



# Family Values

## Virtue Realities

### Humility

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Most virtues give us perspective. None more so than humility. With it we have a keen sense of who we are in relation to God and our fellow human beings. Without it we run the risk of becoming preoccupied with ourselves, exaggerating our importance and abusing others, since arrogance is a precursor to violence. Humility keeps us grounded. It reminds us of our limitations, links us together with all humanity and emphasizes our need for a compassionate, forgiving God.

In the Old Testament, the humble are the poor and the afflicted. They are consistently taken advantage of by the wealthy and those in power. They are dependent on God to help them and protect them. In 2 Samuel 22:28, God is prepared to *“deliver a humble people, but (His) eyes are upon the haughty to bring them down.”* The irony is that people go up to high places to worship God, but He hangs out with the humble in Spirit. Isaiah 57:15 states: *“For thus says the high and lofty one who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with those who are contrite and humble in spirit, . . .”* God is up there, but also down here with the lowly and afflicted. God leads the Israelites through the wilderness to humble them so that they do not exalt themselves and forget *“the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.”* (Deut. 8:14,15)

Jesus understands the conflict between the poor and the rich. He continually emphasizes through parables and His sayings that the rich will have difficulty following Him. *“Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.”* (Luke 18:25) The lowly, afflicted Lazarus ends up looking down on the rich man who pleads for a drop of water. The humble are exalted in the kingdom of God.

Jesus is the true example of humility. He describes Himself as *“gentle and humble in heart.”* (Matt. 12:29) His triumphant entry into Jerusalem is in fulfillment of the prophecy: *“Look, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey.”* (Matt 21:5) He can claim all the attributes of God, yet he chooses not to throw his Messianic weight around. He could easily call the shots, but he remains obedient instead. As Paul reminds us in Phil. 2:8, *“he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death – even death on a cross.”*

As a result of what Christ has accomplished on our behalf, Paul now encourages Christians to *“do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves.”* (Phil. 2:3) Humility is a core Christian trait. In Romans 12:2, Paul emphasizes this factor when he says, *“Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are.”* Indeed, humility keeps us in our place, right next to our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, who sits at the right hand of God.

The following are ways to practice humility:

1. **Pray for humility.** Don't leave home without it.
2. **Be honest with yourself.** Recognize and appreciate your own limitations. Don't pretend to be something you are not.
3. **Build up others.** Take a one down position to let others know that they are important to you.
4. **Admit your mistakes.** Don't be afraid to apologize and to take responsibility for your behavior rather than passing the buck.
5. **Practice gentleness.** Asserting yourself without regard for others leads to violence. Take the opposite road.

Affirmation: “Lord, keep me from getting stuck on myself!”

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