

**Men's  
Servant Leadership Study**

Week 9

***HUMILITY***

Memory Verse for the Week Philippians 2:3

In a few words write out your definition of what humility is. \_\_\_\_\_

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On a scale from 1 – 10 (1 least important and 10 being most important) how important is it for you to live with an attitude of humility? \_\_\_\_\_

**DAY 1**

**Read Philippians 2:1-11**

The main goal for godly leaders – and Christians in general – is to reflect the life of Christ in their own lives. And the character trait that best enables us to do that is humility. After exhorting the Philippians to lay aside their personal interests and focus on the needs of others, Paul tells us how to follow the example of Christ (vv5-11). From this beautiful passage we learn three things about our Lord that model for us the essence of true humility.

First, Jesus didn't selfishly cling to the outer expression of His divinity. Instead, He took the form of a servant. A humble leader doesn't flaunt his or her position of power. Instead, he or she identifies with the weakest member of the team. Second, Jesus demonstrated humility through obedience to God the Father. A humble leader doesn't impose his or her will on God, but submits to God's commands. Third, Jesus waited for His Father to lift Him up. A humble leader doesn't grab for power or position. He or she patiently waits for God to increase his or her influence.

Jesus didn't come as a king, but as a helpless infant (Luke 2). Although He was perfectly God and perfectly human at the same time (John 1:14), He lived His life as a humble laborer. After he began His ministry, he demonstrated humble service to others in the miracles he performed, as well as in His instruction to His disciples. When the time came for Him to die, He submitted to His Father's divine will (Mark 14:36). And now, seated in power at the right hand of God, He intercedes on our behalf (Acts 5:29-32). As the perfect model for godly leadership, Jesus set the perfect example of humility. Ask God to help you follow Jesus' example as you seek to demonstrate the kind of humility that will cause others to see Jesus in you.

1) Write out in your own words the "three things about our Lord that model for us the essence of true

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humility”, found in today’s reading. \_\_\_\_\_  
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2) Write verses 3 and 4 as if you were writing a note to yourself. Put your name in at the beginning of your note, and put in the name of the person(s) with whom you have the hardest time being humble towards. \_\_\_\_\_  
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## **DAY 2**

### **Humility and Who God Is**

Humility has fallen on hard times. Contrary to popular opinion, humility is not a matter of weakness or passivity; from a biblical point of view, it is disciplined strength and other-centered power. In His earthly life, Christ Himself was the perfect exemplar of true humility. Read Matthew 11:28-30 for a glimpse at what humility really means.

#### **Read Matthew 11:28-30**

Unlike the Pharisees, Christ is gentle, and has a humble heart. He offers rest for the weary souls of those who come to Him and learn from Him. Christ’s humility was evident in His perfect obedience to the authority and will of His Father. He learned obedience through suffering (Hebrews 5:8) and always sought to glorify the Father and not Himself.

Jesus summarized His mission statement in saying that He had come to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). He came to serve and offer His life as a ransom (Mark 10:45). It is one thing to claim to be a servant, but it is another to be treated as one. Jesus Christ, the most powerful man ever to walk on the face of the earth, was also the most humble man who ever lived. His agenda was never to promote Himself, but to please His Father by loving and serving others.

Jesus’ incarnation was in itself a profound act of humility, let alone His death on a cross. Read Philippians 2:5-11 to see how His humiliation preceded His exaltation.

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1) Because He knew who He was, Jesus was secure enough to serve others (read John 13:3-5). In what way does your understanding of your identity relate to the issue of humility in your life?

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2) In Matthew 11:28 – 30 Jesus explains that he is gentle/meek/humble. What does this say to us about the attitude that we should have when approaching Jesus?

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### **DAY 3**

#### **Humility and Who I Am**

“My humility cries out for recognition!” “I’m humble and proud of it!” The problem with the virtue of humility is that as soon as we think we have attained it, we have lost it. How do we avoid this dilemma? Look at Numbers 12:3 for insight into this crucial biblical virtue.

#### **Read Numbers 12:3**

The high and lofty One who lives forever, whose name is holy says He lives in a high place, but also with those who are contrite and lowly in spirit (Isaiah 57:15; 66:2). The Bible repeatedly emphasizes that God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Those who are proud have an inappropriate and inflated view of themselves. They attribute their accomplishments to their own efforts and fail to acknowledge that everything they are and have comes directly from God’s hand.

One way to summarize the Bible’s message is that it is God telling us, “I am God, and you are not.” The quality of humility flows out of a proper assessment of ourselves before God. Moses was a powerful man, but he was also a humble man because he saw himself in the light of God and sought God’s honor and reputation, not his own. When people come to grips with their desperate needs for the grace and mercy of God, they develop a teachable spirit, they seek wise counsel and they are willing to be under authority. Humble yourselves and cast your anxiety on Him (1 Peter 5:6-7). Ask God for the grace to make this passage a reality in your life. Finally, realizing that to be other-centered is to be Christ-like, reflect for a moment on the words of Philippians 2:3-4.

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1) It is generally accepted that Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible. Knowing this, how could he write about his humility in v 23 and still be considered a humble person? And how was he able to maintain that humility after writing such a statement?

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2) Would you be able to write a sentence extolling one of your virtues and still remain humble? \_\_\_\_\_

3) 1 Peter 5:6 – 7 commands us to humble ourselves before God and cast our anxieties on Him. Is there an area of your life that you regularly experience anxiety due to a lack of humility? \_\_\_\_\_

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## **DAY 4**

### **Humility and How I Think**

How can one who is fabulously successful maintain humility? Solomon, arguably one of the most successful men of all time, tells us how. Read Proverbs 25:27 and reflect on Solomon's homily on humility.

#### **Read Proverbs 25:27**

Perks and privileges usually accompany successful leadership. Many leaders enjoy being in charge, making decisions that affect the organization, delegating implementation of those decisions to others, occupying a corner office, "running the show," having others defer to them in meetings, and the like. As one gets ahead, it's hard not to get a big head.

As a leader, King Solomon enjoyed all these perks and much more. Like few leaders before or since, he had wealth, power, wisdom and plenty of servants. Other rulers traveled long distances to listen to his wisdom, and other entrepreneurs came to marvel at his wealth. Yet from this lofty position Solomon cautioned against seeking our own honor. Doing so is like eating too much honey. Sweet as it is, and healthy as it is in proper amounts, too much of a good thing will make you sick – and sick of it.

Honor accompanies a job well done. If a leader is effective, he or she will get all the honor he or she can stand. But a person who has to go looking for honor has his or her hand in the wrong hive. Solomon learned that focusing on a job well done is the way to earn honor. Focusing on honor cuts into the time and energy needed to do the job well.

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Which will you choose, the upward spiral or the downward spiral? “It is not honorable to seek your own honor.” Doing so will make you a “sick” leader.

Examine these scriptures and explain what each one says about the blessings of living in humility.

Pr 18:12 \_\_\_\_\_  
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Pr 22:4 \_\_\_\_\_  
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Pr 29:23 \_\_\_\_\_  
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## DAY 5

### Humility and What I Do

Moses gives us an excellent picture of how difficult the battle with pride really is. The ancient Israelites struggled continually with their pride. Their example, and an insightful story by Thomas Merton, will help us realize the importance of cultivating humility. Deuteronomy 8:1-20 is today’s reading.

### Read Deuteronomy 8:1-20

What a perspective! Israel’s pride led them to disobey God’s commands, so God invested forty years in developing their humility and obedience. God took them into the desert to show them how vulnerable they were (and how vulnerable we are). Notice the relationship between prosperity and humility and between difficulty and pride.

Even the desert fathers, a group of monks in the early church who left everything and voluntarily went into the desert to seek a greater relationship with God, struggled with the battle of pride and humility. Thomas Merton told a helpful story about these remarkable men; “There was a certain brother who was praised by all the others in the presence of Abbot Anthony, but when the elder tested him he found that he could not bear to be insulted. Then Abbot Anthony said: “You, brother, are like a house with a big strong gate, that is freely entered by robbers through all the windows.”\*

Neither Israel nor the desert fathers was the first to struggle with the destructive power of pride – and they certainly were not the last. Our successes, which demonstrate our strength, turn and destroy us if we fail to

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realize where the success actually comes from. Abbot Anthony teaches us that the stronger the gate, the bigger the windows.

\*Thomas Merton, *The Wisdom of the Desert*, New York: New Directions, 1960.

1) Why did God chasten Israel? \_\_\_\_\_  
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2) What were some of the hardships Israel suffered through during the discipline process?  
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3) How did God demonstrate His love and care for Israel during the discipline process?  
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4) Based on today's scripture reading what is the key to overcoming pride and walking with God in humility? \_\_\_\_\_  
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5) Can you think of a time that God chastened you because of your lack of humility? What methods did He use to set you straight? \_\_\_\_\_  
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