

# **LifeWay Family Bible Series for Aug. 22: Humility is the posture for service to God, others\_80904**

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## **Humility is the posture for service to God, others**

1 Peter 2:13-14, 17-21; 3:1-4,

7-9; 5:5-7

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Peter describes several relationships in life where submission is required. He includes domestic relationships (3:1-7), civic relationships (2:13-17), relationships between young and old (5:5), and work relationships between slaves and masters (2:18-20). The latter might be applied to employers and employees.

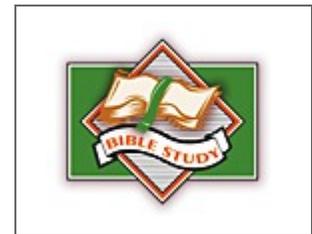
This kind of submission in human relationships requires true humility. Peter says, "Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time" (5:6).

Humility is a decision. "Humble yourselves." We can choose to be humble.

We can choose to be arrogant.

When I was a child, I would tell my mother she made me mad. She was not buying that. She would simply say, "You have the same shoes to get glad in." It was her way of saying my anger was a decision. When we get prideful, arrogant or self-centered, we need to hear Peter say, "You have the same shoes to get humble in." Humility is a decision.

Humility begins with our attitude toward God. "Humble yourselves under God's mighty hand." We will never be humble in our dealings with a fickle humanity until



we come to be humble toward God. There are many people in life who will take advantage of humility. But not God! Far from it! Verse 7 goes on to say, "Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you." Humility will require deep trust in a God who has proven himself faithful toward us. Because he cares, we can trust him.

Humility is a prerequisite to proper exaltation. "Humble yourselves under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time." God raises his people up to places of responsible service in his kingdom. It is not something for us to snatch.

David was a shepherd, the youngest of a bevy of boys. He took care of his father's flock while his more-qualified siblings fought Israel's wars. He played the harp to calm the demons of a failing king. He refused the trimmings of royalty from King Saul when he rejected the king's armament. He trusted God to deliver Goliath into his hand.

Samuel came to David's house and poured the oil of coronation on his head. The nation did not fall at his feet immediately and recognize him as their king. It would take time, but it would happen. It happened "in due time." It was the right time. It was God's time. David first learned humility.

Humility has an example. Peter knew sinful people would take advantage of humility. Suffering might come to those who followed this command. It was especially true in the relationship of slaves to masters. In this context, Peter said, "To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. 'He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.' When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly" (2:21-23).

Jesus trusted God. He humbled himself before God so he might humble himself before humanity in service and love. He served others. He washed their feet. He gave his life for them. That is humility. According to Peter, it began with trusting God. "He entrusted himself to him who judges justly."

Paul expressed the same thing in Philippians 2:4-11. Listen to his description of Jesus' humility and of God's exaltation of him in due time.

"Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:4-11).

A number of years ago, I was at Glorieta, N.M. I took my camera to capture the beauty of the campus and the surrounding Sangre de Cristo Mountains. The landmark structure at Glorieta is the chapel. The logo of the campus hints at the logo of New Mexico. It is a circle with a cross in the middle of it. The balconies around New Mexico Hall had a railing that included this logo.

I noticed one day that from the balcony of New Mexico Hall it might be possible to compose a picture of the chapel through one of the circular logo structures. I got my camera and my tripod. It was possible, but only from a very low angle. To compose the scene, I had to lie down on the floor of the balcony. I had been there for a few minutes when the class meeting closest to my position let out early. People bolted from the room headed to the chuck wagon.

I learned two things that day. First, never lie on the floor in front of a hungry Baptist. It is a good way to be transformed into ground beef. Second, humility is a posture. It is getting into a position from which you can see God and others as more important than yourself. It does not matter what others may think. Without it, we will never stoop to the position of service. Be humble. It is the prerequisite for service to God and others.

### **Question for discussion**

- ◆ How can a posture of humility be demonstrated?

News of religion, faith, missions, Bible study and Christian ministry among Texas Baptist churches, in the BGCT, the Southern Baptist Convention ( SBC ) and around the world.