

WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT HUMILITY: -

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NOTE: - All Bible texts are taken from the King James Version; and the compiler has supplied all emphasis throughout this Study Document.

It may be helpful at the beginning of this small Study Document to define the words “humility” and “humble”, before I turn to the Scriptures.

Noah Webster’s 1828 Dictionary defines “HUMILITY” as follows: -

“HUMILITY, noun. [L. humilitas.]

“1. In ethics, freedom from pride and arrogance; humbleness of mind; a modest estimate of one's own worth. In theology, humility consists in lowliness of mind; a deep sense of one's own unworthiness in the sight of God, self-abasement, penitence for sin, and submission to the divine will. ... 2. Act of submission.”

Noah Webster’s 1828 Dictionary defines “HUMBLE” [the adjective] as follows: -

“HUMBLE, adjective [L. humilis.]

“1. Low; opposed to high or lofty. ... 2. Low; opposed to lofty or great; mean; not magnificent; as a humble cottage. ... 3. Lowly; modest; meek; submissive; opposed to proud, haughty, arrogant or assuming. In an evangelical sense, having a low opinion of one's self, and a deep sense of unworthiness in the sight of God.”

Noah Webster’s 1828 Dictionary defines “HUMBLE” [the transitive verb] as follows: -

“HUMBLE, verb, transitive.” To abase; to reduce to a low state. ... 1. To crush; to break; to subdue. ... 2. To mortify. ... 3. To make humble or lowly in mind; to abase the pride of; to reduce arrogance and self-dependence; to give a low opinion of one's moral worth; to make meek and submissive to the divine will; the evangelical sense. ... 4. To make to condescend. ... 5. To bring down; to lower; to reduce.”

While the actual words “*humility*”, “*humble*” or “*lowly*” do not appear many times in our King James Bibles, what the Scriptures do say about this subject is both clear and of vital spiritual importance.

Proverbs 15:33: - “The fear of the LORD *is* the instruction of wisdom; and **before honour *is* humility.**”

See also: - Proverbs 18:12.

The Bible writers leave us in no doubt, that God's saving grace is **ONLY** give to the lowly or humble, because God resists those who are proud.

Proverbs 3:34: - "Surely he scorneth the scorners: but **he giveth grace unto the lowly.**"

James 4:6: - "But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, **God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.**"

1st Peter 5:5: - "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all *of you* be subject one to another, and **be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.**"

☞ This clear Biblical teaching reveals the following simple truth: - Humility is the essential prerequisite to be able to receive God's saving grace. Therefore, if we are not truly humble because of our lost, spiritual condition as fallen sinners, it means that we **CANNOT** receive God's saving grace; and therefore, we **CANNOT** receive God's gift of salvation!

On the other hand, when we read in the Bible concerning certain individuals having the grace of God, it automatically reveals to us, the specified individual was first humble and clothed with humility, to be able to receive the grace of God!

Our God Who inhabits Eternity, will dwell with those who are of a contrite and humble spirit.

Isaiah 57:15: - "For thus saith **the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity**, whose name *is* Holy; I dwell in the high and holy *place*, **with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.**"

Psalms 138:6: - "Though **the LORD be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly**: but the proud he knoweth afar off."

Jesus clearly taught his disciples, that if we exalt ourselves, we shall be humbled; but if we humble ourselves, we will be exalted by the Lord. This teaching is also echoed by the Apostle James.

Matthew 23:12: - "And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and **he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.**"

James 4:10: - "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and **he shall lift you up.**"

See also: - Luke 14:11.

Jesus exhorted His disciples that they must be converted and be humble as a small child, so that they can be able to enter into the Kingdom of God.

Matthew 18:3 & 4: - "And said, Verily I say unto you, **Except ye be converted, and become as little children**, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. **Whoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.**"

The prophet Micah exhorts us amongst other things, to walk humbly before the Lord.

Micah 6:8: - "He hath showed thee, O man, what *is* good; and **what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?**"

With the lowly is wisdom.

Proverbs 11:2: - "*When* pride cometh, then cometh shame: but **with the lowly is wisdom.**"

Jesus is the ultimate Example of humility. Although He was equal with God, He humbled Himself to become a man and an obedient servant [to do His Father's will]. He became obedient even unto the point of enduring the agonizing death of the cross. The Apostle Paul exhorts us to have this same humble mind that Jesus has.

Philippians 2:5 – 8: - "**Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.**"

Jesus identified Himself as being meek and lowly during the time of His first Advent.


Matthew 11:28 & 29: - "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; **for I am meek and lowly in heart:** and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

I can conclude that our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself fulfilled the essential prerequisite of being humble and was clothed with humility, so as to receive the grace of God, from His childhood according to Luke's gospel.

Luke 2:40: - "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and **the grace of God was upon him.**"

The clearest contrast between spiritual pride and true humility, is given in Jesus' parable of the proud Pharisee, and the humble Publican [that is, the Tax Collector]. The Tax Collector was justified in the sight of God, while the Pharisee's prayer went no higher than the ceiling of the temple.

Luke 18:9 – 14: - "And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men *are*, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. **And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as *his* eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.**"

 When a person reflects upon what our precious Saviour Jesus Christ has endured for us in willingly submitting to suffer the agonizing death of the cross, because of our sins, it should bring us in contrition and deep humility before God, and lead us to utter the humble prayer of the Tax Collector – "**God be merciful to me a sinner.**" And according to the teaching of our gracious Saviour, we shall indeed be justified before the Lord.