



Humility

Adapted from "Demands of Discipleship" series by Dennis Marquardt.

We live in a world of big egos, especially in this country! However, the greatest leaders in history have been people who demonstrated humility. People with big egos are often people who, reality, lack self-confidence, and so they mask it by pretending to be so sure of themselves that others often see them as arrogant. Because so many of us also struggle with self-confidence, we often look up to people who appear to be strong leaders, and many times are no more self-confident than we are!

Real leadership, however, is found in those who have a humble attitude rather than those who appear arrogant. Those who have true self confidence do not have to impress others, they have their own self crucified. Such people are outward focused rather than inward focused. Those whose focus is "me" or "I" are those that should alarm us and those who will find life empty.

In 1940, the *International Herald Tribune* printed a report from a student at Syracuse University who had studied the speeches of Adolf Hitler and other world leaders of the time. He reported that Hitler used the first person singular more frequently than any other world statesman. He used "I" or "me" an average of one time in every fifty-four words--twice as often as Franklin D. Roosevelt.¹

The scriptures teach us that God desires a humble heart. His desire is for men who are strong, who are humble, and not weak. Since "*pride*" is the root of all sin, it has no place in the life of God's disciples. Pride is the foundation for all sin. It is what Satan appealed to in Eve to tempt her, and it is what destroys our lives when it is allowed to blossom. Pride can gradually cloud our perspective and rob us of God's potential. Pride truly is one of the seven deadly sins!

¹ Robert C. Shannon, *1000 Windows*, (Cincinnati, Ohio: Standard Publishing Company, 1997).

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COURAGE

C1: Read and answer or discuss the following.

Matthew 23:1–12 (ESV) Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, “The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat, so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice. They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people’s shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger. They do all their deeds to be seen by others. For they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long, and they love the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces and being called rabbi by others. But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers. And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. Neither be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Christ. The greatest among you shall be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.”

- In these verses, Jesus tells His disciples not to do the deeds of the scribes and Pharisees because they say things and yet do not do them. Have you ever said things for others to do and you are not willing to do them yourself?
- Why do you think Jesus rejected the scribes and Pharisees way of doing things, discussed in this passage?
- What comes to your mind when you hear the word “ego”?
- Although Jesus was the Son of God, how did His actions speak about His own ego?

C2: Answer or discuss the following.

- Have you ever done something to be noticed by people? Why?
- There is a saying that an officer, whether military or fire service, should never send a man where he will not go himself. Why do you think that is?
- Have you ever been placed in a position of authority? If so, how did it make you feel to be recognized as a leader?
- Pride is the root of all sin. Why do you think that is?
- If pride is putting oneself first, who does the humble servanthood put first and why?
- Have you ever allowed your pride to get in the way of serving as a Christian?

STRENGTH

S1: Read and answer or discuss the following.

Matthew 23:1–12 (ESV)

- Jesus spoke to His disciples about the scribes and Pharisees attitudes concerning their positions of authority. Why did Jesus have a problem with how they led the people?
- Why do you think Jesus said, “call no one Rabbi, or Father or Leader?”
- Have you ever been in a position where the leader was like the scribes and Pharisees telling you to do one thing but doing another? Describe your experience.
- Jesus shares that the greatest shall be your servant, what are some ways that you can humble yourself and let God exalt you?

S2: Answer or discuss the following.

- When you are around people who feel they “deserve” a position or place of honor, how does that make you feel?
- Pride puts you first, but humble servanthood puts others first. How did Jesus live this example? Why do you feel pride is the root of all sin?



- Have you ever struggled with pride, wanting a position or a place of honor because you felt you deserved it?

- Over the course of the next thirty days, what are some ways you can overcome a prideful heart and replace it by being humble servants of others?

ENDURANCE

E1: Read and answer or discuss the following.

Matthew 23:1–12 (ESV)

- One of the biggest problems with pride is a big ego. How does your ego line up with what Jesus shared about the scribes and Pharisees?
- If God desires a humble heart, how can you rid yourself of pride and take on a humble heart like Christ?
- If it is true that actions speak louder than words, what would people say about what they see you do?
- Have you ever been placed in position of authority and let pride creep into how you held that position? Give specific examples of how pride can tarnish our witness of Jesus Christ. How does pride effect every other area of your life?

E2: What would your reaction be to the following situations:

- You have been placed in a position of authority and a task has come up that you really do not want to do. Would you do the job or pass it off to someone else? Why?

- Your pastor has asked for a volunteer to help the less fortunate in your community, you have the gifts and talents to help but you struggle with the belief that your time is better spent on the things you want to do. What would you do? What would your attitude be?

- There are two positions open in your church, one is the leader but no true responsibilities but title alone, and the other is someone to empty the garbage cans. Which of the two jobs would you apply for and why?

- Over the next sixty days, what are some way you can serve your family, church community and strangers who do not know Christ?