

Day 12
Oh, Lord it's hard to be humble...

Matthew 5:5 (MSG) *"You're blessed when you're content with just who you are—no more, no less. That's the moment you find yourselves proud owners of everything that can't be bought."*

Meekness and humility do not come naturally to us. Just the opposite. Have you ever wondered why so few are truly humble? Is it really that hard to be humble? Part of the reason we resist meekness is because we don't understand that meekness is actually a strength, not a weakness. So, we shy away from it because we would hate to appear weak. Yet Jesus, throughout His life and ministry, demonstrated that it is only the strong that are able to be meek. If you are struggling with humility, it is highly likely that you have the wrong mindset about humility.

Listen to what Paul writes: *"For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, **not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly**, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith."* (Romans 12:3 NKJV) For us to grow in the arena of meekness, we have to think the right way. We have to think right or sober about ourselves! Jesus tells us to be meek, because some of us are on a trip. It's called an ego trip! Have you ever been on that ride, the ride of pride? If we are going to be meek, we have to avoid those kinds of trips, and the way to avoid them is to think soberly about ourselves.

Sober thinking is having a complete grasp on who I am and who I am not. When we think soberly about ourselves, we are neither arrogant nor insecure. Arrogance is easily recognized by others, but we sometimes struggle to identify it within ourselves. We think the opposite of being arrogant is insecurity, because arrogant people are preoccupied by their own importance. Whereas insecure people are timid and lack any confidence in themselves. Both arrogance and insecurity are prideful, because in both we are preoccupied with ourselves. In arrogance, by thinking we are better than we really are, and in insecurity, by thinking we are worse than we really are. Maybe you think, "Well, I can see how arrogance is prideful, but how is insecurity prideful? Isn't that the exact opposite?" Think of the word pride. What letter is in the middle of that word? It's the letter "I". **Jesus said, if you are going to live a blessed life, you will be content with who you are, no more (that deals with arrogance), no less (that deals with insecurity).**

***"Humility does not mean thinking less of yourself than of other people, nor does it mean having a low opinion of your own gifts. It means freedom from thinking about yourself at all."* – William Temple, Sr.**

The problem with some of us is the fact that we either think we are so important that the sun won't rise without us, or we have a false sense of humility and we think we are humble if we demean ourselves. Arrogance is not loving yourself, but it is a preoccupation with yourself. Insecurity, on the other hand, is not hating yourself, it is thinking only about yourself. Jesus is saying that both ends of the spectrum are a form of pride, because it focuses on you. Whether the focus is on your strengths or your weaknesses, it is still a focus on you! Arrogance claims: "I can do anything I want to do." Insecurity claims: "I can't do anything at all." What is interesting about both of these negative traits is that they thrive on outside confirmation and approval. Although the arrogant person often will profess: "I don't care what anybody says", they secretly crave the praise of people. Insecure people are driven by always looking for some form of validation or approval.

Why is it necessary to address both of these spectrums of pride? Because they will completely immobilize our service to the Lord and to others if we don't identify and eradicate them. The only people who can freely serve are the people who know who they are and to Whom they belong. John writes this about Jesus during the Passover meal: ***"Jesus knew that the Father had given him authority over everything and that he had come from God and would return to God. So he got up from the table, took off his robe, wrapped a towel around his waist, and poured water into a basin. Then he began to wash the disciples' feet, drying them with the towel he had around him."*** (John 13:3-5 NLT)

The power of this moment is palpable; God in the flesh, doing the most menial, lowliest, dirtiest job that is reserved for the lowest ranking slave. Don't glide by this moment. Stop, watch, think, learn and follow. This is true meekness in action. The One who has the greatest power has no need to grasp for more. John says: ***"Jesus knew that the Father had given him authority over everything and that he had come from God and would return to God."*** Did you see that? Jesus knew that he had authority over everything. That authority was given to Him by the Father. Let me ask you this question: If you knew you had authority over everything, how would you act? Authority over everything means you have no limits, you are in charge, you can do what you want. You can do to anyone anything you want to do. You could destroy an enemy, put a betraying friend in permanent exile, say what you want, act in any way that you want. Why? Because there is nothing that you do not have authority over! You are large and in charge. In the words of that famous theologian: "You 'da man or 'da woman."

Meekness is power under control. So, what does Jesus do with all that power? He stood, He strips, He stoops and He serves! Jesus knew who He was, He knew where He came from and He knew where He was going. We struggle to be meek because we really don't know who we are. We struggle to serve because we don't know where we are ultimately going.

A truly meek person has no need for others to know how meek they feel. They do not view themselves as better or worse than others. They simply view themselves soberly. Aware of their own weaknesses and thankful for their God-given strengths. That enables them to forget themselves, give themselves, risk themselves and leave the results in the Father's care.

Do you know who you are? Do you know Who you belong to? Do you know where you are going? You don't have to answer that, because all we have to do is to look at how you serve and who you are willing to serve. That will tell it all.

Reflection and Prayer:

- **Pray this prayer: Father, thank you that You know me better than I know myself. Thank You that I am made in Your image and likeness. Give me the confidence to embrace my uniqueness, submit my weaknesses to Your grace, release my insecurities and hurts to Your amazing love. I want to be meek like Jesus. Help me not to hold onto things I need to let go of, or grasp for things I do not need. I need You! I want to live the blessed life that Jesus showed me. Change my heart, so that Your desires may become my desires. Help me to be fully submitted to Your will and purpose for my life. Give me the power to lay down my life for others. I want to have a sober evaluation of myself. Reveal any arrogant way in me and forgive me. I release my hidden insecurities and fears to You. Set me free so that I may serve others like You served them. Here I am Lord, completely available for You to build a meek attitude within me. I love You, Lord. In Jesus Name. Amen.**
- **Read and meditate on Psalm 139: 1-18, 23-24 (NLT) O Lord, you have examined my heart and know everything about me. 2 You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my thoughts even when I'm**

*far away. **3** You see me when I travel and when I rest at home. You know everything I do. **4** You know what I am going to say even before I say it, Lord. **5** You go before me and follow me. You place your hand of blessing on my head. **6** Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too great for me to understand! **7** I can never escape from your Spirit! I can never get away from your presence! **8** If I go up to heaven, you are there; if I go down to the grave, you are there. **9** If I ride the wings of the morning, if I dwell by the farthest oceans, **10** even there your hand will guide me, and your strength will support me. **11** I could ask the darkness to hide me and the light around me to become night—**12** but even in darkness I cannot hide from you. To you the night shines as bright as day. Darkness and light are the same to you. **13** You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. **14** Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it. **15** You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. **16** You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed. **17** How precious are your thoughts about me, O God. They cannot be numbered! **18** I can't even count them; they outnumber the grains of sand! And when I wake up, you are still with me! **24** Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. **24** Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.*