

Don't Look at Us! Ministering with Humility

“And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?”
(Acts 3:12).

As Peter and John prayed for the lame man, strength came into his feet and ankle bones. He stood, walked, and leaped as he went into the church praising God. The people were surprised to see him since many of them had passed him as they made their way into the church. What a great time for Peter and John to try to impress others with their spiritual power. Perhaps, they could have had someone take a few pictures so the story could appear in the daily newspaper. What if the local television station could have gotten in on the story? Their fame would have spread and they would become famous with people calling them to minister in their assembly. They could have boasted over the healing that had just taken place. However, they asked, “Why marvel at this? Or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?” They basically were saying, “Don't look at us! We didn't do it, Jesus did.”

Peter and John remind us of the wise words of one man who wrote:

“I believe that the first test of a truly great man is his humility. I do not mean by humility, doubt of his own power. But really great men have a curious feeling that the greatness is not in them, but through them. And they see something divine in every other man and are endlessly, foolishly, incredibly merciful” (John Ruskin).

The difference between sharing information and boasting is in who gets the credit.

More miracles would happen if more men would humble themselves and give God the praise.

Jesus Himself talked about being humble when He gave His Sermon on the Mount. He said, “Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth” (Matthew 5:5).

What else will the meek (humble) do?

1. “But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace” (Psalm 37:11).
2. “The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way” (Psalm 25:9).

There was once a turtle that wanted to visit a faraway place. He knew he could never walk that far. He persuaded a couple of hawks to help him, each taking one piece of a rope, while the turtle fastened his jaws in the center. The flight went fine until someone on the ground looked up in admiration and asked, "Who thought of that idea?" Unable to resist the chance to take the credit, the turtle opened his mouth to proudly shout, "I did!" As he did, he let go of the rope and fell quickly to the ground.

When God works miracles we should testify about them, but we should be careful about who is getting the credit. The difference between sharing information and boasting is in who gets the credit.

Pride is the opposite of humility. Pride hinders us from being used by God. God wants to do a work but He wants to get the credit for what He does (even when He does it through us).

The Scripture has much to say about pride.

"Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 16:18).

"An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin" (Proverbs 21:4).

"But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth" (2 Corinthians 10:17-18).

Look at what the Scriptures have to say about humility.

"Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:4).

"And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted" (Matthew 23:12).

"Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud" (Proverbs 16:19).

"God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble" (James 4:6).

"By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honour, and life" (Proverbs 22:4).

"The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility" (Proverbs 15:33).

"A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit" (Proverbs 29:23).

"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time" (1 Peter 5:6).

- Humility exalts others, but pride exalts self.
- Humility serves others, but pride serves self.
- Humility bows before God; pride bows before self.
- Humble people share, remain teachable, and care about others. Proud people hoard, are closed minded, and use others to achieve their own selfish ends.

Humility is the ability to see ourselves as God sees us.

It is good to have the attitude expressed by the man who wrote:

“If I appear great in their eyes, the Lord is most graciously helping me to see how absolutely nothing I am without Him and helping me to keep little in my own eyes. He does use me. But I am so concerned that He uses me and that it is not of me that the work is done. The axe cannot boast of the trees that it has cut down. It could do nothing but for the woodsman. He made it, he sharpened it, and he used it. The moment he throws it aside, it becomes only old iron. O, that I may never lose sight of this.”

You can get too big for God to use you...but never too small.

Paul Rader said, “...No one can work for God until humility has taken hold of his life. Otherwise he magnifies himself out of proportion to God.”

Study Questions

1. What would happen if more people would humble themselves and give God the praise for what He does? _____

2. Relate the story of the turtle that wanted to go on a long journey. _____

3. What is the difference between sharing information and boasting? _____

4. Give two Scriptures that talk about humility and two that talk of pride. _____

5. What is humility? _____

6. What are some of the differences between pride and humility? _____

7. What will the meek (humble) do according to Scripture? _____
