

Philippians, Chapter Two, Lesson Two

THE JOY OF HUMILITY Philippians 2:5-11

STIMULATE

** Please look back at Philippians 2:1-4 and see if you can recall God's three step plan for creating a joy filled unity within the body of Christ.

1. Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit. Remember - Watch our motives! (V.3)
2. Regard others as more important than yourself. Form the practice of exalting others! (V.3)
3. "Look out" for the needs of others. Anticipate and meet those needs! (V.4)

** Did anyone find themselves being stretched in one of those three areas over the past week?

It is always marvelous how our loving and faithful God will test us in the areas of our life which need the most correction in order for us to be walking in step with the Word of God.

MOTIVATE

** Generally speaking, who are the people that prove to be examples to you in your Christian life?

Those around us that are consistent in their Godly behavior, no matter what comes their way.

** Going beyond the general category, to a very specific one, who is our greatest example of how we ought to live?

Jesus Christ - Himself!

** As we continue our series in this marvelous chapter, the example of Christ set before us today is going to show us "**The Joy of Humility**". Let's look at our passage together as we prepare our hearts for learning God's precious truth.

Read passage (V.5-8) (V.9-11)

Opening Prayer

The Joy of Humility

INVESTIGATE

V. 5 ** As our passage begins for today, Paul exhorts us to "Have this attitude" within our hearts. To which attitude is he referring?

The same one that was "also in Christ Jesus".

It would be Paul's preoccupation to continually draw us back to Christ as the ultimate example for us to pattern our lives after. The other apostles were in full agreement with Paul.

cf. 1Corinthians 11:1, 1Thessalonians 1:6, 1John 2:6 and 1Peter 2:21-23
(Imitating Christ in all things)

** In our last study we learned in depth about "**The Joy of Unity**" - today's passage is going to give us the cause for our joyously following the example set by Jesus in humility. In between them both lies verse five as a hinge connecting the two thoughts. We have "this attitude" which was in Christ when we consider others more important than ourselves (from our last study) and when we act in true humility like our Lord (from today's study). Before we leave verse five, what is Paul calling for us to do when he says "have this attitude"?

This is a volitional act on our part, we must choose to develop the mental practice of thinking like our Lord. He knows our thoughts! cf. Luke 9:43-47

V. 6 ** From where must we begin, if we wish to understand the depths of Christ's humility? How does Paul describe the pre-incarnate state of Christ?

He "existed in the form of God"! He was God! We need to understand the word chosen by the Holy Spirit in describing Jesus that way. The English word "form" translates morphé, which literally refers to the inner, essential, and abiding nature of a person or thing.

** In view of God's eternal plan of redemption, how did Jesus view His equality with God?

He "did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped". The Love of Jesus for our souls mandated that He be willing to give up His Divine glory for us!

** Does that mean that Jesus does not desire the glory due His name?

No - it merely means He was willing to lay it aside for a time, allowing Him to accomplish our salvation. cf. John 17:1-5

V. 7 ** Having loved us with so great a love, what did He do according to verse seven?

He "...emptied Himself..."! kenoo, from kenos, meaning "to empty". This is what theologians refer to as the "kenosis of Jesus Christ".

** What does that mean?

Literally, Jesus "laid aside His privileges".

** In the incarnation, what types of things did Jesus willingly lay aside?

- 1) His riches (2Corinthians 8:9)
- 2) His glory (John 17:4) Remember!?!)
- 3) His separation from sin (2Corinthians 5:21)
- 4) His independent exercise of His Divine attributes and will. (John 5:30, Hebrews 10:7)

Jesus "changed" His function, while not changing His essential attributes!
cf. John 1:1 and John 1:14

** When Jesus did that for us, out of perfect love and humility, what "form" did He take?

The "form" (morphé) of a bondservant. Jesus was God, is God and will always be God. The same can be said of His servant's heart. From eternity past, Jesus was willing to serve the Father, and us as well! cf. Mark 10:45

** What additional description is offered by Paul to help us understand the humility of Jesus Christ?

He was "made in the likeness of men". Likeness in this verse translates homoïoma, lit. that which is made like [something]. What an amazing sacrifice, just to take on our appearance - when He was the God who made us!

** Even though Christ was "made in the likeness of men" through His incarnation, how was He different?

1) He was joined in personal union with the Divine nature. (Remember - John 1:14)

2) He was Deity! (Colossians 2:9)

3) He was in the "likeness of sinful flesh", not in sinful flesh like us! (Romans 8:3)

4) He was tempted, but did not ever sin! (Hebrews 4:15)

V. 8 ** According to verse eight, how did men perceive Jesus?

"...being found in appearance as a man..." Here, the apostle uses an importantly different word. He uses schema for our English word "appearance", which refers to an outward appearance, in disregard of inward essence, that is subject to change.

** What were some of His human characteristics?

Birth, growth, brothers and sisters, a trade, hunger, thirst, sleep, temptation, grief, weeping, He attended weddings and He died.

** All of this would be quite enough to demonstrate for us the characteristic of humility, but Jesus does not stop there. How does He demonstrate humility before a Holy God?

He was obedient!

** How far was Jesus willing to take His obedience?

Even unto death?

** What makes His obedience unto death an even greater act of humility?

He knew it would be death on a cross.

V. 9 ** Whom is Christ obeying in all of this marvelous display of humility?

"Therefore also God..." cf. Acts 2:22-23

** If Jesus was willing to humble Himself so completely, we should also be willing to humble ourselves before a Holy God. As we turn a corner here in verse nine, let's discover the cause for "**The Joy of Humility**". What was God's response to Christ's humble obedience?

God "highly exalted Him"! cf. Acts 2:32-33, 5:31

** Will God exalt us, if we manifest true humility by obeying the Word and Will of God?

Absolutely - We will reflect the glory of Christ at the proper time, if we are humble before Him as we walk each day in obedience. cf. 1Peter 5:6

** How is Christ's exaltation different from ours?

God has "...bestowed on Him the name which is above every name..." Jesus has taken first place of importance in all of creation.

cf. Colossians 1:15 (He is the first born [prototokos] of all creation)

V.10 ** What is the only proper response to the exaltation of Jesus Christ?

"...every knee should bow..." (From Isaiah 45:22-23)

** Does that include the unbelieving world today?

Yes! Even those who would openly mock Jesus today, they will not be able to stand in His presence when He returns. cf. Revelation 6:15-17

** What does Paul mean by "...those who are in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth..."?

William Hendriksen offers, "in Heaven" as Cherubim, Seraphim, Arch angels and redeemed human beings who have departed from this earthly life, "on earth" as all human beings living on earth and "under the earth" as all the damned, comprised of human beings and evil angels or demons.

The point being simply, that all created life will bow the knee to the Lord Jesus Christ, either in adoration or remorsefully...but all will render homage to Him. cf. Revelation 5:13

V.11 ** As Paul concludes our passage for today, is he describing a born-again experience?

No - For Holy angels and redeemed mankind, this represents our worship and praise (cf. Romans 10:9). But for the fallen angels and the unsaved, this describes their total submission to a sovereign Lord.

** So, what is the cause for "**The Joy of Humility**"? What is the bottom line? For Whom are we to be humble?

It is all for the glory of God the Father!

** When we understand the example set before us by Jesus Christ, we are then able to truly live our lives out humbly for the glory of God. What should make this extremely important to us?

It was of the utmost importance to the One we call Lord and Savior!

EXTRICATE

** When Jesus "emptied Himself" by laying aside His will and privileges, He showed us the way to true humility. Is it possible for us to go through a type of kenosis in our own lives?

Absolutely - If we will be like Christ, we will empty ourselves of all self-serving motives and desire only to serve the Lord and do His will!

DELINEATE

** Who is going to be our greatest enemy in our desire to be Christ-like through genuine, God honoring humility?

We are! All see - Romans 7:19

EVALUATE

** What is the potential impact on others around us, if we were to live our life in accordance with what we have learned in this passage?

They might see Christ in us and become saved to worship Him as well!

ACTIVATE

** Since we know that our loving God is faithful, we should be willing to follow in the steps of Jesus Christ by trusting the Father and giving up whatever is needed in order to do His will and advance the kingdom. Are you willing to make that kind of life changing commitment to the Lord? May He help us find "**The Joy of Humility**" in our everyday walk with Him!

Closing prayer