:43-44 = Matthew 20:26-27)

It is the paradox of the Kingdom: You become great by serving. You gain your life by losing it.

Q18. (Mark 10:42-44) What is the basic difference between the world's pattern of leadership and Christ's pattern? What does servant-leadership look like? Can you be a "great" Jesus-follower without serving humbly?

4.2 Warnings against Exalted Titles (Matthew 23:12)

4.3 Jesus' Acted Parable of Washing the Disciples' Feet (John 13:4-17; Luke 22:24)

Washing the Disciples' Feet (John 13:4-5)

Washing *someone else's feet* was a task reserved for the most menial of servants. A Jewish commentary on the Book of Exodus suggests that Jewish slaves could not be required to wash the feet of others, that this task was so demeaning that it should be reserved for Gentile slaves or for women, children, or pupils. A wife might wash a husband's feet; a child might wash a parent's feet. Rarely, a disciple might honor a distinguished rabbi by washing his feet. But for a superior to wash an inferior's feet was never ever done! Except by Jesus.

Q19. (John 13:4-17) Why did Jesus intend to shock his disciples by performing such a lowly act? What message was he trying to instill in them by this footwashing?

4.4 Jesus' Acted Parable of Welcoming Children (Mark 9:33-37)

A Cup of Cold Water (Mark 9:41 = Matthew 10:42)

4.5 Jesus' Parable of the Sheep and the Goats (Matthew 25:31-46)

The "sheep" question him, When did we see you this way, Lord? "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'" (Matthew 25:40; cf. Isaiah 58:7.

Q20. (Mark 9:41; Matthew 25:31-46) What do Jesus' saying about giving a cup of cold water and Jesus' Parable of the Sheep and the Goats have in common? What kinds of services might please Jesus that can we perform for needy people?

4.5 Humble Service in the Early Church

Dorcas or Tabitha of Joppa (Acts 9:36-42)

Serving Those Who Can't Repay (James 1:27; Luke 14:12-14)

Mother Teresa of Calcutta (1910-1997)

(1 Corinthians 12:7; 1 Peter 4:10)

Q21. (Act 9:36-42; James 1:27; Luke 14:12-14). Why does caring for orphans and widows constitute pure religion? Why does helping those who can't help you show humility? Why are Dorcas and Mother Teresa so inspiring?

4.6 Motive and Humility

Humble Service Is Not for Show (Matthew 6:1-4)

God Sees the Motives of the Heart (1 Samuel 16:7; Matthew 23:27-28; Jeremiah 17:9-10; Hebrews 4:12)

The Spirit Heals Corrupt Hearts

Guard Your Heart with All Diligence (Proverbs 4:23)

Q22. (Matthew 6:1-4; Jeremiah 17:9-10; Proverbs 4:23) Why are motives so important to genuine humility? If the heart is deceitful, how can we ever have pure motives? What does it mean for us to guard our hearts?

5. Humility and Leadership

5.1 Moses, the Humblest Man in the World (Numbers 12:3)

One of the surprises of the Pentateuch is Moses' humility.

Where we find this statement about Moses' humility, Miriam and Aaron are grumbling about Moses' wife, who is from Cush, most likely a region immediately south and east of Egypt – including modern Nubia, the Sudan, and Ethiopia. She probably would have had a very dark complexion. Moses' first wife, Zipporah, is from a Midianite tribe. She isn't Israelite either.

"Meek" (ESV, KJV), "humble" (NIV, NRSV) is the adjective *'ānāw*, "humble" from the verb *'ānâ*, "afflict, oppress, humble." "Frequently the word seems to denote an attitude of mind more characteristic of the poor than of the rich, one of humility and dependence on God."

Q23. (Numbers 12:3) Why is Moses called the most humble man in the world? What is the essence of his humility? What is the essence of Jesus' humility? What is the lesson for leaders today?

5.2 Assertiveness and Humility

The English definition of "assertive" is "disposed to or characterized by bold or confident statements and behavior." In current psychological parlance, assertiveness is "good" and has been idealized, while both submissiveness and aggression are "bad." But stripped of its psychological associations, the basic idea of assertiveness is "the quality of being confident and not frightened to say what you want or believe." Biblical assertiveness refers to what we know as faith and courage.

A Spirit of Power, Love, and Self-Control (1 Timothy 4:11-12; 2 Timothy 1:6-7)

The word "timidity" (NIV), "fear" (ESV, KJV), "cowardice" (NRSV) is *deilia*, "lack of mental or moral strength, cowardice."

Esther's Submissiveness and Assertiveness (Esther 4)

Q24. (2 Timothy 1:7) How is faith related Christian assertiveness? How is courage related? What is the relation of assertiveness to submission? Is assertiveness opposed to humility? What factors might keep leaders from being assertive when they need to be? How does assertiveness display itself in the heroes of the faith?

5.3 Ambition and Humility

Selfish ambition, *eritheia*, "selfishness, selfish ambition" (Philippians 2:3).

"Ambition" = "desire to achieve a particular end." Good ambition (Romans 15:20; 1 Thessalonians 4:11; 2 Corinthians 5:9; 1 Timothy 3:1)

Ambition as Aspiration

Ambition can be seen as the **aspiration** to attain something greater than what one has at the present. Indeed, without ambition there would be no leaders who aspire to a better future and lead people on the path to get there.

Q25. What is the role of ambition in leadership? What does leadership look like without ambition?

Competition

I don't think that competition is really on-target for a study of humility. Competition seems to be built into the way God created his world. We can't really choose *not* to compete. If we must compete,

we must learn to compete effectively, with God's help. Ethical questions of how to compete without taking unfair advantage.

5.4 Humility and Planning (James 4:13-16; Proverbs 16:9; 19:21; 27:1)

5.5 Cautions for Humble Leaders

1. Humility and the Love of Praise

Matthew 6:1a; 23:5-6. Phylacteries are small leather boxes that contain Scripture verses worn by devout Jewish men during prayers. They remind the worshipper of God's promises and commands. Likewise, Israelite men wear tassels (fringes) on their corners of their garments with hyacinth blue cord on each tassel to remind them of God's commands.

John 5:41, 44; 7:18; 12:42-43; Luke 16:16; 1 Thessalonians 2:6a. When we are hungry for approval of others, it is difficult for us to be fully obedient to the One who sends us. But when we no longer seek the praise of men, we are free.

"Flattery" is defined as "insincere or excessive praise." (Matthew 22:16-17; Psalm 36:2; Proverbs 28:23)

Q26. Is it okay to use flattery to smooth social situations? To get our way with a difficult person? If flattery is insincerity and manipulation of another's pride, how do you think God views flattery?

2. Boastfulness

Boastfulness is a close cousin of flattery (Psalm 12:3; 94:4; Jeremiah 9:23-24; Galatians 6:14; 1 Corinthians 13:4; Proverbs 25:27; 27:2)

Q27. How can small businesspersons promote themselves without sinful boasting. What are the guidelines?

3. Worldliness (1 John 2:15-16)

4. Stealing God's Glory (Acts 12:19-24; 14:11-18; Isaiah 42:8, 11; Exodus 34:14; Psalm 115:1)

Q28. (1 John 2:15-16) What role does pride have in worldliness? How can we live holy lives in this world? What does "stealing the glory" look like? How can it be dangerous?

5.6 A Thorn in the Flesh to Humble Paul (2 Corinthians 12:7-10)

The passage raises a number of issues: (1) God *can* allow physical ailments to teach and correct us. (2) God *can* humble us, if we don't humble ourselves, as Jesus said. (3) While painful, it is good to be humbled by God, because the process can produce fruits of the Spirit and faith in us. (4) God *can* send "thorns" to keep us from falling into sin.

5.7 Peter on Humble Leadership (1 Peter 5:1-7)

Q29. (1 Peter 5:1-7) Why does pride make God our adversary? Why is the power of example preferable to power of one's office? What might God "lifting us up in due time" look like?

6. The Humble Lifestyle (Titus)

Q30. (Titus 2:15-3:2) How does living God's way require humbling ourselves before God?

Paul uses the word "sound doctrine" several times in Titus to describe teaching the Cretan believers basic Christian behavior – so the non-believers will take notice and be drawn to Christ, "so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive" (Titus 2:10; cf. 2:1-3, 5-8; 15-3.2)

- **Respectful** – "worthy of respect" (1:5); "kind" (2:5); "seriousness" (2:7); "soundness of speech" (2:8)
- **Patient** – "peaceable" (3:2).
- **God-fearing** – "sound in faith, in love and in endurance" (1:5); "reverent," as opposed to being slanderers and drunks (2:3; 3:2); "integrity" (2:7).
- **Compassionate** – "considerate" (3:2).
- **Generous** – "doing what is good," "good works" (2:7, 14; 3:1, 8, 14).
- **Gentle** – "temperate" (1:5); "self-controlled" (1:5; 2:5, 6); "submissive" (2:5; 3:2); "obedient" (3:1).

NONASSERTIVE
Weak
Docile
Passive
Servile

PATIENT
Forbearing
Long-suffering

RESPECTFUL
Courteous
Considerate
Kind
Esteem
Thoughtful
Understanding
Nonjudgmental

GOD-FEARING
Devout
Pious
Reverent
Repentant
Penitent

Humble

COMPASSIONATE
Altruistic
Empathetic
Gracious
Merciful
Tender

GENEROUS
Serving
Welcoming
Receiving
Hospitable
Magnanimous

GENTLE
Lowly
Meek
Mild
Patient
Modest
Unpretentious
Temperate
Self-control
Cooperative
Submissive

© 2024, Ralph F. Wilson <pastor@joyfulheart.com>

Character traits that cluster around humility. You'll notice that some are greyed out. This because traits of passivity, non-assertiveness, and servile behavior are sometimes falsely ascribed to humility (Lesson 5.4 and Lesson 6.5).

6.1 Quiet, Peaceable Lives

Selfish Desires and Fighting (James 4:1-3)

Peaceable Lives (1 Thessalonians 4:11; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; (2 Thessalonians 3:1; Titus 3:2; James 3:17-18; Matthew 5:9; Romans 12:18)

Q31. (James 4:1-3) How does pride fuel conflict? How do fighting and quarrelling prevent a peaceable life? According to James, what is at the root of our fighting? How do we respond to conflict, knowing that peace doesn't depend solely upon us? Since conflict is inevitable, what are some ways we can disagree agreeably, humbly?

6.2 Good Deeds and Generosity towards the Needy

(Titus 3:1-2; Deuteronomy 15:7-8; Isaiah 58:7; Proverbs 14:31; 19:17; 22:9; Acts 9:36; Titus 2:14; 3:8, 14; Ephesians 2:10; Galatians 6:10; Romans 12:13; Colossians 1:10; 2 Corinthians 9:8; 2 Thessalonians 2:16, 17; James 2:17-18)

Q32. (Ephesians 2:10; Titus 3:1-2; James 2:17-18) How are good deeds related to humility and compassion? What kinds of good deeds were common in the early church? Is it possible to have faith without any fruit of good deeds that demonstrate your faith?

6.3 Temperance and Self-Control

Paul's goal is to help these new believers avoid the excesses that have thus far messed up their lives. One part of the humble lifestyle includes what you might call temperance or moderation. Let's look at some of these character traits.

Temperance with Alcohol (Ephesians 5:18a; Romans 13:13; Titus 1:6-9; 2:2-3; 1 Timothy 3:1-11); 1 Timothy 5:23).

Self-Control

“Self-control” (NIV, ESV, NRSV), is found in several lists of virtues sometimes translated as “prudent” (NRSV) or “sober” (KJV). The ancient Greeks considered “self-control,” restraint or modesty, as a leading civic virtue. Self-control includes ideas of restraint of impulses and desires, as well as prudence, thoughtfulness guiding our actions. (Titus 2:2, 6, 12; 1:8; Galatians 5:22-23; 2 Peter 1:5-7)

All Things in Moderation?

Is moderation scriptural? In the King James Version we read, “Let your moderation (*epieikēs*) be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.” (Philippians 4:5, KJV). But the adjective *epieikēs* here is better translated as “gentleness” (NIV, NRSV) or “reasonableness” (ESV). The word means, “not insisting on every right of letter of law or custom, yielding, gentle, kind, courteous, tolerant.”

Q33. What is the difference between temperance and abstinence? How can use of alcohol and drugs disrupt the humble life? Why is self-control so important in the Christian life? How does self-control differ from the idea of “moderation in all things”?

Moderate Apparel

Isaiah 3:16-23; 1 Timothy 2:9-10; 1 Peter 3:3-4)

Peter contrasts outward beauty (which begins to fade as we age) to inner beauty, “the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit” (1 Peter 3:4). The inner person, the inner spirit of a godly woman is described as “gentle” (*praus*, “gentle, humble, considerate, meek.”). It is also described as “quiet,” without rancor and carrying on, “quiet, well-ordered.”

6.4 Respect and Honor

Gentleness and Respect (1 Peter 3:15; 2 Timothy 2:25)

The word translated in 1 Peter 3:15 as “respect” (NIV, ESV), “reverence” (NRSV), “fear” (KJV) is *phobos* (from which we get words such as “phobia”), “fear.” But this usage isn’t talking about terror of a person, rather “reverence, respect.” Cf. 2 Timothy 2:25. Both verses share the Greek word *prautēs*, generally translated as “gently” or “with gentleness” (NIV, NRSV, KJV), or “meekness” (KJV), “the quality of not being overly impressed by a sense of one’s self-importance, gentleness, humility, courtesy, considerateness, meekness” in the older favorable sense.

Honoring One Another (Romans 12:10; Philippians 2:3-4; Romans 12:10).

Insults Show Disrespect (1 Peter 3:9)

“Insult” (NIV), “reviling” (ESV), “abuse” (NRSV), “railing” (KJV) is *loidoria*, “speech that is highly insulting, abuse, reproach, reviling.”

Q34. (1 Peter 3:15; Romans 12:10; 1 Peter 3:9) How is humility related to respect for others? To honoring others? How can we minister to someone for whom we have no respect? In what way does insulting speech trample upon humility? How does interrupting a person show disrespect?

6.5 Submission without Servility

“Be subject” or “submit yourselves” generally translate *hypotassō*, “to cause to be in a submissive relationship, to subject, to subordinate.” It can contain the idea of “obey,” but there are other Greek words for obedience itself. (Titus 3:1-2; Romans 13:1; 13:6-7; 1 Peter 2:13; 1 Timothy 2:1-2). The apostles consistently teach submission of wives to husbands (Ephesians 5:22-24, 33;

Colossians 3:18; 1 Peter 3:2, 7), children to parents (Ephesians 6:1-3; Colossians 3:20), and slaves to masters (1 Peter 2:18; Ephesians 6:5; Colossians 3:21-25), as well as a kind of mutual submission (Ephesians 5:21). Even within the institution of slavery as it has existed, sadly, for thousands of years, believing masters and slaves are to respect one another (1 Timothy 6:1-2).

Submission That Is Neither Servile nor Slavish (Colossians 3:23-25)

Husbands have a high standard (Ephesians 5:25; 1 Peter 3:7; Colossians 3:25).

Submission to Church Leaders (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; 1 Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:17)

Q35. (Titus 3:1-2; Colossians 3:23-25). How is appropriate submission related to humility? Why does opposing church leaders so often exhibit pride? When you have to submit to a harsh person, how can you look at it in a way that is spiritual? How can we submit voluntarily in our hearts without being slavishly servile?

Submission to God over Man (Acts 5:29; cf. Acts 4:19).

6.6 Patience, Forbearance, and Perseverance

Patience

(Proverbs 25:15; Ecclesiastes 7:8; James 1:19-20; Galatians 5:22-23; Colossians 1:11-12a; 3:12; 2 Timothy 3:10; 2 Timothy 4:2; 2 Peter 3:9). Be patient" is *makrothymēō*, "to remain tranquil while waiting, have patience, wait" (BDAG 612, 1), from *makros*, "long," + *thymos*, "passion," hence, the KJV translation of the noun "longsuffering."

Forbearance (Proverbs 19:11; Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:13)

Greek noun *anechō*, "to regard with tolerance, endure, bear with, put up with."

Q36. (James 1:19-20; Colossians 3:13) What is the relationship of patience to humility? What in us motivates impatient outbursts? What does it take for God to work in us "long-suffering"? Why is forbearance so vital in a marriage?

Perseverance (James 5:7-11; 5:9-11)

James 5:11: *hypomonē* indicates perseverance, steadfastness, endurance – remaining for as long as it takes.

Frustration with God (Lamentations 3:33; James 5:11b)

7. Humility and Living Together in Harmony

Live in Harmony (Romans 12:16; 1 Peter 3:8)

7.1 Maintain the Unity of the Spirit (Ephesians 4:1-3)

1. With all humility and gentleness (vs. 2a). *Tapeinophrosynē*, "humility, modesty." *Prautēs*, "gentleness, humility, courtesy, considerateness, meekness."
2. With patience and forbearance (vs. 2b).
3. Keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace (vs. 3)

(1 Corinthians 13:4-8)

Q37. (Romans 12:16; Ephesians 4:1-3) How does conceit make it difficult to live in harmony with others? Why do you think maintaining the unity of the Spirit such a high value for Jesus and his apostles? What are the tensions in your own congregation that threaten the unity of the Spirit? How can you lessen those tensions and promote harmony?

Finding and Accepting Your Place in the Body (Romans 12:3-5; 1 Corinthians 12:12, 14-27)

Humility involves finding your place and then functioning in it, rather than imagining you are someone you are not.

In Dante's famous *Divine Comedy* (1320 AD) "In his will is our peace."

7.2 Non-Judgmentalism

Judge Not, that You Be Not Judged (Matthew 7:1-2; James 2:13)

Mercy, Not Sacrifice (Matthew 9:13; Hosea 6:6)

They had kept the religious observances, but had lost the moral basis of a loving God. "It was mercy that found favor with God, not sacrifices offered by those who felt themselves to be morally superior." Jesus is saying that the Pharisees think they know the law, but they do not know God or God's heart of compassion for the lost. They honor God with their lips, Jesus says, "but their hearts are far from me."

Comparing Ourselves with Others (2 Corinthians 10:12; Luke 18:11-12; Galatians 6:4b-5; Romans 14:10)

Gossip and Backbiting, the Mouthpiece of Judgmentalism (Titus 3:1-2)

"Slander" (NIV), "speak evil of" (ESV, NRSV, KJV) translates the verb *blasphēmō*, "to demean through speech," specifically, "to speak in a disrespectful way that demeans, denigrates, maligns," in relation to humans, "slander, revile, defame."

Q38. (Matthew 7:1-2; 9:13; Hosea 6:6; 2 Corinthians 10:12) What prevents a judgmental spirit from being compatible with humility? How can we maintain an attitude of mercy towards sinners in our fallen world while still maintaining godly standards within our Christian community? In what way does comparing ourselves with others work against humility? How do backbiting and a critical spirit betray a judgmental spirit?

7.3 Forgiveness vs. Retribution

An Eye for an Eye (Exodus 21:22, 24-25; Proverbs 20:22).

Ghandi: "An eye for an eye leaves the whole world blind."

Jesus Says 'No' to Retribution (Matthew 5:38-39; 1 Thessalonians 5:15; 1 Peter 3:9; Romans 12:17-18)

Called to Bless (1 Peter 3:9)

Jesus and the Apostles Teach Forgiveness

(Matthew 6:12, 14-15; Mark 11:25; Matthew 18:35; Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13)

Judicial Ruling vs. Personal Forgiveness (Romans 12:19; 13:4)

distinguish between personal forgiveness and justice. Each community has some kind of official way of bringing discipline depending upon its polity. This is true of Christian communities, towns, cities, regions, and countries. A judge or panel of judges investigates the issue and decides what punishment is appropriate according to law, then calls for the execution of an appropriate punishment. Judicial *mercy* may or may not be called for, perhaps lessening a just sentence because of family conditions, etc.

Q39. (Matthew 5:38-39; Romans 12:19; 13:4) Why are unforgiveness and humility incompatible with each other? Why must we distinguish between personal forgiveness and judicial determination and sentencing?

7.4 Humility and Social Standing (Romans 12:16)

James on Showing Favoritism (James 2:1-9)

Q40. (Romans 12:16; James 2:1-9) Why does Christ's humility require us to associate those considered lowly? Who are the "lowly" in your community? What are you and your congregation actively doing to break down the barriers between these people and yourselves? What message does lack of favoritism send to the world that is watching Christians?

7.5 Humility in Conditions of Abundance

(Psalm 62:10b; Deuteronomy 8:18a; 1 Corinthians 4:7)

Humility and Wealth (1 Timothy 6:6-10, 17)

The Greek word for "arrogant" or "haughty" here has the idea of thinking oneself as somehow high or lofty, that is, superior to others who are not as well off.

Humility and Knowledge (Colossians 2:18; 1 Corinthians 8:1)

The Conceit of Favorite Doctrines (1 Timothy 6:3-4a; Titus 3:2)

Q41. (1 Timothy 6:3-4,17; Colossians 2:18) Why does having an abundance of wealth and knowledge tend to make us feel superior? Why do false doctrines and heresies often come with a feeling of superiority over lesser Christians who believe differently? How can you show humility if you are wealthy? How can the well-educated show humility?

He Must Increase (John 3:30)

Q42. (John 3:30) In what ways are you observing Christ's influence increasing in you? How is your seeking of your own way decreasing? What are the biggest obstacles to humility currently before you? What are you doing to humble yourself in these circumstances that challenge you?

Appendix 2. A Christian Litany of Humility

Leader reads regular type. Group reads italicized type.

O Jesus! meek and humble of heart, *Hear me.*

From the desire of being esteemed, *Deliver me, Jesus.*

From the desire of being loved, *Deliver me, Jesus.*

From the desire of being extolled, *Deliver me, Jesus.*

From the desire of being honored, *Deliver me, Jesus.*

From the desire of being praised, *Deliver me, Jesus.*

From the desire of being preferred, *Deliver me, Jesus.*

From the desire of being consulted, *Deliver me, Jesus.*

From the desire of being approved, *Deliver me, Jesus.*

From the fear of being humiliated, *Deliver me, Jesus.*

From the fear of being despised, *Deliver me, Jesus.*

From the fear of suffering rebukes, *Deliver me, Jesus.*

From the fear of being calumniated, *Deliver me, Jesus.*

From the fear of being forgotten, *Deliver me, Jesus.*

From the fear of being ridiculed, *Deliver me, Jesus.*

From the fear of being wronged, *Deliver me, Jesus.*

From the fear of being suspected, *Deliver me, Jesus.*

That others may be loved more than I, *Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.*

That others may be esteemed more than I, *Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.*

That, in the opinion of the world,

others may increase and I may decrease, *Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.*

That others may be chosen and I set aside, *Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.*

That others may be praised and I unnoticed, *Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.*

That others may be preferred to me in everything, *Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.*

That others may become holier than I,

provided that I may become as holy as I should, *Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.*

Attributed to Rafael Cardinal Merry del Val (1865-1930), though previous versions were published in 1865 and 1880, one translated from the French. Wikipedia article, "[Litany of humility](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Litany_of_humility)." (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Litany_of_humility)