

THE KINGDOM KEY OF HUMILITY



LESSON 2 // THE DOWN THAT LEADS UP

A crucial part of staying on track spiritually, or getting back on track, involves an important key in God's kingdom—the kingdom key of humility. Throughout the Bible we are warned about the dangers of pride and encouraged to develop humility.

In our last lesson we considered how we can clean out pride from our lives to make room for humility. Now let's look at what humility is and does in our hearts as we seek to follow Christ.

1. The paradox of humility

Humility is not popular. People often think that being humble means putting yourself down, or letting others put you down and walk all over you. But real humility is not self-hatred, a sense of worthlessness and insignificance, or a constant feeling of guilt and condemnation.

God has a very different perspective about humility. Notice how the Apostle Paul describes this with Jesus as our ultimate example:

Philippians 2:3-11 (NLT) *Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. ⁴ Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. ⁵ You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. ⁶ Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. ⁷ Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, ⁸ he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor and gave him the name above all other names, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

The Son of God took the lowest position as a human being—to the point that He willingly went to the cross! And because this humble pathway was the Father's will, the Father lifted Jesus up to the place of "highest honor." In other words, the way "up" for Christ was "down."

The same is true for us. The way of honor in God's kingdom is through humility (Proverbs 15:33). When we choose "the same attitude that Christ Jesus had," we open the way for His name to be honored in and through our lives. Humility is a Christ-like attitude that:

- *Impacts our actions—we are more responsive and obedient to God.*
- *Changes how we think about and relate to God, to ourselves and to others.*
- *Empowers us to give up "rights" and "privileges" for the sake of God's kingdom and others, just as Jesus did for us.*

2. The promise of humility

Jesus taught us that we must learn this humility from Him and that there are great promises for those who humble themselves.

Matthew 5:5 (GNT) *Happy are those who are humble; they will receive what God has promised!*

Matthew 11:29 (NIV) *Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*

Let's look at some of what God promises to the humble:

- *His presence (Isaiah 57:15).*
- *His promotion (Luke 14:11; 1 Peter 5:6).*
- *His power (2 Corinthians 12:9; James 4:6).*
- *His protection (Psalm 18:27).*
- *His peace (Colossians 3:12-15).*
- *An effective prayer life (2 Chronicles 7:14).*
- *Real prosperity (Proverbs 22:4).*
- *The fulfilling of His purposes in our lives (John 13:12-17).*

Humbling ourselves means taking a “low” position, but the Lord responds to our humility by raising us up to new heights in Him. This is a great paradox in God’s kingdom—the way up is down!

By choosing humility, we position ourselves to be more like Jesus and to receive more of what He wants to pour into our lives.

Discussion questions

1. Read Philippians 2:3-11. What do you learn about God’s perspective on humility from these verses?
2. How do the following verses encourage you to walk in humility? 2 Chronicles 7:14; Proverbs 22:4; Isaiah 57:15; 1 Peter 5:6
3. How does humbling yourself make you more like Jesus? What are some practical ways you can do this in your daily life?