

HUMILITY OF MIND

Humility is a key factor in our salvation. We will not be able to be saved by the gospel until one humbles himself in obedience to it. In the sermon on the mount Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 5:3). "The poor in spirit" are those whose minds are humble in spirit. "Poor in spirit" means to be destitute of a proud and arrogant mindset which is characteristic of those who love this world! Humility of mind is also defined as submission to God and His word.

The disciples came to Jesus asking, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Jesus then called a little child to Him and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me' (Mt 18: 3-5). Children do not have pride or arrogance a trait that is learned from the world. If we are to be innocent before God as these children we need to be "poor in spirit" and submit ourselves to be obedient in all things pertaining to God! Humility must continue during the life of a Christian if they are to remain in fellowship with God.

Jesus taught the disciples a lesson in humility and demonstrated how to be a servant to others, a characteristic of humility by washing their feet. Peter initially did not want Jesus his master to wash his feet but Jesus answered him by saying, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." After Jesus had washed their feet, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I gave you an example that you should do as I did to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is no greater than his master, nor is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him" (Jn 13: 6-17). Jesus through this act taught His disciples how to humble themselves and be a servant to others."

Peter learned a lesson from his Master when he wrote in his first epistle telling us to be humble... "all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Therefore, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time" (1 Peter 5: 5-7).

Humility must express appropriate sorrow for sin. Before we became a Christian sin seemed to be fun, but when we realized that sin condemned us to hell it caused us to be sorrowful and mourn that we have sinned against God. When Jesus gave us the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector, His concluding remarks are recorded in Luke 18: 14: "I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other, for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted." Jesus clearly indicated that the tax collector was a man who acted in a humble fashion and would be exalted by God. On the other hand the Pharisee, who conducted himself in a rather proud manner, would end up being humbled.

All of us enjoy praise whether it comes from a spouse, a co-worker, a classmate, a friend or an employer. We like to have our accomplishments recognized. These earthly praises pale in significance for the Christian who looks to the eternal rewards. We should remember that "pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling" (Proverbs 16: 18). "When pride comes, then comes dishonor, but with the humble is wisdom. Paul gave us a better understanding of the meaning of humility when he wrote "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who although He

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existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross" (Phil 2: 3-8).

The Lord will strengthen us as we humble ourselves before Him. Fortunately for Christians, we can live with the assurance that God does have high regard for humility and that if we would only exercise it in our daily lives, the time will come when God Will exalt us!