4. Humility & Wisdom

"Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, Who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." (Philippians 2:5-8 NASB)

-As disciples of Christ, we must strive to gain all of the heavenly virtues in order to have maximum effectiveness in ministry, leadership, and spiritual warfare. Love, Faith, Grace, Hope, Peace, Patience, and Wisdom are a few traits that make a Christ-follower more powerful than earthly kings. As we examine these heavenly virtues, we find that Humility could be used as the foundation for any and all of them. One illustration we could use is that of beautiful flowers growing in a garden... if each of the virtues is represented by one flower, it would be a fair assessment to say that Humility is the soil in which they all thrive. Humility is indeed a starting point, for without it we cannot submit to the One who awards all the virtues we need for success in our calling. Furthermore, without Humility we would not be able to properly hold the other virtues.

This lesson will focus on the absolute necessity of Humility in the life of a disciple. As seen in the opening verse, we will first look at the perfect example set by Christ. His offering up of His own life was the ultimate act of humble obedience, but He also conducted Himself very humbly throughout the entirety of His time here. One expression of Jesus' Humility that we must learn from is the parables, or stories, that Jesus told. When we look deep into the heart of the parables we can unlock a divine secret at work. As we discover the symbiotic relationship between Wisdom and Humility, we understand that the proper application of these two virtues is what made the parables effective.

- Humility In Evangelism -

- Mark 12:1-12 (Parable Of The Tenants)

- The parables were a lesson to the hearers then, just as they are to us today. But they are also a valuable gift to disciples and leaders in the Kingdom. Firstly, they show us that Jesus ministered successfully by operating within the realm of Wisdom, not intellect. His intent, and the end-result of a parable, was to make the listeners experience the solution for themselves
rather than just be told. This had a much more impactful and lasting effect on their lives because the truth of the lesson became *rhema*, or revealed knowledge for them.

In focusing solely on the end-result of conviction and correction within the hearer, rather than His own glorification through displays of knowledge or earthly intellect, He proved the absolute effectiveness of Humility. The parables were a humble expression, but they were also filled with Wisdom. This combination must be understood and utilized for successful evangelism. There is a saying, "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." A humble person generally seems sincere and makes those around them feel revered, honored, and respected. If we use this model and harness the proper Humility in our actions and speech, then our evangelism will be successful. This is Wisdom at work.

- Relationship Between Humility And Wisdom -

> James 3:13 (NIV)
> "Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by (1) deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom."

> Proverbs 11:2 (NASB)
> "When pride comes, then comes dishonor, but (2) with the humble is wisdom."

1. "deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom."

- "But someone may well say, 'you have faith and I have works; Show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works.'"
  (James 2:18 NASB)

- Bottom-line, our faith is most evident by what we do. Where we go, how we spend our money, who we associate with, and how we live is our strongest expression of what, or Who, we believe life is all about. Therefore, the Humility of Christ must always be on display within us and the relationships we hold. Just as it is foolish to be prideful, it is Wisdom that will find, and draw us to, Humility in all situations. Displaying Humility shows others that following Christ is not just a philosophy or mindset, but truly a way of life. This visible aspect of our witness will make it easier for outsiders to believe us when we tell them that He is the way to life because they will know that we believe it by our Humility in action.
2. "with the humble is wisdom."

• The result of pride is our own disgrace. This serves to further prove that even the most gifted and talented individual is simply unfit for true honor apart from his own dependence on God. In the previous verse breakdown we learned that it is Wisdom that leads us to Humility. However, here we read that Wisdom comes from Humility... the Word does not contradict itself, rather it is showing us the symbiotic (mutually dependent) nature of these two powerful virtues. Yes, Wisdom will lead us in the path of Humility, but as we increasingly humble ourselves before God and men, the Father begins to pour more Wisdom into us. Therefore Wisdom is just as dependent on our Humility as our Humility is dependent on our Wisdom. Mastery of this co-dependent relationship would enable one man to change the world. In fact, it did.

- Humility In Leadership -

> Luke 18:14 (NASB)

"For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Although Humility, by definition, forgoes any honor or glorification, it amazingly always leads to glorification. We have this promise for ourselves in the above scripture. There are many literal examples of this promise evident all throughout the Word as well as the truth that pride, or exalting of one's self, leads to being humbled. For a perfect picture of this principle, and to learn the value of Humility in leadership, we will examine the contrasting styles of two kings- David and Saul.

As we know, Saul was anointed king over Israel. Eventually his heart became hardened by pride and God sent Samuel to anoint young David as future-king. From the very beginning we see a noteworthy difference in these two men. Saul was "a head taller" than all the other men, but David is described as "small and ruddy". Then, as leaders, we see a contrast in the way they conduct themselves. Saul was very forward and bold, often making his decisions without, or against, the approval of the Lord. While David was known to wear the ephod and consult the Lord before going into battle or making any decision. In 2 Samuel we see the account of David leading all of Israel in bringing the ark of God to it's rightful place in Jerusalem. In this moment of great celebration, king David abandons any garments of royalty, clothes himself in nothing more than a simple linen ephod, and dances in front of the procession as a display of praise and honor to his King. Michal, the daughter of Saul, saw the king dancing like a commoner and in
that moment she despised him in her heart. (see 2 Samuel 6:16) As she confronted him and accused him of degrading the position of a ruler and exposing himself to all the women watching, we see the reaction of a mighty king...

- "I will be more lightly esteemed than this and will be humble in my own eyes, but with the maids of whom you have spoken, with them I will be distinguished." (2 Samuel 6:22 NASB)

In this situation, we see a progression of Humility as well as it's effects. First David abandons all pride by wearing simple clothing in public. Next he absolutely humbles himself before all men by dancing like a child for the Lord. We then see the reaction of a cold heart as Michal despises him for it, but the height of the progression is his statement in which he reveals his plan to take Humility even further in adjusting the way he views himself. In this moment, the heart of a servant-king is revealed as we see that he is not only willing to lower himself outwardly, but that his Humility ran as deep as his own heart and inner-man.

Now let us remember the principle which we are learning through this story as we see it again in 1 Peter.

- "Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time." (1 Peter 5:6 NASB)

So we have looked at the difference in Humility of David and Saul. We found great Humility in David, and we even saw the devout nature of his Humility in his response to Michal. What is the result of this? Doesn't the principle mentioned in both verses promise that Humility leads to exaltation? Let us move ahead one chapter after David's dance before the ark and see what the Lord told him.

- "...the Lord will make a house for you. When your days our complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your Descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish His Kingdom. He shall build a house for My Name, and I will establish the throne of His Kingdom forever." (2 Samuel 7:11-13 NASB)

We understand this to be speaking specifically of Jesus, as our Savior was a direct descendant in the bloodline of King David. What a great honor this was for the young king, and it came right after his amazing display of Humility in leadership. This account serves to validate the promise found in the principle of Humility and glory.

-CLOSING STATEMENT-

We gain Humility and Wisdom through the Word. As we increasingly lose ourselves more and more in His Word on a daily level, we naturally begin to reverence it as not just a mere
document, but a way of life, an authority, a breath... THE breath... If Jesus is the Word, which He is, and Jesus is the personification of such heavenly virtues as Humility and Wisdom that we seek, then the Bible is our tool for success. Our level of interest and dedication to it will determine our effectiveness in His ministry. Again, Humility must be present for us to even do this. Humility will strip away the pride of independence that seeks to keep us from reverencing the Word and building our lives by it.

-CLOSING VERSE-

"For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."
(Philippians 2:9-11 NASB)

- QUESTIONS -

• How has pride affected your reaction to past moments of hardship? Could an attitude of humility have avoided hurt, anger, and offense?

• What area in your life do you struggle with pride the most?

-HOMEWORK/MEDITATION-

• Titus 3:1 & 2
• Micah 6:8
• 1 Peter 5:1-5
• Proverbs 15:33
• Philippians 2:3 & 4
• Proverbs 22:4
• Romans 12:3