

THEOLOGY OF HUMILITY

(Arranged by Mark E. Moore)

Matthew 23:12 For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

Luke 14:11 For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Luke 18:14 "I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

James 4:10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

1 Peter 5:5-6 Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.

2 Samuel 22:28, "You save a humble people, but your eyes are on the haughty to bring them down."

Proverbs 29:23, "One's pride will bring him low, but he who is lowly in spirit will obtain honor."

Ezekiel 21:26, "Exalt that which is low, and bring low that which is exalted."

Related Texts:

- Matthew 18:3-4 And he said: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.
- Matthew 20:26 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant,
- Luke 1:52 He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble.
- Luke 16:15 He said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts. What is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight.
- James 1:9-10 The brother in humble circumstances ought to take pride in his high position. But the one who is rich should take pride in his low position, because he will pass away like a wild flower.

Illustrations:

- Child Matt 18:2
- Low Seats Luke 14:10
- Publican's Prayer Luke 18:13
- Apostles' Positions Luke 22:24-27
- Foot Washing John 13:14ff

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Gk—*Tapeinos* [ταπεινός]: Lowly, humble. It originally meant a state of poverty or oppression. (See also ταπεινός, ταπεινώσις, and ταπεινοφροσύνη). This word is closely related to *praus* [πραύς], Matt 11:29; Eph 4:2; 2 Cor 10:1.

Heb—See *anah* (עָנָה); *shachach* (שָׁחַח); and *shaphael* (שָׁפַל). All carry the idea of bringing down, lowering, or abasing, even to the point of destruction and devastation. *Anah* also carries with it the connotation of poverty and oppression as does *tapeinos* (Gk) and is its closest counterpart.

I. Description of Jesus

- A. Matt 11:29 "I am gentle [*praus*] and humble at heart."
- B. Phil 2:3-11, a description of the humiliation of the incarnation.

II. The Principle of Exaltation and Humiliation

- A. Humble yourselves before God and He will exalt you:
 - 1. Quotes: Matt 23:12; Luke 14:11; Jam 4:10; 1 Pet 5:5-6; Luke 18:14.
 - 2. Related: Matt 18:3-4; 20:26; Luke 1:48, 52-53; Luke 16:15; Phil 2:3-11; Jam 1:9-10; 4:6.
- B. The First Shall Be Last and the Last First:
 - 1. Matt 19:30; 20:8, 16, 27; Mark 9:35; 10:31, 44; Luke 13:30; 22:26.
- C. Principle in the O.T.
 - 1. Directly Related: Psa 18:27; 147:6; Prov 16:18-19; 18:12; 29:23; Isa 2:11-17; 53:10-12; 57:15; Ezek 17:24; 21:26.
 - 2. Indirectly Related: 1 Sam 2:7-10; Job 40:11, 12; Psa 37:11; Isa 13:11.

III. Humility Turns Away God's Wrath, While Arrogance Elicits God's Wrath (all *canah* except in Daniel): *Lev 26:41; 1 Kings 21:29 (Ahab); 2 Kings 22:18-20; 2 Chron 7:14 ("If my people will humble themselves . . ."); 12:6,7 (Princes of Jerusalem); 12:12 (Rehoboam); 32:26; 33:10-13 (Manasseh); 34:27; Dan 4:37; 5:22-28.

IV. In Regard to Personal Relationships

- A. Dominant Principles:
 - 1. For unity of the Body
 - 2. Each member has a gift and a function
 - 3. In imitation of Christ's humility and condescending
- B. References:
 - 1. Rom 12:16—Condescend to men of low estate (cf. vv. 1-5)
 - 2. Eph 4:2—with humility and gentleness [*praus*], put up with one another.
 - 3. Phil 2:3—In imitation of Christ
 - 4. Col 3:13-22—Regarding "Body" relationships.