

# **Robert R. McLaughlin Bible Ministries**

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**The TREE OF LIFE is a weekly teaching summary.**

**Tree of Life 05/31/98**

## **The Doctrine of Humility. Part 2.**

**Tree of Life for 05-31-98**

**Phi 2:3 "... but with humility..."**

**Humility... that virtue which all speak of but very few cultivate. Humility is that state of mind which submits to the divine order in the universe and does not impiously exalt self. Humility is a life long lesson lending to the correct evaluation of self (Rom 3:23) and is therefore the highest form of self respect since it admits mistakes and makes the proper adjustments. Humility does not consist in hiding one's talents and virtues, but in possessing a clear knowledge in all that is lacking in one's character and not exalting oneself. The Biblical meaning of humility is not a feeling of insignificance or inferiority or of a low rank or low importance. Humility in the ranks of predestination is a recognition of the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ and submission to the Lord's delegated authority, i.e., the accurate teaching from one's pastor-teacher. Such submission is tantamount to perception, metabolization, and application of Bible doctrine. To be neglectful toward doctrine is a blatant state of rebellion.**

**The mind of Christ commands us to examine ourselves, 2Co 13:5; Gal 6:4. In such, the unexamined life is not worth living. The unexamined life is arrogant and against God. For many their lives merely serve as a warning to others of what not to**

be like. Humility creates in us the capacity for the closest possible intimacy with God. Humility is the antithesis of arrogance and is the only true wisdom by which we prepare our minds for all the possible changes in life. The humble person realizes that whatever he has - comes from God, 1Co 4:7, and is thankful for it. A manifestation of humility is gratitude. On the other hand thoughtless, selfish, arrogance is a manifestation of the world today. Absence of gratitude is a mark of an ignorant, narrow, arrogant attitude. Only humility paves the way for us to appreciate what God has done. And where there is appreciation there is courtesy and concern for the rights and property of others. Humility is the first virtue to go when the believer exits the pre-designed plan of God. In fact, whenever you become aware of your humility you have lost it!

Humility must be distinguished from humiliation. Humiliation is to reduce your view of self to a lower status in your eyes or the eyes of others whereas humility is the virtue of freedom from arrogance. Where there is humility, self is no longer the issue. In the Bible, humility connotes independence from human power and ability and dependence on the power and ability of God. When there is maximum dependence on God's power and provisions there is the true function of grace. Grace is the effectiveness of the Christian life. Humility therefore, is a system of thinking based on divine viewpoint thinking related to grace orientation and occupation with the person and mind of Jesus Christ. Humility is a system of cognition of Bible doctrine resulting in the believer living the directive will of God rather than the permissive will of God! Humility is more than a system of thinking, it is a way of life.

As a system of thinking, humility is freedom from both subjective arrogance (toward self) and objective arrogance (toward others) related to Christian degeneracy. Humility begins when you are happy with yourself, i.e., who God has made you to be, 1Co 15:10. You are God's workmanship, Eph 2:10, and as such there is not place for malcontentment with who God has made you to be. Humility stirs us free from the numerous tentacles which reach out from the cosmic system.

**Humility must never be defined in terms of legalism, self effacement, asceticism, or any other form of subjective arrogance. Humility includes recognition and submission to legitimate authority without feeling inferior or threatened. Humility is therefore poise as its expression under the normal circumstances of life and courage as its expression under the abnormal circumstances of life. Courage and poise lends itself to perserverence and perseverance is power.**

**We each have a station or calling in life and humility is that which motivates that calling, Eph 4:1. Pro 15:33 tells us that respect for the Lord is us wanting to be instructed by His wisdom. And it is His wisdom which leads to humility and honor. On the other hand, Pro 11:2 informs us that arrogance is related to dishonor. Humility is three-fold in that it is directed toward self, toward others, and toward legitimate authority in life. In the spiritual realm humility is the means by which the believer executes predestination as one of the productions of the Spirit, Gal 5:23. Humility renders the believer teachable and causes the believer to obey the commands of God. Teachability recognizes two things, the authority of one's pastor-teacher, and the content of his message.**

**1Pe 5:5 commands us to clothe (fasten) ourselves with humility. Why? Because God can only give blessing and deal graciously with those who have true humility since humility offers capacity. Under humility, achievement belongs to God and happiness belongs to the believer, when the believer functions in the plan of God. It is safe to say then that the believer experiences happiness comparative to his function in the plan of God. The arrogant believer attempts to achieve things by his own ability according to his own rules. The humble believer waits for God to pave the way in His time even though the present circumstances may not make sense. Christian service performed in the cosmic system glorifies SELF, while the same Christian service performed in the power sphere of God's plan glorifies God. The issue then, is not what you do but which power sphere you reside and function in. The cosmic system can offer power (human**

power) and it can offer that which you think you want but God's plan goes far beyond what you can even dream of. The humility and peace which accompany the blessings of God is something the world can never offer and never understand. As a result of living in predestination and being humble, the things you do mean a great deal more. Humility orients everything in life to the grace of God while arrogance orients everything in life to the promotion of self.

For the unbeliever, humility is developed from adherence to the laws of divine establishment. In such, the unbeliever can develop virtue as his protection in the devil's world. But this will not do for the believer in Christ. If the laws of divine establishment can be kept by all, believers and unbelievers alike, then the provisions for humility for believers entails more. Humility from physical birth is developed through a system of authority based on the laws of divine establishment, but humility from one's spiritual birth (belief on the Lord Jesus Christ) thereafter is based on the mystery doctrine of the church age and the spiritual gift of pastor teacher. Since humility is not inherent it must be attained through learning under some legitimate system of authority. Hence, it is important for both believer and unbeliever to identify what true authority in life is and then submit to that authority. Rejection of authority is a sign of the believer being under demon influence, Jud 1:4,8. The arrogant learn just as the humble learn, but the arrogant learn from the system which disorients them to life.

God has provided for every normal person of the human race a mechanical system of humility. No one is born with genuine humility, it is a virtue which must be acquired/developed. And the first system of teaching humility is the authority in the home. This is not to say that every home offers the ideal circumstances of authority, but it to say that authority can be administered in right or wrong/ just or unjust circumstances to be effective. God has made it possible in homes with unfair authority for acceleration of virtue or acceleration of evil. It

can go either way depending on the person own volition. There are times when the child learns the concept of virtue faster from bad and unjust authority than from fair authority. God knows what will be the most effective situation for each of us. This does not claim that God creates the unfair and unjust authority but in accordance with free will He allows it and uses it to His glory. Environment in the home is not the issue, it's the authority in the home that is to be respected. Degeneration in a society begins with malfunction of authority in the home. Rejection of authority is promoted by the god of this world, Satan, in order to produce human viewpoint thinking rather than divine viewpoint thinking. Rejection of authority produces resentment, bitterness, reaction, and implacability toward unfair authority and is a guarantee that the child will be a loser in life. The adult soul takes responsibility for his decisions. This introduces the concept of the potter's wheel found in Rom 19:19-21.

The potter's wheel is God's basis for humility. It must be noted that it is not God who makes the vessels of honor and dishonor. God established a system by which a vessel of honor can be molded and rejection of His system therefore molds a vessel of dishonor. The decision is each person's response or reaction to that which God provides. The sovereign will of God and the free will of man must coexist in human history due to the pre-established rules of the angelic conflict. So, whether a person becomes a vessel of honor or dishonor depends on the function of his own volition in regard to divine authority. It all starts with your attitude toward your parents, nation, pastor, and so on. Now, what does the potter (God) do with vessels of honor? He keeps them. And what does He do with vessels of dishonor? He smashes them, i.e., administers divine discipline. Divine authority establishes and preserves those with humility and destroys those with arrogance. The vessel is molded as the vessel responds to God's system, the potter's wheel and humility is the key.

**How do we then, humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God? By casting all your cares on Him so that we do not open ourselves to the distractions of this world, 1Pe 5:7. God has invented authority as the environment of freedom for the function of human volition. Freedom without authority is chaos and authority without freedom is tyranny. When children are allowed too much freedom they develop no respect. The home is the system of organized humility and parents are the authority designed to provide enforced humility. In the rearing of the child in the home, freedom should be given gradually as trust and virtue builds. The child's positive response is genuine humility and his negative response is in need of being broken by the potter's wheel. Sparing the rod (divine discipline) is why so many children have a terrible start in life. They have managed to bypass the first system of authority and so emerge into the world at a severe disadvantage! Negative volition to the authority at home results in life in the cosmic system.**

**Parents teach children the principles of self control, self discipline, poise and restraint by the use of volition as the means of reaching genuine humility in life. The sooner the genuine humility eventuates from the enforced humility, the sooner the child grows up. Genuine humility develops a sense of destiny and the foundation for good decision making. It is almost impossible to become mature spiritually without having some maturity from the human and temporal standpoint. Once you leave the home you revert to divine institution number one: Volition. This is when you (should) begin to take responsibility for your own decisions. Ultimately each of us are responsible before God for the decisions we make, Rom 14:12.**

**So, once you leave the home, your soul needs organized humility. This becomes the most powerful thing the individual will possess in all his lifetime. If organized humility is lacking it is a great detriment to the person. It is from our inculcated training under the system of authority under the laws of**

**divine establishment that we obtain orientation to life. The vessel of honor accepts these things in the status of humility. The vessel of dishonor rejects these things in the status of arrogance. When children reach adolescence, the vessels are formed in two categories:**

- 1) The vessel of honor: humble and teachable**
- 2) The vessel of dishonor: unteachable and resistant to authority. The only hope for the vessel of dishonor is regeneration, and if already saved, then positive volition toward the word of God.**

**Following the home environment, there comes the divine institutional humility, i.e., institutional authority. With one exception (volition), all authority in life is institutional; which means that authority does not depend upon love for its function, but upon professionalism. There are three factors in any institution:**

- 1- The authority of the organization**
- 2- The purpose of the organization**
- 3- The policy of the organization**

**These factors are involved in all divine institutions except the volition of the soul who's authority is the mentality of the soul. The volition of the soul is the authority for making decisions. Positive volition toward authority means good decision and negative volition toward authority means bad decisions resulting in cosmic involvement. This is true of divine institution numbers 3, family, and 4 human government. But in divine institution number 2, marriage, impersonal love and capacity for life is needed in this authority. That is why we have such commands as found in Eph 5:22 and Eph 5:25,33. Divine institution number two, marriage, is a system of organized humility, the husband is the authority over the wife, not because he is deserving of this authority but because it is God's divine order. Yet the woman cannot be subordinate to her husband if she is not first subordinate to the Lord. The function of volition in marriage is not for the development of genuine humility but for the response of love. Marriage therefore requires genuine humility to secure its success. One major reason why marriages fail is arrogance. Hence, no marriage can succeed without both enforced and genuine**

**humility. Without genuine humility in marriage there is no capacity for love of for life. Note that volition cannot be developed into genuine humility by means of marriage! Humility must have been developed first before marriage, or it must be developed from Bible doctrine during marriage, or in the unbeliever's case from adherence to the laws of divine establishment.**

**The chain of command under God's system of authority throughout our lives is each intimately related. It starts in the home and is carried over to the soul, to the marriage, to the family and to one's nation. Therefore if authority is rejected in the home, a damaged soul emerges and enters into marriage without the proper capacity. Thereafter what generally happens is a break in the marriage reaping its effects on the family in turn producing more ill formed souls to emerge from the home. This all culminates into a great evil which makes up the societies which form a nation, a nation sick with multitudes of those who reject authority.**

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