

## Humility and Submission – 1 Peter 5:5-6

May 16, 2021

Today we are talking about humility, which I believe is the most important, most foundational attitude you need to have as a Christian.

- 1 Peter 5:5-7. The main theme in these vss. is humility. It is a subject we've already talked about in 1 Pet. 2 and 3, and now it's being talked about again, which means it's critically important, absolutely necessary, essential for your life as a Christian. It's like your body – you need food and water. You can spend all this time on your hair, your clothes, your makeup, and even exercising, but what's most important, what's foundational is drinking water and eating food, and let me add, good food.

And so too, humility is foundational, vital for your relationship with God and your relationships with others, with both the saved and the lost. It is vital for the work you do, out in the world or in the church. It is vital for your ministry in the church. It is vital for your family, your children, your spouse. Indeed, this is a huge subject, a most important subject, for it relates to every day of your life, everything in your life, and everyone you know.

Humility relates to growing as a Christian, to becoming more mature.

And in fact, it relates to every aspect of your Christian life.

- It relates to having faith. It relates to experiencing God's grace.
- It relates to being holy. It relates to having unity.
- It relates to loving God. It relates to loving people. It relates to being kind, compassionate, forgiving, gentle, hospitable, and many other godly qualities.

Indeed, every Christian needs to be humble, whether they are a man or a woman, whether they are spiritually young or old. It's what every person needs to have.

In fact, it's what unbelievers need to have too, even though most don't realize it.

- Jesus said this about humility - *"Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled and everyone who humbles himself will be exalted."* Luke 14:11. James said, *"Humble yourself in the presence of the Lord."* James 4:10. Paul said, *"Have this attitude of humility in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus."* Phil. 2:5. Peter said, *"Be submissive to your masters with all respect."* 1 Pet. 3:18

- And this word submissive directly relates to humility, which I'll explain later.

If you don't have humility, then you will have problems, problems in life, problems at work, and problems internally - in your mind, soul, and spirit; and you'll have problems in your relationships with people, and most importantly problems with God Himself.

- 1 Peter 5:5c. And the main reason you will have problems is that if you are not humble, then you won't be useful to God, and God will oppose you. And you don't want that.

Now let me clarify - God won't oppose you as a Christian because He hates you, but because He loves you, and because He knows how important it is for you to be humble.

- 1 Peter 5:6. Now God commands you to be humble because He knows more than anyone else how critically important it is for you as a Christian. James 4:10

Let's look at what this word humble means. It is based on 3 things: 1. You know who God is. 2. You know who you are. 3. You know who you are in relationship to God.

- 1<sup>st</sup>, it means you know that God is God, that He is supreme, that He is sovereign, that He is eternal, that He is all powerful, that He is holy, that He is righteous, that He has all wisdom, that He is omniscient, that He is the Creator of all things.

2<sup>nd</sup>, it means you know God created you. It means you know you're special to Him for you were created in His image. Ps. 139:14. It means you know you are unique, that you're not a clone or a robot, and that no one else in the whole universe is like you. It means you know you have a soul, and therefore you are an eternal being.

- 3<sup>rd</sup>, it means you know that God saved you from sin and death, and that you didn't save yourself. It means you understand that God was merciful to you, that He didn't have to save you, but He loved you and wanted to save you and He chose to save you. It means you know God, and that you have a personal and eternal relationship with Him.

This results in you knowing who you are in relationship to God. A person's main problem is that he's a sinner, and a sinner is spiritually separated from God – he is off doing his own thing, he doesn't want God in his life, he doesn't think he needs God, he doesn't want God telling him what to do, he wants to run his own life, and in all this, he is acting like he's god, god with a little g. But knowing who God is, and knowing who you are, and knowing that you're saved, and that God saved you, and that you're His child and He's your Father - all this relates to and results in you being truly humble before God, being humble in a godly way.

Rom. 1:18-25. This talks about sinners, and how the unbeliever doesn't worship God, doesn't thank God, doesn't bow down to God, and thinks he knows it all, and doesn't want God in his life, and as I just said, wants to be his own god. And so he rejects God, and the truth of God, and therefore he's not humble, but instead, is proud, and does his own thing, not what God wants him to do. And therefore, all kinds of sin and evil is seen in his life, which is what Rom 1 goes on to talk about.

- Daniel 4:34-35, 2 Chronicles 33 - Manasseh

Here is a dictionary definition of humility that basically says the same thing:

*"in a religious context, humility can mean a recognition of self in relationship to a deity (i.e. God) and (a) subsequent submission to that deity."*

- This too says that humility relates to understanding your relationship with God and then submitting to Him. You know who God is and you know who you are, you know you're saved – and this is the basis for humility and enables you to humble. And it all starts in your thinking, in your heart, in your spirit, in your soul. Prov. 23:7

This word humble is used three different times in 1 Pet. 5:5-7. The literal definition of humble is low-lying, and it's usually used in a positive sense. And a humble person sees himself lower than God and it's good that he does, for he is much lower than God. He also knows he has a relationship with God because God was merciful to him, a sinner, and that truth of God's mercy and love towards him helps produce humility in his heart towards God. That is, a person is humble because he knows God is powerful, awesome, holy, and just, but also that He has been so merciful and forgiving towards him. Luke 18:9-14

1 Pet. 2:13, 18; 1 Pet. 3:1; 1 Pet. 5:5. This word submit or subject is from a Greek word that was used as a military term. It means to rank yourself under, to put yourself under, to line up under. And in the military there are different ranks – private, sergeant, corporal, lieutenants, generals, etc. And those in the military always rank themselves under someone else, unless, of course, they are the commander in chief, the President. And so humility and submission go together, you can't separate them, they are like a hand and a glove. And only those who are humble can submit.

When a person is humble in his heart, in his thinking, then he will submit to those in authority over him, in his speech and his actions. And so a heart of humility results in the action of submitting. Submission is that which results from a humble heart. And if a person is not submitting to the authorities over him, then he is not humble in his heart towards God. That's why that command in vs. 6, "*Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God*" is so important. Humility that starts in a person's heart with God whom he cannot see, will always result in humility towards authorities that he can see. And a way to see if you are humble towards God is by being humble to your authorities. 1 Peter 2:13, 3:1, 5:1

Proverbs 22:4. Now there's this connection between being humble and fearing God. And fearing God is an essential heart quality of a Christian, and it results from being humble. When a person is humble, he knows who God is, he knows who he is, and he has a right relationship with God, the One who made him, saved him, and is his Lord. Therefore, this person fears God. He respects God, is in awe of God, bows down to God, worships God, and he obeys God. And so a person who is humble fears God, and if he fears God, then it's because he is humble before God. Humility and fearing God go together, you cannot separate them.

- You cannot live the Christian life without both humility and the fear of the Lord. And the result is wonderful - it's riches, honor, and life. The result of humility and the fear of the Lord is true life and true blessing, spiritually and eternally so. Prov. 15:33

Let's go back to 1 Peter 5. I want to briefly go through these three verses and then look at them more extensively next week. And I am taking all this time on this topic of humility and submission because it is so extremely important.

1 Peter 5:5a. We had just read that the elders were to serve the church, and that can only happen if they are truly humble. But now we see that the younger men, those in the church who are spiritually younger, not as mature, that they're to submit to these elders. And that's needed for the spiritual health and growth of the church.

1 Peter 5:5b. Not only should younger men submit to those spiritually older, but every Christian should be humble and submit to every other Christian. This is a profound and important truth, that you are to be humble before every other believer, before every other person in this church, and really, towards all people in your life.

1 Peter 5:5c. Here is a strong statement, that God is opposed, is against all those who are proud, both Christians and non-Christians. And this should be a motivation to you to be humble, and if you are not, then God will oppose you and humble you. And there are many examples of this in the Bible, as we saw already.

1 Peter 5:5d. God gives grace to those who are humble. We all need grace every day of our Christian life, and the way to receive God's grace is to be humble, is to admit to God that you need His help, His wisdom, and His power. And that admission of your need and desire for God's help will result in you receiving His grace.

1 Peter 5:6a. Therefore - which means what do you in view of what you have learned? You humble yourself. That is, God wants you, in your heart and soul to humble yourself under His mighty hand. And there are many ways to do this, and I'll mention a few – you humble yourself by worshiping God, by believing His word, by prayer, by confessing sin, by obeying God, and by serving the saints. And we'll talk more about this next week.

1 Peter 5:6b. When you humble yourself, then God will exalt you, will bless you, And as it said in Prov. 22:5, God will, spiritually speaking, give you riches, honor and life. Your life will be what God wants - your life will be full, rich and blessed when you are humble, when you submit to God and others, when you do what He wants you to do.

1 Peter 5:7. Anxious people aren't humble, they're looking to others, they are looking at their circumstances, they are thinking about their problems, but they are not looking to God and being humble before Him. They are trusting in themselves or others, but they aren't trusting God. Matt. 6

I cannot state enough the importance of humility. I encourage each of you to be praying about this, to be asking God to help you understand more what godly humility is, and how you can be more humble. And if you are humble, God will greatly bless you and use you for His purposes and His glory. Philippians 2:9-11