

LESSON FOUR SELF-SACRIFICE AND HUMILITY

We currently live in a society that knows little of the topics of this week's lesson: self-sacrifice and humility. In fact, quite the opposite is true. More than ever today people are all about themselves as evidenced in selfies, blogs, Facebook posts, Instagram pictures, road rage and so on. Even many Christians have moved away from embracing or living out these traits of self-sacrifice and humility. If we don't look different than the world around us, how can we expect to shine the light of Jesus and lead them to Christ?

Author L.E. Maxwell states: *"Self is the new and false center upon which man has fixed. He loves himself as nothing else under the sun."* That these topics of self-sacrifice and humility are not fully understood is evidenced by how few Christians today are living them out on a daily basis. Thus, it is vital for us to look into what Jesus Himself exemplified and taught the disciples concerning these two all-important Christian virtues.

Day One – Self-Sacrifice

1. When you hear or see the words, self-sacrifice, what immediately comes to mind?
 - a. Why don't we like the idea of self-sacrifice?
 - b. In what areas do you believe we are to show self-sacrifice?

2. As we consider this teaching on self-sacrifice, what important truths are found in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 that remind you to live a life of self-sacrifice?

3. Paul gives us the proper perspective on self-sacrifice. Look up Romans 12:1 and write the verse below.

a. What should be our motive for sacrifice according to this verse?

b. Write what you learn about how we are to become a sacrifice to God according to Romans 12:2.

4. It is only as we sacrifice ourselves to God that we are able to begin to live a life of self-sacrifice. According to these verses, how can we apply these characteristics in more practical ways?

Romans 12:10

Romans 12:16

Ephesians 5:1-2

1 John 3:16

a. Give some specific ways you can apply this in your daily life.

5. It has been said that sacrifice is in the Bible and the dictionary, but not in most people's hearts. Do you agree or disagree? Explain.

6. Compare what Jesus says in Mark 10:31 to the thinking of society today. Write your thoughts.

"True Christian self-sacrifice signifies hardship and loss, not for its own sake but for Christ's sake."

Alexander Bruce

Day Two – Humility

1. In order to better understand a topic, it is good to start with learning its definition. Use a dictionary and define humility.

2. In his letter to the Philippians, Paul warned the believers that their attitudes were wrong, they were prideful, and lacked love for each other. How does Philippians 2:2-4 help you better understand the meaning of self-sacrifice and humility?

a. How would practicing these verses be useful to you every day?

b. If we truly practiced Philippians 2:3, what would be the result?

3. When we lack humility, it often shows that we are depending upon ourselves and not God. Read Jeremiah 9:23-24. What do you learn?

4. John Bunyan, author of Pilgrim's Progress, says that it is hard to get down into the valley of humiliation because the descent into it is steep and rugged, but it is very fruitful, fertile, and beautiful when once we get there. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why or why not?

5. It would do us good to look at some examples in scripture of those who portrayed humility and self-sacrifice. Read about them in the following verses and record how they exemplified either one or both of these traits.

Moses

Exodus 32:30-32

Hebrews 11:24-28

Mary

Luke 1:26-38; 46-55

John the Baptist

John 1:19-27; 3:25-30

Paul

1 Corinthians 2:1-5; Galatians 6:14

6. Sadly, even when we are “doing good” and are well-intentioned, we may still show signs of thinking of ourselves and our own honor, dignity or reputation. We may struggle with self-importance and wanting recognition for what we have done or are doing. Why do you think this is true?

a. How can we overcome this?

“Humility is not thinking less of yourself; it is thinking of yourself less.”
C.S. Lewis

Day Three – Pride

One of the biggest battles we face is with our internal attitudes. These internal attitudes often display themselves outwardly in pride and selfishness. If these are not dealt with, they can begin to control us.

Webster's 1828 Dictionary defines pride as: inordinate self-esteem; an unreasonable conceit of one's own superiority in talents, beauty, wealth, accomplishments, rank or elevation of office, which manifests itself in lofty airs, distance, reserve and often in contempt of others.

1. The opposite of humility is pride. Read the following verses to see what God says about pride.

Psalm 101:5

Proverbs 6:16-17

2. It is important for us to know and understand that these sins of pride and selfishness are not to be tolerated in our lives. How can you begin to overcome them according to these verses?

2 Corinthians 10:5

Philippians 4:8

1 Peter 5:5b-6

a. Which one of these verses might you need to apply in your life and/or situation today?

3. Most of the time we view things from our own perspective. Read Isaiah 64:6. How does God's view of things change your viewpoint on what you might consider to be the "best" of yourself? How does this verse show you that pride cannot have a place in your heart?

4. As even the disciples learned, pride and self-importance are things we all struggle with. We read of two powerful teachings of Jesus to His disciples concerning humility. As you read these passages of scripture, consider how Jesus addresses the topics of pride, self-importance and humility.

Read Matthew 18:1-5; 20:26-28.

a. What does Jesus say in answer to the disciples' question about who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

Read Luke 18:9-14.

a. A word is repeated five times in verses 11-12, what is it?

b. Is there anything wrong with the attitude of the Pharisee? Explain.

What conclusion can you make from above passages of scripture?

5. When we allow pride and selfishness to exist in our lives, what is the result according to James 4:1-4?

a. According to James 4:7-10, how can we overcome these attitudes?

6. As mentioned previously, pride is the opposite of humility. Let's look at the warnings given about pride and the blessings that come to the humble.

a. What warnings are given in these verses about pride?

Proverbs 11:2a

Proverbs 13:10a

Proverbs 16:5a

Proverbs 16:18

b. What blessings or good things come to the humble?

Proverbs 11:2b

Proverbs 22:4

Proverbs 29:23b

Isaiah 66:2

7. As we've studied what the scriptures say about pride and humility, it would be good for us to take a moment to examine ourselves in light of them and write a prayer to the Lord.

*Let not pride swell my heart...
Help me to see myself in Thy sight...
Humble my heart before Thee...
Keep me humble, meek, lowly.
The Valley of Vision
Puritan Prayers and Devotions*

Day Four – God’s View

Can one really sacrifice himself fully to God as we’ve been studying? Isn’t this asking too much? Paul states in Romans 8:29 that we are to be conformed to the image of Christ and this includes the areas of self-sacrifice and humility. In this last day of study, we will take a final look at God’s view on the matter.

1. How is God described in these verses?

Isaiah 57:15a

Job 38-41

a. Why is it important for us to know the attributes of God?

When we have a right view of God, it should lead to a right view of ourselves.

2. Based on 1 Samuel 15:22-24 and Isaiah 57:15b, what condition of the heart is acceptable to God as it relates to the subject of our lesson?

a. What did you learn that is applicable to your life?

3. Once again Jesus offers us the example we are to follow. What does He specifically state about Himself in Matthew 11:29b?

4. Slowly and carefully read Philippians 2:5-8. Write down all you learn about Jesus that you need to practice regarding the principle of self-sacrifice and humility.

a. What stands out most to you from this passage?

b. What emotions/feelings do you experience as you read these verses? Why?

5. How does Matthew 22:37-39 help you to make self-sacrifice and humility a reality for your life?

6. As we close out our lesson today, take a look at where you stand on the *humility and self-sacrifice* scale by asking yourself the following questions. Share your thoughts.

- Have I been decreasing and letting Jesus increase in my life?
- Do I think less of myself and my position than I did a year ago?
- Am I seeking some position of dignity, prestige or authority?
- Am I offended because I'm not treated with some courtesy or attention that I think is due to me?

7. From the study of self-sacrifice and humility, record at least one thing the Lord has spoken to you and how you will apply it to your life. Review some of the verses if necessary.

"Self-preservation is the first law of nature; self-sacrifice the highest rule of grace."

Anonymous

