



## The Excellent Way: Humility

### Philippians 2

By Pastor Ken Patterson

**Introduction:** The letter to the Philippian church was written to encourage believers to fully embrace the life of a disciple. Disciple means more than one who exhibits the outer trappings of “Christian”. Disciple implies one who imitates someone else. Those who are disciples of Christ are to be imitators of Christ. In the current lesson, students will learn that one characteristic we are to imitate is humility. By the end of this lesson students will be able to identify why they need humility and the benefit of Christian humility. Further, students will describe the outcome of humility in terms of benefit to God’s kingdom and then as benefit to the one who shows humility.

**Key Scripture:** Philippians 2: 1-11

#### **I. Encouraged to be Humble**

When Paul wrote Philippians 2, the Christian characteristic he promoted relates to putting others needs first. Throughout the letter to the Philippians, Paul uses the word love. This version of the word love is Agape love. The term agape refers to a self-sacrificing attitude towards others which seeks to promote the best for them. Paul wrote that he desired the Philippian church to be lacking in selfish ambition and vain conceit but to be abounding in love (Philippians 1: 9), to be of one mind in love and to esteem others instead of themselves.

When one looks to the interest of another they are exemplifying the highest form of love. The “you first” attitude is crucial to gaining others to Christ. It is an attitude where one goes the extra mile for someone before they ask or realize they need

anything. Jesus' sacrifice for mankind shows this and is explained in Romans 5: 8 which teaches that Christ died for us while we were still sinners. This is proof of God's agape love because He did this before we asked. The sacrifice of Jesus also shows that love is an act and agape love is always to the benefit of others. Those who are followers of Christ are to behave in the same way (caring for others' needs first) which in turn will open a door for us to share Christ with them.

## II. The Example of Humility

It might surprise many of us to realize that mankind is selfish by nature. Those who have worked with youth may have experienced the I, me, mine attitudes of children. In fact, if one were to ask teachers, they would quickly testify that children have to be taught to share, how to be kind, and how to be sensitive to others' needs. This is why we receive such joy when people exceed the norm and go out of their way to help others or to raise money for people's needs. The reality is that it is uncommon to put others first. The letter to the Philippians admonishes believers to look to Jesus and to follow His example of humility. In verses 5-8, Paul describes how Jesus showed humility.

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*How do you show the humility of Christ in your daily walk?*

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### Jesus' example of humility

Jesus' Status	How Jesus showed Humility
Is equal to God	Did not use it to His advantage
Is equal to God	Became a servant
Is equal to God	Became human
Is equal to God	Was obedient to the will of God the Father
Is equal to God	Died on a cross

One can understand Jesus' right and ability to continue to exist as God, yet in humility He chose to lower Himself for the benefit of Man. The example He set forces His followers to examine themselves and to adjust their thinking to line up with the mind of Jesus Christ. When we choose our status over the needs of others we show pride. When we choose the needs of others over our own needs, we show the humility of Christ.

## III. The End Game of Humility verses 9-11

So, what is the result or the end game of humility? If one quickly scans verses 9-11 they will see that Jesus is exalted. The tendency is to read this as what we will receive if we are humble. This is not the result we receive! Our reward is salvation and a home in heaven plus all the side benefits of being God's children (blessings on blessings). We do however achieve the same result that Jesus did. The result is that Jesus is lifted and acknowledged at the level He deserves. He is seen as Christ and Lord.

In verse 10-11 we are reminded about the ultimate goal of every Christian characteristic. When you and I show agape love, or forgiveness, or humility, or joy, or any of the fruit (characteristics) of the Holy Spirit, we elevate Jesus and show the world that He matters and makes a difference in our lives. More importantly, we show that Jesus can make a difference in the lives of others if they too make Him Lord. Thus, the end game of humility is not to elevate us, it is to lift up the savior Jesus Christ.

Question to consider: How can you and I remain humble in a world that suggests that we seek to be seen in everything we do?