

The High Calling

a bimonthly publication of The Francis Asbury Society

The Nose Knows

The Stench of Pride and the Fragrance of Humility

By Stan Key

I have to be honest: some of the most obnoxious persons I've ever known are holiness people. Don't get me wrong. My struggle is *not* with the doctrine of entire sanctification. My difficulty is with the unfortunate results that sometimes occur when the glorious promise of a holy heart is either erroneously preached or wrongly understood. Perhaps you've met these people, too. Their theology is orthodox, their piety deep, and their good deeds are impressive. But something isn't right. You may not be able to explain it, but you can *smell* it. The odor is unmistakable. The nose knows!



This issue of *The High Calling* is devoted to the subject of pride—and its opposite, humility. It is no accident that pride is consistently listed first among the seven deadly sins. God opposes the proud (I Pet. 5:5). No sin will send us more certainly to hell than this! But perhaps the most startling reality about this noxious sin is that its presence

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The Mind of Christ

By Dennis F. Kinlaw



The co-founder of *The Francis Asbury Society*, Dennis F. Kinlaw, describes how humility and holiness go together. The following article is a slightly edited abridgement of a chapter taken from his book *The Mind of Christ* (Francis Asbury Press, 1998). The chapter is an examination of Philippians 2:1–18 and is entitled “Look Not to Your Own Interests” (99–109).

The basic problem at Philippi was that the Christians had different “minds”; each one thought his own way. So if Paul was to heal their division, he had to deal with the mind. He describes the sort of mind they must have.

Do nothing from rivalry (self interest) or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus.... Do all things without grumbling or complaining (arguing)... (Philippians 2:3–5, 14 ESV)

“Every Christian should act without self-interest, conceit, grumbling, and arguing.”

The first time I read that in the Greek, I thought, “Wait a minute. Where is the word *only*?” Try as I might, I couldn't find it. So I went to our Greek specialist at [Asbury College], who has a Ph.D. in classical languages, and I said, “Help me here.” He cast about for a while and then wrote me a note that said, “It isn't there, Kinlaw.” Yet most modern translations insert the word *only* into the text: “Let each of you look not *only* to your own interests, but *also* to the interests of others.” Why do they do this? Because we twentieth-century Christians don't believe the Lord can deliver us from self-interest, so we insert our assumptions into Scripture.

In verses 3 and 14, Paul lists four characteristics that should be alien to the Christian life. He says that every Christian should act without self-interest, conceit, grumbling, and arguing.

Self-interest (v 3). The purpose of redemption is to undo our distorted self-orientation—to turn us outward, so

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The Way Up Is Down

By Andrew Murray (1828–1917)



This article is a slightly edited abridgement from the book *Humility & Absolute Surrender* (Hendrickson, 2005). It is taken from Chapter 4, “Humility in the Teaching of Jesus” (17–20).

We have seen humility in the life of Christ, so now, let us listen to his teaching where we will hear how he speaks of it and how far he expects us, his disciples, to be humble as he was.

1. *Look at the commencement of his ministry.* In the Beatitudes, he speaks: “Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth.” The very first words of his proclamation of the kingdom of heaven reveal the open gate through which alone we enter. The blessings of heaven and earth are for the lowly. Humility is the secret of blessing.
2. *“Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest for you souls.”* Jesus offers himself as teacher. Meekness and lowliness are the one thing he offers us; in it we shall find perfect rest of soul. Humility is to be our salvation.
3. *The disciples had been disputing who would be the greatest in the kingdom and had agreed to ask the Master.* He set a child in their midst, and said, “Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, shall be exalted” (Luke 9:46; Matt. 18:3). The chief glory of heaven, the true heavenly-mindedness, the chief of the graces, is humility. “He that is least among you, the same shall be great” (Luke 9:48).
4. *James and John asked Jesus to sit on his right and left, the highest places in the kingdom.* He said it was not his to give, but the Father’s, who would give it to those for whom it was prepared. Their thought must be of the cup and the baptism of humiliation. And then he added, “Whoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant—even as the Son of Man came to serve” (Luke 20:27–28). The primacy in the church is promised to the humblest.



5. *Speaking of the Pharisees and their love of the chief seats,* Christ said once again, “He that is greatest among you shall be your servant” (Matt. 23:11). Humiliation is the only ladder to honor in God’s kingdom.
6. *On another occasion, in the house of a Pharisee,* Jesus spoke the parable of the guest who would be invited to come up higher and added, “For whosoever exalts himself shall be abased; and he that humbles himself shall be exalted” (Luke 14:1–11).
7. *After the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector,* Christ spoke again, “Everyone that exalts himself shall be abased; and he that humbles himself shall be exalted (Luke 18:14). Everything is worthless that is not pervaded by deep, true humility towards God and men.
8. *After washing the disciples’ feet,* Jesus said, “If I then, the Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet” (John 13:14). Jesus’ authority as well as his example make humility the first and most essential element of discipleship.
9. *At the Holy Supper table,* the disciples still disputed who should be greatest. Jesus said, “He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that serves. I am among you as he that serves” (Luke 22:26). The path in which Jesus walked and which he opened up for us is ever the humility that makes me the servant of all.

Brethren, here is the path to the higher life. Down, lower down! This was what Jesus ever said to the disciples who were thinking of being great in the kingdom. Seek not, ask not for exaltation; that is God’s work. Look to it that you abase and humble yourselves, and take no place before God or man but that of servant; that is your work; let that be your one purpose and prayer. Just as water ever seeks and fills the lowest place, so the moment God finds the creature abased and empty, his glory and power flow in to exalt and to bless. Let us study the words we have been reading until our heart is filled with the thought: “My one need is humility.” And let us believe that what he *shows*, he *gives*; what he *is*, he *imparts*. ✨

is not limited to unbelievers. It is found even among the saints of God! King Uzziah is perhaps the classic biblical example.

Called one of the “good” kings of Judah, Uzziah’s early life was characterized by an exemplary zeal for God. His spiritual maturity brought blessings and prosperity to the nation—almost unmatched in the history of Israel. But tragedy came when this godly king misused God’s blessings. The story is told in one pregnant sentence: “But when he grew strong his heart became proud to his destruction” (II Chron. 26:16). Overstepping his functions as king, Uzziah took on the role of priest, entering the temple to burn incense to God. Although 80 priests begged him to stop, he rebuked them in anger and persisted on the path he had chosen. “I’m the king,” he must have thought. “Other kings in other nations serve as priest. I have my rights. The law of Moses doesn’t apply to me.”

And when he became angry at the priests, leprosy broke out on his forehead... Azariah the chief priest and all the priests looked at him, and behold, he was leprous in his forehead! And they rushed him out quickly, and he himself hurried to go out, because the Lord had struck him. And King Uzziah was a leper to the day of his death... (II Chronicles 26:19–21)

This powerful story teaches us several important lessons about the danger of pride.

God’s blessings are meant to humble us, not make us proud! How easy it is to forget the source of our blessings and begin to assume that we are the reason for all the good things in our lives. Paul scolded the arrogant Corinthians: “What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast?” (I Cor. 4:7). “Do you not know,” Paul asked the Romans, “that God’s kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?” (Rom. 2:4 RSV). God’s gracious goodness is meant to humble us, not make us proud. What a tragedy when God blessings become a curse!

The danger of pride increases as one grows closer to God. Uzziah was a good man. He had a heart for God. But this led him to believe that he was somehow above the law and entitled to live as he pleased. In a similar way, Judas’s privileged closeness to Jesus helped to turn him from a saint to a traitor. And most frightening of all, Lucifer’s fall was precipitated not because of his distance from God but because of his proximity: “I will make myself like the Most High...” (Isa. 14:12–15).

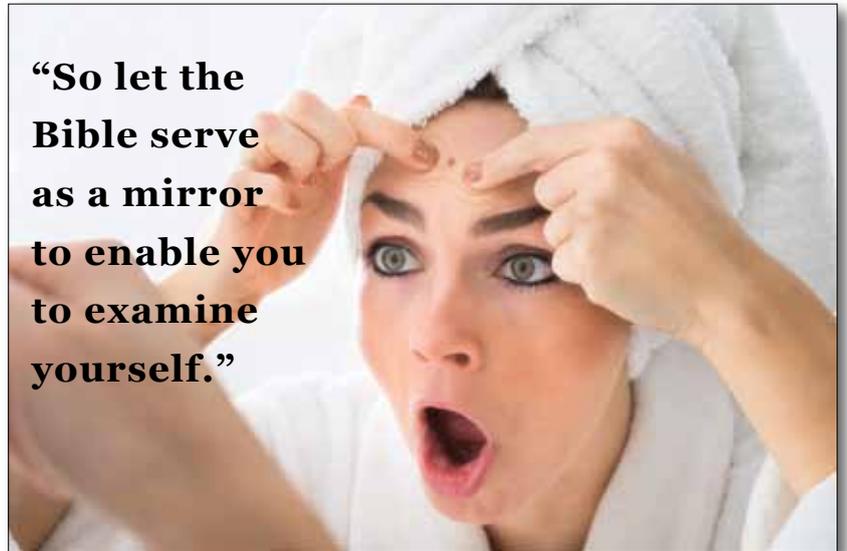
Pride is easy to spot in others but difficult to see in ourselves. It is significant that Uzziah’s leprosy “broke out on his forehead.” This was the one place on his body that the king could not see! Everyone else knew the truth

about his condition while he remained ignorant. So it is with pride. The last ones to realize they have the spiritual cancer of pride are the ones who have it.

Pride isolates us from others. For the remainder of his life, Uzziah lived apart, “excluded from the house of the Lord” (II Chron. 26:21). Pride is contagious. It is deadly for the one who has it, and it places the entire community at risk. Therefore, it must be dealt with in the strongest possible manner.

Pride can be cured, thanks be to God! It would be dangerous to outline “steps to humility” lest those who follow them take pride in their accomplishment! Humility is a by-product of living in the reality of God’s grace and of seeing ourselves for who we truly are. But for those who need something more specific, perhaps these humble suggestions will be helpful:

1. Begin by confessing what a self-righteous, pompous little jerk you really are. Nothing gets genuine humility flowing like honest candor about ourselves.



“So let the Bible serve as a mirror to enable you to examine yourself.”

2. Look in the mirror. The evidence of your pride is written on your forehead. Everyone can see it except you! So let the Bible serve as a mirror to enable you to examine yourself. And if you have the courage, ask your closest Christian friends to tell you if they see any signs of the leprosy of pride in your life.
3. Don’t wait to be humiliated (like Uzziah); “humble yourself” (II Chron. 7:14; Matt. 18:3–4; 23:12; Jam. 4:10; etc.). This is not a call to pious acts of self-flagellation! Rather, it is a gracious invitation to embrace every situation and person that comes your way as a gift from God. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, and give thanks in all circumstances. Immerse yourself daily in the ocean of God’s grace.

We send this issue of *The High Calling* with the prayer that it will serve as a warning about the dangers of pride and an invitation to discover the beauty and power of humility. ✨

It Takes Humility to Know How Proud We Are!

By Peter Kreeft



Peter Kreeft is a professor of philosophy at Boston College and author of many books. A Catholic, he writes in the style of C. S. Lewis, addressing both the mind and the heart. The following article is taken from his book *Back to Virtue* (Ignatius Press, 1992). It is an abridgement of chapter 7, “Poor in Spirit vs. Proud in Heart” (97–107).

Aristotle called it one of the virtues. Christianity calls it the greatest of all vices. Nothing distinguishes Christian morality from pagan morality more sharply than their opposite attitudes toward pride.

Pride is the greatest sin. It comes not from the world or the flesh but from the Devil. It comes from Hell. It was the Devil’s original sin, perhaps the only sin possible for a pure spirit. Pride was also Adam’s (our) original sin, the desire to be like God, over the Law rather than under it. It is the first and greatest sin because it is the violation of the first and greatest commandment, “You shall have no other gods before me.” Pride puts self before God. Pride loves your self with all your heart and soul and mind and strength rather than God.

Pride is the greatest sin because it is the living heart of all sins. Every sin says to God, “*my* will be done.” Pride excludes not only God but also neighbor. For there can be only one Number One. Pride is essentially competitive.

Non-Christians think so little about pride’s sinfulness that they frequently appeal to pride to eradicate other vices. Parents and teachers often appeal to a child’s pride and self-respect to turn him from lust, cheating, or bad temper. I have even heard priests in the confessional well-intentionedly use this appeal. God uses exactly the opposite technique, as pointed out in the *Summa* by Saint Thomas:

In order to overcome their pride, God punishes certain men by allowing them to fall into sins of the flesh, which though they be less grievous are more evidently shameful... From this indeed the gravity of pride is made manifest. For just as a wise physician, in order to cure a worse disease, allows the patient to contract one that is less dangerous, so the sin of pride is shown to be more grievous by the

very fact that, as a remedy, God allows men to fall into other sins.

Perhaps that is why there are so many priests and monks who are alcoholics or homosexuals.

Have you often wondered why God does not give you more grace, as he certainly could, to avoid your many sins? Well, now you know. And you also know how to receive that grace: through eradicating the thing that blocks it, your pride. That is why Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, when asked what the four cardinal virtues were, replied: “Humility, humility, humility, and humility.” If you think you are not in serious danger from your sin of pride, then you certainly are. If you are even a little proud of your humility, you are terribly proud indeed.



Narrow gate in field. ©Peter Barr. This work is licensed under the CC 2.0 Generic Licence

Socrates, humblest and wisest of the philosophers, was told by the Delphic oracle that no one in the world was wiser than he. He proved this true by interpreting it to mean that neither he nor any other man was wise—“God alone is wise”—but that he alone knew that he was not wise, “and this is the only wisdom I or any other man can have.” In other words, there are only two kinds of people: fools, who think they are wise, and the wise, who know they are fools. Augustine’s two Cities are the proud, who think they are humble, and the humble, who know they are proud. The only way to become humble is to admit you are proud.

The song they all sing in hell is the hymn to pride: “I Did It My Way,” or the song Milton has Satan sing: “Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven.” The song they all sing in heaven is the hymn of humility, King David’s song: “I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness.”

Our typical modern prophets are the new Pharisees. Nearly all our modern psychologies tell us how to be “adult,” “mature,” and “responsible for our own lives.” When you see these ubiquitous code words in catechism textbooks or sex education programs or religious education courses, remember what they are: the old paganism in new dress. Remember that Jesus *never* told us to be “adult” but instead said, “Unless you become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 18:3). Heaven’s gate is too tiny for any but a child. ✨

The Insidious Love of Self

By Helen Roseveare (1925–2016)



Passing on to glory on December 7, 2016, at the age of 91, Helen Roseveare was a true saint of God. A medical missionary to Zaire from 1953–1973, Helen’s personal experience of brutality and abuse led her into the depths of God’s love and mercy. This article is abridged and slightly edited, taken from her book *Living Sacrifice* (Moody, 1979: 44–48). It describes how God broke her pride and brought her to a place of genuine humility before God and before her fellow Africans.

Our work included a 100-bed hospital, a training school for national paramedical workers, and a growing circle of dependent regional clinics. I was the only doctor and had only one qualified nurse to assist me. I was thus on call day and night the whole year round. The load seemed to grow heavier daily. Sick people from a 200-mile radius made their way to us. There was no way out, no escape.

The day came when, on a medical ward-round in the hospital, I snapped at a woman patient. A small incident grew out of all proportion into a blazing row. Everyone in the ward became involved as they listened in horrified amazement to the Christian missionary doctor, as she lost her temper in fluent Swahili.

We left the ward and silently crossed the courtyard. Very graciously and humbly, John Mangadima spoke to me. He had been my first student. He had now rejoined me at the hospital as my first medical assistant. “Doctor,” he said, “I don’t think the Lord Jesus would have spoken like that.”

I stood still, agonizingly still, my eyes shut, a great struggle in my weary heart. How right he was, how obviously right, and yet where did I go next? I wanted to break down and cry, to run away, to escape, to leave it all—but I could not. We went back to the women’s ward, where I apologized.

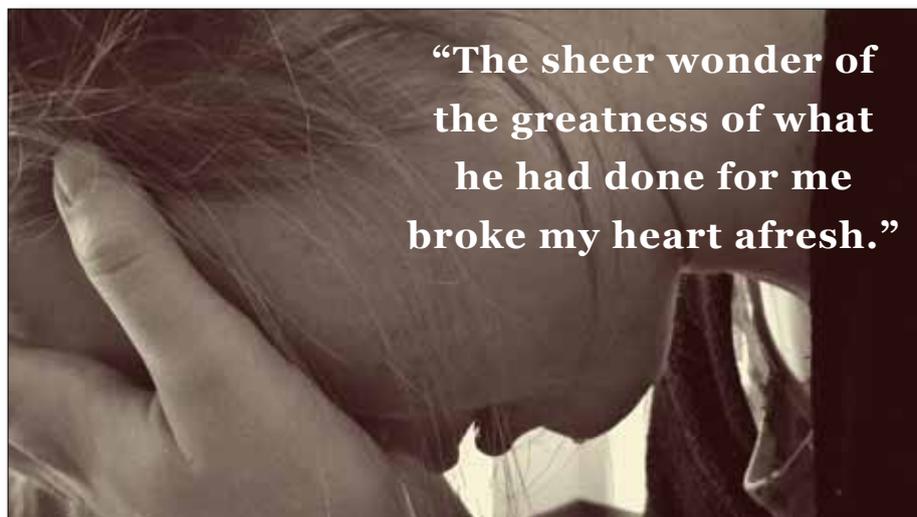
I struggled on through a few more frustratingly irritating weeks. I knew God was speaking to me, but I would not listen. I deliberately closed my ears and hardened my heart. I piled up the excuses—my overweariness, my taut nerves, the load of responsibility. But God was not

listening to my well-reasoned arguments, and I was not listening to his still, small voice of love.

Then one morning at our Bible study hour, I broke down. The Holy Spirit was working in the hearts of African students and workmen, but not in my cold, hard heart, and I could bear no more. The Lord “arranged” for Pastor Ndugu to be passing through Nebobongo that morning. He sized up the situation, made the necessary arrangements, and invited me to accompany him to his village for a ten-day break. I followed him on my bicycle, haversack on back, the sixteen miles to his home. There he gave me a room and left me alone.

I sought God’s face for two unhappy days, but I could find no peace. The heavens seemed like brass and the Bible a closed book. Sunday evening, Pastor Ndugu called me out to the fireside, where he and his wife, Tamoma, were

sitting. We prayed. A great still silence wrapped us around, only broken by the crackling firewood. Gently he leaned toward me. “Helen,” he said quietly and earnestly, “why can’t you forget for a moment that you are white? You’ve helped so many Africans to find cleansing and filling and joy in the



Holy Spirit through the blood of Jesus Christ. Why don’t you let him do for you what he has done for so many others?”

He went on, and opened up to me hidden areas in my heart that I had hardly even suspected, particularly this one of race prejudice. I was horrified. Could it really be true? I was out there to share with the nationals the Good News of the gospel. I loved my African brethren. I cared... but did I? The Spirit forced me to acknowledge that subconsciously I did not really believe that an African could be as good a Christian as I was, or could know the Lord Jesus or understand the Bible as I did. My caring had in it an element of condescension, of superiority, and of paternalism.

I began to confess: the Spirit continued to reveal and break. Hidden envies and jealousies toward other missionaries; resentments over certain treatments and

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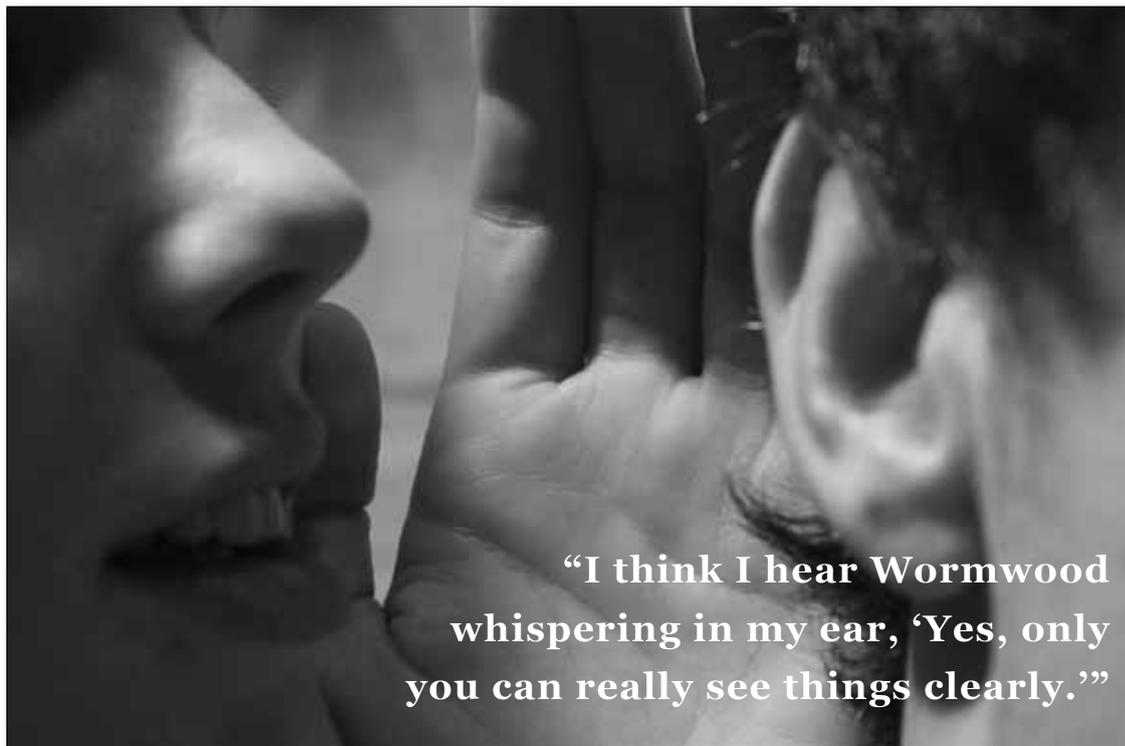
Humility: The Most Dangerous Virtue

By Tim Keller



Tim Keller is the founding pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Manhattan as well as a prolific author. Reformed in theology, his perspectives on humility are most helpful. The following is an abridgment of “The Advent of Humility” which first appeared in the December 2008 issue of *Christianity Today*.

Humility is crucial for Christians. We can only receive Christ through meekness and humility (Matt. 5:3,5; 18:3–4). Jesus humbled himself and was exalted by God (Phil. 2:8–9); therefore, joy and power through humility is the very dynamic of the Christian life (Luke 14:11; 18:14; I Pet. 5:5). The teaching seems simple and obvious. The problem is that it takes great humility to understand



humility, and even more to resist the pride that comes so naturally with even a discussion of the subject.

Humility is so shy. If you begin talking about it, it leaves. To even ask the question, “Am I humble?” is to not be so. Examining your own heart, even for pride, often leads to being proud about your diligence and circumspection.

There are two basic narrative identities at work among professing Christians. The first is what I will call the moral-performance narrative identity. These are people who in their heart of hearts say, *I obey; therefore I am accepted by God*. The second is what I will call the grace narrative identity. This basic operating principle is, *I am accepted by God through Christ; therefore I obey*.

People living their lives on the basis of these two different principles may superficially look alike. They may sit right beside one another in the church pew, both striving to

obey the law of God, to pray, to give money generously, to be good family members. But they are doing so out of radically different motives, in radically different spirits, resulting in radically different personal characters.

When persons living in the moral-performance narrative are criticized, they are furious or devastated because they cannot tolerate threats to their self-image of being a “good person.” But in the gospel our identity is not built on such an image, and we have the emotional ballast to handle criticism without attacking back. When people living in the moral-performance narrative base their self-worth on being hard working or theologically sound, then

they *must* look down on those whom they perceive to be lazy or theologically weak. These people have a constant need to find fault, win arguments, and prove that all opponents are not just mistaken but dishonest sellouts. People who live in the moral-performance narrative use sarcastic, self-righteous put-down humor, or have no sense of humor at all.

This is the place where the author is supposed to come up with practical solutions. I don’t have any. Here’s why. *First*, the problem is too big for practical solutions. The wing of the evangelical church that is most concerned

about the loss of truth and about compromise is actually infamous in our culture for its self-righteousness and pride. However, there are many in our circles who, in reaction to what they perceive as arrogance, are backing away from many of the classic Protestant doctrines (such as Forensic Justification and Substitutionary Atonement) that are crucial and irreplaceable—as well as the best possible resources for humility.

Second, directly talking about practical ways to become humble will always backfire. I have said that major wings of the evangelical church are wrong. So who is left? Me? Am I beginning to think only we few, we happy few, have achieved the balance that the church so needs? I think I hear Wormwood whispering in my ear, “Yes, only you can really see things clearly.” I do hope to clarify, or I wouldn’t have written on the topic at all. But there is

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That Silly Nonsense about Your Own Dignity

By C. S. Lewis (1898–1963)



C. S. Lewis is perhaps the best-known apologist for the Christian faith of the 20th century. Taken from his most famous book, *Mere Christianity* (HarperCollins, 1952), the following article is an abridgement of the chapter entitled “The Great Sin,” where he treats the subject of pride (121–28).

There is one vice of which no man in the world is free; which everyone in the world loathes when he sees it in someone else; and of which hardly any people, except Christians, ever imagine that they are guilty themselves. The vice I am talking of is pride or self-conceit: and the virtue opposite to it, in Christian morals, is called humility. According to Christian teachers, the essential vice, the utmost evil, is pride.

Pride leads to every other vice: it is the complete anti-God state of mind. It is pride which has been the chief cause of misery in every nation and every family since the world began. Other vices may sometimes bring people together: you may find good fellowship and jokes and friendliness among drunken people or unchaste people. But pride always means enmity—it is enmity. And not only enmity between man and man, but enmity to God.

In God you come up against something which is in every respect immeasurably superior to yourself. Unless you know God as that—and, therefore, know yourself as nothing in comparison—you do not know God at all. As long as you are proud you cannot know God. A proud man is always looking down on things and people: and, of course, as long as you are looking down, you cannot see something that is above you.

That raises a terrible question. How is it that people who are quite obviously eaten up with pride can say they believe in God and appear to themselves very religious? I am afraid it means they are worshipping an imaginary God. They theoretically admit themselves to be nothing in the presence of this phantom God, but are really all the time imagining how he approves of them and thinks them far better than ordinary people: that is, they pay a pennyworth of imaginary humility to him and get out

of it a pound’s worth of pride towards their fellow-men. The real test of being in the presence of God is that you either forget about yourself altogether or see yourself as a small, dirty object. It is better to forget about yourself altogether.

We must not think pride is something God forbids because he is offended at it, or that humility is something he demands as due to his own dignity—as if God himself was proud. He is not in the least worried about his dignity. The point is, he wants you to know him: wants to give you himself. And he and you are two things of such a kind that if you really get into any kind of touch with him you will, in fact, be humble—delightedly humble, feeling the infinite relief of having for once got rid of all the silly

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By Jason Hargrove from Toronto, Canada [CC BY 2.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>), via Wikimedia Commons]

“[God] is trying... to take off a lot of silly, ugly, fancy-dress in which we have all got ourselves up and are strutting about like the little idiots we are.”

Good for Nothing

By François Fénelon (1651–1715)



Fénelon was a French Roman Catholic archbishop, theologian, writer, and royal tutor. Deeply influenced by the life and ministry of Madame Guyon, Fénelon experienced God in profound ways. His spiritual influence reached many beyond the Catholic church, including John Wesley. The following excerpt, abridged and slightly edited, is taken from a chapter entitled “Humility” from his book *Christian Perfection* (Harper & Row, 1947:

205–8).

Humility is nothing else but truth. There are only two truths in the world: that God is all and the creature nothing. In order that humility be true, we need to give continual homage to God in our lowliness and to stay in our place, which is to love being nothing.

Only Jesus Christ can give true humility of heart. It is born of the unction of his grace. It does not consist, as many imagine, in performing exterior acts of humility, although that is good, but in keeping one’s place. He who

has a high opinion of himself is not truly humble. Neither is one who wants something for himself. But he is humble who so completely forgets himself that he never thinks of self. He is not wounded by anything, does not pretend to forget self when he is all full of it, and is even content to pass as being not humble at all. He does not seek his own interests but the interests of God alone. He who is truly humble is perfectly obedient because he has renounced his own will. He lets himself be led to where he is wanted. He yields to everything and resists nothing.

Let us abandon ourselves then with courage. If God makes nothing of us, we are blessed because we are good for nothing. If God makes something great of us, the glory will be all his. ✦

None of Self and All of Thee

By Theodore Monod (1836–1921)

Monod was a French Protestant pastor who was a popular speaker at Keswick conventions. Perhaps his most lasting legacy is found in his poems and hymns. It is difficult to imagine worshippers today singing lyrics such as these. Oh, that God would raise up song writers for a new generation who could help us articulate the need for self-abasement and the beauty of humility.

*Oh, the bitter pain and sorrow,
That a time could ever be,
When I proudly said to Jesus,
“All of self and none of Thee.”*

*Yet He found me; I beheld Him
Bleeding on the cursèd tree:
And my wistful heart said faintly,
“Some of self and some of Thee.”*

*Day by day His tender mercy,
Healing, helping, full and free,
Brought me lower, while I whispered,
“Less of self and more of Thee.”*

*Higher than the highest heavens,
Deeper than the deepest sea,
Lord, Thy love at last has conquered;
“None of self and all of Thee.”*

The Insidious Love of Self *continued from page 5*

committee decisions; criticism of others and pride in my own achievements. There were many apologies needed, many restitutions to be made, much forgiveness to be sought from family and fellowship.

Then the Lord reminded me of his sacrifice on the cross. The sheer wonder of the greatness of what he had done for me broke my heart afresh. He so loved *me* that he gave himself for *me*. He was *my* ransom. He bore *my* sins and iniquities, and with his stripes I was healed.

As I cycled back to Nebobongo early the following Monday morning, I was churning over in my mind just how I would share with our African church fellowship all I had learned that week. Reaching home, I was unexpectedly met by a small welcome committee! One took my bicycle, another the haversack. Before I could say anything, John Mangadima burst out: “Oh, Doctor, hallelujah!” Startled, I looked at him. I hadn’t said a thing. “Oh,” he laughed, “You don’t need to tell us, your face tells us. We’ve been praying for you for four years!”

And I had gone out to them as the missionary-teacher!

The first major “cost” that I encountered in seeking to love God with all my heart was in the giving up of my pride—pride of nationality, pride of education, pride of natural abilities. God has continually to break me on each of these. They get in the way of love, real outgoing love. Then he has to deal with my self—self-reliance, self-justification, self-pity. These too hinder the free flow of his love. Step by step, as God deals with pride and the insidious love of self, he can take my heart and truly love others through it. ✦

that we are interested not in ourselves but in the well-being of others. Self-interest is well demonstrated by the question, “What’s in it for me?”

Conceit (v 3). A Christian should be unconcerned about elevating his own status or doing things for the sake of appearance. How often we fall short of doing God’s will because we are overly concerned about appearances! We are driven by the question, “How do I look?”

Grumbling (v 14). Murmuring about our circumstances is another mark of our fallen condition. It is the self-pitying attitude that says, “I deserve better than this.”

Arguing (v 14). How often we try to bargain with God! “Yes, Lord, but...” We profess a willingness to obey God but then make compromises and place conditions on doing God’s will.

Can you imagine a person who is not characterized by self-interest? A person who is not a slave to appearance? A person who is not always feeling he deserves better? Or a person who does not answer God’s will with conditions? That person would be a part of the answer rather than a part of the problem of evangelizing the world.

The only way the world will know Christ is through us. Therefore, there must be a correspondence between our lives and the life of the One we represent. Otherwise the world will never know who he is. Becoming like Christ is a work of grace. It occurs only as Christ lives within us, not as we strive to be like him. Is this possible? Of course it is!

During Samuel Brengle’s senior year at Boston University, he was offered the pastorate of a wealthy congregation in South Bend, Indiana. He had an opportunity to begin his ministry at the top of the social roster. But he felt that God was calling him to join the Salvation Army, so he crossed the Atlantic and presented himself to General William Booth.

“We don’t want you. You’re dangerous,” Booth said. “Dangerous? What do you mean?” Brengle asked. “You have too much education. You would not be willing to subordinate yourself to one of the officers here where converted drunks and prostitutes are the staff leaders.” “Please give me a chance,” Brengle said. So Brengle was put to work as a bootblack for the Central Salvation Army Corps in London. In an unfinished basement, on a dirt floor

half-submerged in water, Brengle began cleaning mud off of the boots of converted street bums who were now soldiers in the Army.

One day he seemed to hear an inner voice that said, “You’re a fool!” “What do you mean?” Brengle asked. “Remember the man who buried his talent in the earth?” the inner voice said. “Think of all the training you’ve had. You’re just throwing it away.” Brengle sank in depression

and began to pray, “Lord, have I failed you? Did I miss your leading?” And the Lord replied, “Remember, Sam, I washed their feet!” That muddy cellar became an anteroom to heaven as Brengle

sensed the reassuring presence of his Lord. From that day forward, he knew that he was called to spend himself for others.

Only the Holy Spirit can make this kind of sacrificial thinking possible. Jesus’ ministry began when the Spirit descended upon him at his baptism. His disciples’ ministry began when the Spirit came upon them at the day of Pentecost. Likewise, the Spirit of Christ must control us if we are to be conformed to the character of Christ and filled with his power. As long as we attempt to save our own lives, we shall lose them; but if we surrender our lives to be controlled by his Spirit, we shall live and bear fruit for him. The Bible says very little about self-enrichment, but it says a great deal about giving our lives for the enrichment of others. ✦

“Jesus’ ministry began when the Spirit descended upon him.”

“That muddy cellar became an anteroom to heaven as Brengle sensed the reassuring presence of his Lord.”



The God Who Is Humble

By George MacDonald (1824–1905)



MacDonald was a Scottish pastor and writer. In addition to his novels, he wrote some fifty books, including poetry, short stories, sermons and essays. The following article is an abridgement of a sermon entitled “The Child in the Midst” (*The Truth in Jesus* [Bethany House, 2006], 145–62).

In Jesus’ famous teaching on servanthood (Mark 9:33–37), he took a child and put him in the midst of the disciples and said, “Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me.” To receive a child in the name of God is to receive *God himself*. How are we to receive him? In the only way he can be received—by knowing him as he is. God is represented in Jesus, for God is *like* Jesus. In the same way, Jesus is represented in the child, for Jesus is *like* the child. Therefore, God is represented in the child, for he too is *like* the child. God is childlike. *Childhood belongs to the divine nature.*

How terribly, then, have the theologians misrepresented God. Nearly all of them represent him as a great king on a grand throne, thinking how grand he is, and making it the business of his being and the end of his universe to keep up his glory, wielding the bolts of a Jupiter against

them that take his name in vain. They would not admit such a statement, but follow out what they say and it amounts to this. The simplest peasant who loves his children and his sheep is a *true* type of our God beside the monstrosity of a monarch that the theologians present.

Who is our God? Our God is the God of little children! Therefore, with angels and with archangels, with the spirits of the just made perfect, with the little children of the kingdom, yea, with the Lord himself, we praise and magnify and laud his name, saying *Our Father*. It is his childlikeness that makes him our God and Father. For our childhood is born of his fatherhood.

Brothers, have you found our king? ✦

That Silly Nonsense about Your Own Dignity
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nonsense about your own dignity which has made you restless and unhappy all your life. He is trying to make you humble in order to make this moment possible: trying to take off a lot of silly, ugly, fancy-dress in which we have all got ourselves up and are strutting about like the little idiots we are. I wish I had got a bit further with humility myself: if I had, I could probably tell you more about the relief, the comfort, of taking the fancy-dress off—getting rid of the false self, with all its “Look at me” and “Aren’t I a good boy” and all its posing and posturing. To get even near it, even for a moment, is like a drink of cold water to a man in a desert.

Do not imagine that if you meet a really humble man he will be what most people call “humble” nowadays: he will not be a sort of greasy, smarmy person, who is always telling you that, of course, he is nobody. Probably all you will think about him is that he seemed a cheerful, intelligent chap who took a real interest in what *you* said to *him*. If you do dislike him, it will be because you feel a little envious of anyone who seems to enjoy life so easily. He will not be thinking about humility: he will not be thinking about himself at all.

If anyone would like to acquire humility, I can, I think, tell him the first step. The first step is to realize that one is proud. And a biggish step, too. At least, nothing whatever can be done before it. If you think you are not conceited, it means you are very conceited indeed. ✦

Humility: The Most Dangerous Virtue
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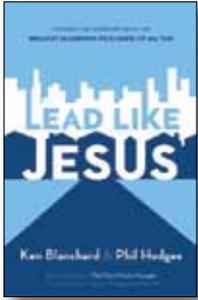
no way to begin telling people how to become humble without destroying what fragments of humility they may already possess.

Third, humility is only achieved as a byproduct of understanding, believing, and marveling in the gospel of grace. But the gospel doesn’t change us in a mechanical way. Recently I heard a sociologist say that for the most part, the frameworks of meaning by which we navigate our lives are so deeply embedded in us that they operate “pre-reflectively.” They don’t exist only as a list of propositions, but also as themes, motives, and attitudes. When we listen to the gospel preached or meditate on it in the Scriptures, we are driving it so deeply into our hearts, imaginations, and thinking that we begin to instinctively “live out” the gospel.

So let us preach grace till humility just starts to grow in us. ✦

Leadership EGO

By Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges



Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges have written a book on leadership that treats humility as one of the greatest assets a leader can have. Whether in government, business, or ministry, proud leaders do more harm than good. The following article is an abridgement of Chapter 2 in their book, *Lead Like Jesus* (Thomas Nelson, 2005: 39–80), and makes the point that the most persistent barrier to leading like Jesus is a heart motivated by self-interest.

Most leadership books and seminars focus on the leader's behavior and try to improve leadership style and methods. Emphasis is on the *hands* of the leader. They attempt to change leadership from the outside. Yet in teaching people to lead like Jesus, we have found that effective leadership starts on the inside; it is a *heart* issue.

As you consider the *heart* issues of leadership, a primary question you have to ask yourself is, "Am I a servant leader or a self-serving leader?" This question, when answered with brutal honesty, reveals your motivation as a leader. It also reflects your heart's EGO: do you seek to Edge God Out or to Exalt God Only in the way you exert influence on those around you? The answer to that question reveals whether you are driven to protect and promote yourself or called to a higher purpose of service.

Edging God Out results in two kinds of EGO problems: pride and fear. When false pride and toxic fear enter into a relationship, they poison it. Pride or fear-filled people are quick to judge, quick to take offense, quick to speak, and quick to push blame away and pull praise closer.

Pride centers on the promotion of self. It is, as we read in Romans 12:3, thinking of yourself "more highly than you ought." Here are some of the ways you can tell that pride is at its destructive work. See if any of these seem familiar:

- When you are engaged in a discussion, you resist acknowledging that the other person's idea is actually better than your own. In other words, "The righter they sound, the madder you get."

- You start to do all the talking, taking too much credit, demanding all the attention, boasting, showing off, or demanding service on the basis of your position.
- You judge the value of an idea by who said it rather than by the quality of the thought.
- You treat people as too far below you in position or credentials to seek out their input on issues that affect them.
- Your image becomes more important than substance and truth.
- You act as if the rules, judgments, and standards you impose on others should not apply to you because of who you are or the position you hold.



“Put your EGO on the altar and Exalt God Only”

- Your compensation becomes more important as a mark of success than the ethical and relational price you paid to attain it.
- Winning and losing become the only criteria you value and character becomes an option.

The other dynamic of Edging God Out is *fear*. Most people don't normally recognize fear as an EGO issue, but it is at the root of many seemingly prideful behaviors. The first thing Adam and Eve did after they ate the forbidden fruit was become self-conscious, cover up, and hide in fear. In a way we have been hiding ever since, in fear that our weaknesses and bad behavior will be found out. In both

the Old and New Testaments, the fear of God and fear of man are placed at the extremes of good and evil. We are called to hold God in life-giving, reverent awe as the ultimate source and judge of our self-worth and security. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Ps. 111:10). In stark contrast, Proverbs 29:25 tells us, "Fear of man will prove to be a snare."

The mirror image of Edging God Out is Exalting God Only. The key to this transformation is altaring your leadership EGO. *Altaring* is not misspelled. That's exactly what you have to do—put your EGO on the altar and Exalt God Only. If God is the object of our worship, the source of our security and self-worth, and our only

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audience and authority, false pride and fear are replaced by humility and God-grounded confidence.

Leading like Jesus means leading with humility, which requires knowing whose you are and who you are. As a leadership trait, humility is a heart attitude that reflects a keen understanding of your limitations to accomplish something on your own. According to Jim Collins in his book *Good to Great*, a leader with a humble heart looks out the window to find and applaud the true causes of success and in the mirror to find and accept responsibility for failure. A leader who does that is not coming from low self-esteem. In fact, people with humility don't think less of themselves; they just think of themselves less.

With a little brutal honesty, you will probably come to realize that you, too, have an EGO problem. That's the bad news. The good news is that you are not alone and that what you are struggling with is a treatable condition. In I Corinthians 10:13, we read,

No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

This applies to letting your pride and fear control your thoughts and actions as a leader. ✨

“With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high? ...He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”

Micah 6:6, 8

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The High Calling

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