

THE IMPORTANCE OF HUMILITY

LUKE 14:07–14

Introduction

The importance of humility is the thrust of this passage.

- I. Jesus attended a banquet (v. 7).
- II. The parable: the ambitious guest (vv. 8-10).
- III. The parable's point (v. 11).
- IV. The demonstration of humility (vv. 12-14).

I. *Luke 14:07 Jesus Christ's Social Life*

Jesus was still at the banquet of the chief Pharisee (v. 1). It was time for everyone to be seated for the meal, and Jesus noticed how some guests scrambled for the chief seats. Today we usually place the names of the most honoured guests at the plates. However, in Jesus' day the highest seat of was on the right of the host and the next highest on his left, and so the ranking continued alternating back and forth until the lowest ranked person sat the farthest away from the host. Very simply, the closer one sat to the host, the higher the honour. When Jesus saw how some quickly moved up close to the host, He saw an opportunity to teach the great importance of humility. The phrase "the places of honour" (tas protoklisias) means the best seats.

II. *Luke 14:8–10 Parable of the Ambitious Guest*

The parable is that of the ambitious guest. Jesus spoke directly to the man of ambition, the man who wants more recognition, honour, and position. Jesus said something that is very practical and should be clearly seen even by an aggressive individual: the ambitious man should not sit in a seat that is higher than his position or capability lest a man more honourable enters and replaces him. If the ambitious man takes a higher seat, four things are likely to happen.

1. He will be displaced.
2. He will then find all the other seats taken.
3. He will have to take a less prominent, less visible seat.
4. He will be embarrassed.

What the ambitious man should take is the least prominent seat and place of honour. Three things happen when he does.

1. His presence is acknowledged by the host.
 2. He is rewarded, moved up to a higher seat and position.
 3. He is recognized and honoured by all, no matter how high or how far from the top the position is.
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The point of the parable is twofold: self-exaltation humbles and humility exalts.

III. *Luke 14:11 Self-Exaltation Humbles*

The parable's point is clearly contrary to the ambitions and behaviour of most men. The man who exalts himself shall be humbled. It is not just a possibility; he *will* be humbled. Jesus said so.

1. The man who exalts himself does at least four things.

a. He debases others. He has to treat others as less and lower than himself in order to exalt himself.

=> He degrades others: downplaying their ability or person, position or performance, appearance or acceptance.

=> He demeans others: trying to wound and injure, shame and humiliate.

=> He debases others: trying to tear down, hurt, lower, and damage.

b. He acts self-sufficient. He may not be self-sufficient, but if he is going to exalt himself, he is forced to act...

- in control
- independent
- in charge
- above others
- very capable

Note: the great problem with being self-sufficient is that a person feels he does not even need God in his life. He may be religious, but he does not live a changed life that demonstrates a true trust and dependency upon God for salvation and life.

c. He corrupts morality and justice. The man who exalts himself governs all things by whatever moves him ahead and gives him the greatest position and recognition. True morality and justice may be thought about, but they are set aside if needed. The ambitious man who exalts himself often has to...

- lie
- shame
- steal
- not give due recognition
- cheat
- hold others back or down
- abuse
- hurt, damage or kill
- ridicule

d. He lives a life of struggle. He always feels torn within to manoeuvre and outdo others in order to get the highest seat or recognition possible. He seldom knows peace within, no matter the appearance given.

2. The man who exalts himself is to be humbled. As mentioned above, it is not just a possibility; it is a sure thing. He shall be humbled. The likelihood is that he will be humbled in this life, but if not, then he will be humbled by God in eternity (see v. 14). Four things will happen to him.

- a. He will be displaced. He will be removed from his seat of position and recognition. It probably will happen in this world, for people can be fooled and misused for only so long. Eventually they catch on and react. More tragically, the self-exalting (proud) man will be displaced by God. He will lose his place in heaven and be put out of heaven.
- b. He will find all other seats and positions already taken. There will be no room for him. This often happens in business when a man is demoted or released. A suitable position cannot be found to match his ability and true worth. The same will happen in heaven. If a man has exalted himself, he will find all available seats taken. His name will not be written by any seat in heaven. He will move farther and farther down the line, finding no empty seat.
- c. He will have to take the lowest seat. Note: this man was invited to the feast and he responded. He walked in the midst of all the guests. But he had a problem. He exalted himself, so he had to be moved down to the lowest seat. The lowest seat was the place of the least recognition and honour, doomed to be the seat for all hypocrites (see Mt. 25:41).
- d. He will be embarrassed and shamed by being debased.

Rom 12:16 *Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.*

1 Cor 8:2 *The man who thinks he knows something does not yet know as he ought to know.*

Gal 6:3 *If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.*

1 John 2:16 *For everything in the world — the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does — comes not from the Father but from the world.*

2 Sam 22:28 *You save the humble, but your eyes are on the haughty to bring them low.*

Psa 10:2 *In his arrogance the wicked man hunts down the weak, who are caught in the schemes he devises.*

Prov 11:2 *When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.*

Prov 13:10 *Pride only breeds quarrels, but wisdom is found in those who take advice.*

Prov 16:18 *Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.*

Prov 26:12 *Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.*

Prov 28:25 *A greedy man stirs up dissension, but he who trusts in the Lord will prosper.*

Isa 5:21 *Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight.*

Isa 24:4 *The earth dries up and withers, the world languishes and withers, the exalted of the earth languish.*

Oba 1:4 “Though you soar like the eagle and make your nest among the stars, from there I will bring you down,” declares the Lord.

Hab 2:4 See, he is puffed up; his desires are not upright — but the righteous will live by his faith.

Zep 3:11 On that day you will not be put to shame for all the wrongs you have done to me, because I will remove from this city those who rejoice in their pride. Never again will you be haughty on my holy hill.

LUKE 14:11 HUMILITY AND EXALTATION

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

The man who humbles himself shall be exalted. Exaltation is a certainty, and a man can ask for nothing more than to be assured that he will be exalted.

Humility (tareinophrosune) means lowliness of mind. It is a word that was coined by Christianity. Before Christ, a humble man was looked upon as a coward: a cringing, unappealing, effeminate type of person. However after Christ, humility was elevated to the most praise-worthy level. When men looked at Christ, they saw the strength of humility through the influence of One Who was perfect in meekness and lowliness of heart. Humility means five things.

1. To *walk* as a servant to others, always ready and willing to help (see Phil. 2:8).
2. To *behave* in an unassuming manner, not being showy or pretentious, prideful or haughty, arrogant or assertive.

Mat 18:4 “Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”

Rom 12:3 For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.

3. To *assume* a spirit of lowliness and submission, of oneness and identification with others, not showing conceit or superiority or being boastful.

Mat 20:25-28 Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave — just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Luke 22:25-26 Jesus said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves.”

Acts 20:19 I served the Lord with great humility and with tears, although I was severely tested by the plots of the Jews.

1 Pet 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.

4. To possess a sense of lowliness and unworthiness, to have a modest opinion of oneself, knowing that others are just as significant and valuable.

Phil 2:3-4 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Eph 4:1-2 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

Col 3:12 Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

5. To come to God on a regular basis and confess one’s spiritual need and unworthiness.

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

Humility is a problem to most men. Why? Because the world looks upon humility as a sign of weakness and cowardice. They see a humble person as a person who cowers and cringes before others, as a person who the world takes and...

- uses and misuses
- overlooks and bypasses
- ignores and neglects
- enslaves and abuses
- shuns and despises

Men fear humility. They fear humility will make them the object of contempt and abuse, causing them to be passed over. However, the very opposite is true. Humility leads a person...

- to Christ and to conversion.
- to realize his full potential.

- to evaluate himself and to work at improving himself.
- to become all that he can and should be.
- to develop more healthy relationships with people.
- to a stronger and more productive community and world.

When men consider others (humble themselves), they win friends and influence people. They build and strengthen everyone and everything involved.

The results of humility are threefold.

1. The humble man will be acknowledged. Both men and God will notice his spirit and energy in serving others, no matter how lowly his position. His putting others first, whether person, project, work or company, will not go unnoticed for long. His dedication to serving and working and helping others will be seen and acknowledged.
2. The humble man will be rewarded. He will be approached; and his presence, energy, and effort will be desired and promoted and placed where he can serve to the maximum.
3. The humble man will be honoured by all. He will have lived to serve and help others; therefore, when he is exalted, all will rejoice with him.

Prov 22:4 *Humility and the fear of the Lord bring wealth and honour and life.*

Prov 29:23 *A man's pride brings him low, but a man of lowly spirit gains honour.*

Isa 57:15 *For this is what the high and lofty One says — he who lives forever, whose name is holy: "I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite."*

Mat 18:4 *"Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."*

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."*

Humility comes from three things. (Eph. 4:1-3.)

- a. Humility comes from measuring ourselves against the Lord Jesus. When a man measures himself against Christ, he measures himself against Perfection, for Christ was without sin (Jn. 8:46; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15; 7:26; 1 Pet. 1:19; 2:22). When measured against other men, a man may be morally good, but God demands that every man measure himself against the perfection of Christ.

Against such a One and such a demand, there is no room for pride. (See *The Son of Man*, Mt. 8:20.)

- b. Humility comes from a continued consciousness of God's presence. No man has anything, not in reality: not air, not food, not clothing — nothing. All we have and all we know deteriorates and decays, even our own bodies. And all that crosses our path is held but for a short time, for the end of all things comes ever so quickly. We are completely dependent upon God who has given all and controls all and, in the end, shall take all. Before Him we can only walk humbly.
- c. Humility comes from knowing ourselves, just who we really are. It comes from an honest appraisal of ourselves. It takes courage to look at ourselves and it takes honesty to see ourselves as we really are: basically self-centred, a bundle of self admiration and self-love. We tend to dramatize ourselves. We tend to see ourselves through rose-coloured glasses. We see ourselves...
- at the centre of action.
 - as the hero of some spectacular rescue.
 - as the great politician marching to victory.
 - as the renowned sportsman saving the game in the last second or bagging a record catch.
 - as the beauty queen dazzling the crowds.
 - as the labourer of brilliance.
 - as Prince Charming or Cinderella sweeping others off their feet.

We are always at the centre of the picture. Humility begins to come when we honestly face ourselves and admit our self-centredness. Self-centredness weakens and limits and destroys relationships and achievements. Humility reaches its height when we lose our lives in the cause of Christ and welfare of others. □

MATHEW 08:20 JESUS, THE SON OF MAN

*Jesus replied, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head." **Mathew 08:20***

Jesus is not only what an ordinary man is, a son of man; Jesus is what every man ought to be, the Son of Man Himself. He is the Ideal Man, the Representative Man, the Perfect Man, the Pattern, the Embodiment of everything a man ought to be. Jesus Christ is the perfect picture of a man. Everything God wants a man to be is seen perfectly in Jesus Christ (see Jn. 1:14; Col. 2:9-10; Heb. 1:3.)

The title also means the Ideal Servant of man. It stresses His sympathy for the poor, the broken-hearted, the captives, the blind, the bruised, the outcasts, the bereaved (see Lk. 4:18). Jesus is the Pattern, the Model, the Perfect Example of concern and caring. He served and set a perfect example of how every man ought to serve other men.

Jesus calls Himself “the Son of Man” about eighty times. It is His favourite term. The title ‘Son of Man’ is probably based upon the Son of Man in Daniel (Dan. 7:13-14). Scripture also gives a picture of Jesus as the heavenly Son of Man contrasted with Adam as the earthly Man (1 Cor. 15:45-47). Each serves as a Representative Man for the human race in God’s plan for world history.

Mat 9:6 *“But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins...” Then he said to the paralytic, “Get up, take your mat and go home.”*

Mat 16:13, 16 *When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”*

Mat 20:28 *“Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”*

Mark 8:38 *“If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father’s glory with the holy angels.”*

John 5:26-27 *“For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man.”*

Luke 19:10 *“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.”*

John 13:31-32 *When he was gone, Jesus said, “Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once.”*

Acts 7:56 *“Look,” he said, “I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”*

Rev 1:12-13 *I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lamp stands, and among the lamp stands was someone “like a son of man”, dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. □*

IV. Luke 14:12–14 A Demonstration of Humility

The demonstration of humility was clearly stated by Jesus. He addressed His words to the chief Pharisee, the most proud and ambitious man present. What He said was forceful; it served as a strong warning, for no man can enter the Kingdom of Heaven without true humility.

1. Humility is not serving or centring one's life around those who can repay. Jesus used the banquet as an illustration. If the host courts the presence of those who can repay him for his favour, then the host has received his reward. He will receive their favours, but that is all he will receive. He will not have God's favour; he will be left with only human favour.

Note: Jesus was not downgrading normal social life and Christian fellowship. He was saying that the host had not shown humility and lowliness of mind, the giving of himself and his goods to those who really needed his gifts and services. The host served only those who could repay by adding to his welfare. He had not humbled himself to help anyone who really needed help.

2. Humility is serving those who are needy and cannot repay. Now, if a man serves the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind — that man demonstrates humility. His motive is pure; he has a lowly spirit, a spirit willing to get down with a needy person and help him. By "host" Jesus means any man who is able to help others because he has the health, position, or finances. When he gives himself and his goods to help those who need help, he is demonstrating humility. Man lives in a world full of desperate needs; therefore, a man should live being kind and giving generously. But note the crucial point: he should not be giving to receive back, but rather to help and to encourage and to build others up.

Mat 19:21 Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

Luke 6:38 "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

Prov 19:17 He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward him for what he has done.

Psa 41:1 Blessed is he who has regard for the weak; the Lord delivers him in times of trouble.

Prov 14:21 He who despises his neighbour sins, but blessed is he who is kind to the needy.

Prov 28:27 He who gives to the poor will lack nothing, but he who closes his eyes to them receives many curses.

Isa 58:10 *And if you spend yourselves on behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday.*

3. Humility shall be rewarded. Note when: at the resurrection of the just.
 - a. A humble person is a *just* and righteous person, a person who does what is right.
 - b. A humble person shall be raised from the dead to live eternally with all the other just persons and, of course, with God Himself who is the very embodiment of righteousness. (See pts. 2, 3, Lk. 14:11.)

Mat 5:24-25 *“Leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift. Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still with him on the way, or he may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison.”*

John 6:40 *“For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.”*

John 11:25 *Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies.”*

Acts 24:15 *And I [Paul] have the same hope in God as these men, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.*

2 Cor 4:14 *Because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence.*

Phil 3:11 *And so, somehow [I, Paul], to attain to the resurrection from the dead.*

1 Th 4:16-18 *For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words.*

Titus 2:12-13 *It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age. while we wait for the blessed hope — the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. ■*