

Practicing the Christian Life: Humility

Philippians 2:1-8

8/20/23

Discussion Guide

Preparation:

Does humility really make a big difference in a person's life? Is being prideful all that harmful? And what do you think about Lauren Slater's findings?

"There's enough evidence from 20 years of scientific studies to conclude that people with high self-esteem possess a greater threat to people than those with low self-esteem. Low self-esteem is not the source of society's biggest problems." ~ from "The Trouble with Self-esteem"; NYT: 1992.

Passage:

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. ³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

⁵ In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

⁶ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

⁷ rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!

1. Talk about Pastor Richard's favorite definition of humility: *"Humility is not thinking less of yourself but thinking about yourself less."* How do you define humility?
2. React to this statement: *"Humility involves a daily decision to be unimpressed with ourselves, even when we have every reason to do so."* Is there anything wrong with being proud of who we are or our accomplishments? Isn't it false humility to downplay the reasons we have to be proud of ourselves and can it lead to low self-esteem?
3. Who exemplifies humility to you? Have you ever been in the presence of someone who was clearly above you socially, professionally, intellectually, or materially, who made you feel important? They made the conversation about you and not them.

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4. "Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment..." (vs. 3) If we pulled in this truth into our being, how would it shape our lives?
5. Talk about the power of humility to: 1) Look away from ourselves. 2) Look towards other.
6. Scan I Samuel 18. Compare and contrast Jonathan and Saul. See the difference humility can make in our lives and how destructive pride can be.
7. "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit." (vs. 3) Discuss both and how they are toxic to our lives.
8. Brainstorm ways our culture tries to deny this truth about life: "The grass withers and the flowers fall..." Isaiah 40:8
9. Nellie Bly, Cleisthenes, Pope Leo I, Audrey Munson, Edith Wilson, Percy Julian, Agent 355, Mary Anning, Sybil Ludington, Hedy Lamarr, Ching Shih, Annie Edison Taylor, Violet Jessop, Margaret Howe Lovatt, and Lyudmila Pavlichenko are all people who were once extremely famous.

List others who used to be famous but are now largely forgotten. This truth can shape our lives in negative ways but it can shape us in positive ways as well. How?

10. "Therefore if you have any encouragement from being **united with Christ**, if any **comfort from his love**, if any common **sharing in the Spirit**, if any **tenderness and compassion**..." (vs. 1)

Pick one of the things we experience by knowing Christ and share how it's made a difference in your life.

11. Talk about this statement: "You become what you focus on..."

12. Spend some time gazing at Jesus as you read the verse below. Perhaps have someone read it slowly while the rest of the group closes their eyes and meditates it. What thoughts or images came to your mind as you did?

"have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

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did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;
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*And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross! (vss. 5-9)*