

# Bible Humility



J. W. Byers



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By J. W. BYERS

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The word *humble* in the latter verse signifies *to make self low*. In Proverbs 6:3 the word has yet a deeper signification, which is to *trample on self*. Taking these two texts we have a very important thought before us. It suggests to our minds the proper and scriptural position of *self*. Many other references of Scripture could be added but these, I believe, are sufficient.

It is not the carnal nature or sinful self that is here spoken of: for this has the death sentence pronounced upon it. This must be crucified and cast off, the process of which, of course, requires also a deep humiliation and abandonment of our will to God in sanctification, but what is to be made low and trampled upon and placed under the mighty hand of God is our individual soul, life, including body and all. The God-life cannot be perfectly manifested through us to the world until the self-life is brought into the depths of humility and kept in its true position of subjection. It is a necessary part of us in our existence and also a necessary part of us in the service of God. In its proper place it is the vehicle to convey the God-life to our surroundings, sustaining the same relation to God as our feet to our body. It is therefore not to be destroyed nor

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considered as useless but in meek submission to the will of God it can be used of Him to His own honor and glory.

Our every attitude toward God must be in this utmost submission; always ready and willing to glorify Him without the least desire for any glory to ourselves; always seeking to represent Him to this world without the least desire of self-representation: always seeking, as Jesus did, “not mine own will but the will of Him that sent me.” Like the branch laden with the delicious fruit of the vine, it is never spoken of for the good fruit borne, but the vine receives the praise. So we are to be so meekly and humbly the branches to bear the precious fruit of Christ—always to honor Him in every step, willing to be hid away out of sight that He may always be manifest.

It is evident from the language of this text that this yielding ourselves into this humility is within our own power. Of course it is all through the grace of God but there is an essential part required of us. “Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God” is the command. There are scriptural instances where God had to humble His people that He might be glorified and they benefited and other instances where the people humbled themselves. The self-humiliation is much more to the glory of God and to the good of His people. In the one case it is by compulsion, in the other it is an acceptable service and will be proportionately productive of greater blessings to God’s glory and our good. In the one case it may be necessary, in many instances, to secure the salvation of the individual without any profitable service and fruit for God in the salvation of others, while in the other case the whole life is one of continual fruit bearing for God.

Oh beloved, let us humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God! In these evil days there is no other place of safety against the

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awful powers of the devil who is walking about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. The mighty hand of God is our sure defense, but it cannot so be if we do not put ourselves under His power.

Through the depths of humility we enter and abide under this glorious defense where that wicked one cannot touch us. In this condition alone can we resist him steadfast in the faith and discern his wily schemes that would overcome us.

The apostolic faith can never be attained without the apostolic humility. This was shown to me by the Holy Spirit in a dream. I dreamed I was in company with some saints praying for the sick and casting out devils. The battle was on. We were in the depths of earnestness when suddenly I began to feel myself sinking. The earth beneath me gave way and I saw we were all going down. We were not alarmed and held still. We began going down very rapidly into immense depths, when at last we reached a beautiful plane of open country, but all around were multitudes of people with all manner of sicknesses and those possessed with devils. The sight of this so inspired us that we again laid hold on God for the faith to claim deliverance for these people. While thus looking to the Lord the people began to gather around us in throngs; some cried out for help, others possessed with devils tried to flee from us but we called out to all around us that in the name of Jesus they could all be delivered. We began to touch those within our reach and the experience of Acts 5:16 was repeated. I awoke with a conviction for apostolic humility. The dear Lord had been doing much for us and we were sinking deeper, but oh, there are such great depths yet to attain! We all desire to rise to a higher plane but this desire will only be realized as we sink deeper into humility.

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The dear Lord is revealing to me that I have failed both in example and precept to hold up definitely this doctrine to the Bible standard as much as I should have done at all times, and I hereby humbly confess my lack and request prayers of the saints that I may redeem the time. The lack has been upon worldly conformity—permitting individuals to continue in unscriptural adornments such as wearing of gold and fashionable apparel without insisting as much as I should have done against it—depending too much upon the individuals being led into this light by the Holy Spirit.

It is with this subject just as with every other; the light usually comes through the preaching or reading of the Word. If it were not for the false teaching upon these matters, the Holy Spirit would easily lead everyone into the clear scriptural light of non-conformity in dress. As it is, the doctrines of error must be boldly withstood by the faithful preaching of God's Word so that every honest soul may have the opportunity of reaching the Bible standard of humility in every respect. Many dear souls reach the glorious experience of entire sanctification who, of course, do not at the time comprehend the depths of meaning in "Thy will be done," but who would very soon, as the "thy will" keeps unfolding, find, if they were left alone under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, that God's Word is His will and would be led naturally to measure up to every precept of the Word as fast as light and knowledge is, by the Spirit, imparted.

Many false doctrines are everywhere advocated, teaching there are many non-essentials in God's Word; therefore it matters not about their observance thus leading many honest souls into the delusion that they are just as acceptable to God by conforming to the vain fashions and customs of the world. This makes it more and more an incumbent duty of the ministry in the evening light to cry aloud and spare not, to show a deluded and proud religious world



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their sins and also to keep back nothing that is profitable to the Church of God that everyone who has a willing and obedient heart may measure up to the standard of Bible humility. Dearly beloved, I mean, by the grace of God, to lift up this standard more definitely.

## **Promise to the Humble**

“Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear.” Psalm 10:17.

“My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad.” Psalm 34:2.

“A man’s pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.” Proverbs 29:23.

“. . . For God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.” I Peter 5:5.

“But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.” James 4:6.

“And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.” Matthew 23:12.

The advantage of a life of humility is herein plainly set forth. The rich blessings and deep things of the secrets of the Lord cannot be found anywhere else. It is here where God prepares the heart to respond to every whisper of His will and plants His own holy desires there so He can ever incline His ear to the whispers of that heart. This is a blessed life. The ear of the humble soul is always open to the voice of God and the ear of God is always open to the prayers and whispers of that soul. (I Peter 3:12.) This makes life delightful; for it is one of continual communion and harmony with God.

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Many a dear child of God has had seasons of such a blissful life in the past. Perhaps this perfect communion has gradually become less perfect and the voice of God, that had been so distinct and clear, has grown indistinct and dim and yet there has been a loss to know just what has caused this. In many cases this condition is brought on through a lack of humility. By a careful self-examination there will be found a time or place in the past where there was a glance or look upon something else than the perfect will of God. Instead of an immediate turning away from it the soul has taken counsel with itself and thereby lost the perfect communion.

There are many little things that can come in our way which must be at once ignored else they will surely prove to our hurt in this respect. The same is true with reference to additional light that comes to us through the Word of God. The perfect communion can only be maintained by an immediate obedience and measuring up to every ray of light as it flashes upon us, humbling ourselves under the mighty hand of God. This is where the glorious harmony will continue to increase and the riches of God's grace continue to flow in an unbroken stream until our life becomes like a watered garden bountifully bearing the delightful fruits of the Spirit.

The humble soul that learns how to let God have His own way in everything will reach the blessed state of harmony where God will let him have his way in everything. God will honor him who loses his own honor under the mighty hand of God, not with the vain honor of this world but with that which is from heaven. "He giveth grace to the humble," and everything in the context warrants us in the assertion that the more humility, the more grace. The proud have no promise but utter resistance. The humble have all the grace.

No wonder there is such a barrenness of the grace of God in the professing religious world. In sectism, everywhere, the cry is heard

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from such as have yet a spark of life remaining, “We need an old-fashioned revival.” The cause of this is, “God resisteth the proud.” Grace and pride can never dwell together. They are as opposite as day and night. Humility always precedes grace and the two are inseparable. Pride and sin are alike in harmony with each other.

Oh beloved, let us seek deeper humility! May it so illuminate our lives that we may shine like a brilliant star in the midst of this dark, vain world of pride, pomp and show. May the exceeding riches of grace, through the necessary channel of Bible humility, become so manifest in the Church of God that She may be indeed a crown of glory and a royal diadem in His hand.

## **“God Dwells with the Humble”**

“For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.” Isaiah 57:15.

Wonderful grace! That almighty God, whom the heavens cannot contain, would take up His abode in the heart of him who has humbled himself under that mighty hand! Who would imagine an unclean thing in God’s dwelling place in heaven!

The holy God will have a holy dwelling place whether in heaven or in earth. His earthly abode, our hearts, must correspond with heaven; the dwelling place with its occupant. For this purpose God has given us the perfect revelation of His holy will—to instruct us in the complete preparation for His incoming and indwelling. This instructs us in every possible respect even to the outward adornment of our bodies which altogether, if faithfully observed, will obtain all the promised graces of His presence.

He promises in this text to dwell with him who is of an humble spirit and also to revive the spirit of the humble. Is not this glorious? A continual revival. It must be so. His dwelling place must necessarily correspond with Himself with respect to life. The God-life is there and the spirit of the humble receives continual sustenance.

## **Humility A Reasonable Requirement**

“He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” Micah 6:8. The Hebrew rendering of this last sentence reads: “humble thyself to walk with thy God.” We have the same admonition from the apostles James and Peter. “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.” James 4:10. “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.” I Peter 5:6.

This implies implicit obedience to all the requirements of God—a perfect agreement with Him. There is a striking difference between the omnipotent sovereignty of God and humility. A walk with God at once suggests an exalted and lofty position, quite opposite from one of humiliation. This is all clear when we see that humiliation is the requirement necessary for exaltation. It is a sinking before a rising. A humiliation of all that pertains to self that there may be in us the exaltation of God in all His perfect will. This is what exalts us. It is God working “in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure.” This is the most exalted and honored position that redeemed mortals on earth could ever desire.

Enoch must have enjoyed a life similar in many respects to this; for he had this testimony, that he pleased God. He humbled himself to walk with his God. His exaltation was so great and his walk so perfect and the harmony so complete that it would seem that God

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could not do without him and “took him.” A wonderful exaltation and yet no greater in the part of his life on earth with God than ours should be.

All this divine requirement is for our highest good. It is also a most reasonable demand. Every earthly king demands as much of his subjects. Who could reasonably expect a promoted position for life with a king without a complete submission to all his sovereign will? Thus we through true humility may rise into the glorious life interests with God. A few more scriptures will emphasize this thought that humility precedes honor.

“The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility.” Proverbs 15:33.

“Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honour is humility.” Proverbs 18:12.

“By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honour, and life.” Proverbs 22:4.

“A man’s pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.” Proverbs 29:23.

## Example and Benefits of Self-humiliation

“And it came to pass, when Ahab heard those words, that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly. And the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days: . . .” I Kings 21:27-29.

“Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the Lord, when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me; I also have heard thee, saith the Lord.” II Kings 22:19.

“If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people; If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.” II Chronicles 7:13, 14.

“And when the Lord saw that they humbled themselves, the word of the Lord came to Shemaiah, saying, They have humbled themselves; therefore I will not destroy them, but I will grant them some deliverance; and my wrath shall not be poured out upon Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak. And when he humbled himself, the wrath of the Lord turned from him, that he would not destroy



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him altogether: and also in Judah things went well.” II Chronicles 12:7, 12.

“And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.” II Chronicles 20:3.

“And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding.” Daniel 9:3, 21, 22.

## Examples of Compulsory Humiliation

“And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live. Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end.” Deuteronomy 8:3, 16.

Ahab was one of the most wicked kings of Israel. His proud heart had almost entirely forgotten that the people over which he ruled had ever been true worshipers of the God of heaven. He persisted in the most extreme idolatry despite all the warnings and judgment of God upon him and the kingdom. He considered Elijah, the prophet of God, as his enemy and a trouble of Israel. In the language of the prophet concerning him we have his condition in a few words: “Thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord.”

The sentence of Jehovah against him was that he and all his posterity should be “cut off forever” for his provocation of God and causing Israel to sin. But what wonderful mercy we see in God toward erring man! When Ahab heard the sentence of death pronounced upon himself he humbled himself in the deepest repentance. The wrath of God was turned from him in a measure and

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the sentence revoked. Even in the rigid dispensation of Sinai there was mercy for those who sought God in the valley of humiliation.

Josiah, king of Judah, had a tender heart toward God. He did all he could to repair the house of God that had been made desolate by the sins of his fathers but the book of the law had been lost. When this was found and read to the king he humbled himself before the Lord and obtained mercy and favor and his eyes did not see the judgments God had pronounced upon that place. He not only humbled himself but gathered all the prophets, priests, men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem together and read the book of the law in their ears. He made a solemn covenant with God to keep all His commandments with all his heart and soul. All the people stood to the covenant. This is where God's approval was found and it teaches us the lesson with emphasis that "God giveth grace to the humble."

At the dedication of Solomon's temple God marvelously witnessed His acceptance of the sacrifices and the building of the house for the earthly dwelling place of His name among men in that dispensation. He appeared to Solomon and made a covenant with him to always keep His eyes and ears open toward that place to see and hear all who humbled themselves before Him.

King Rehoboam also found mercy in humiliation when otherwise he would have been destroyed by the heathen king. God's compassion was extended toward him and all Israel when they humbled themselves.

King Asa found great grace when he was very humble. A very short prayer, though full of faith and confidence, caused the Lord to turn the battle against the Ethiopians and gave victory to His people, verifying His promise to the king and all who live before Him in deep humility. ". . . The Lord is with you, while ye be with him; and

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if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you.” II Chronicles 15:2. What wonderful depths of meaning in these words, teaching us the importance of clinging unto the Lord through perfect obedience!

The gracious deliverance wrought in Jerusalem under King Jehoshaphat was granted because of the humble attitude of the king and the people. Daniel received answer to his prayer through his humiliation before God. God gave Nebuchadnezzar great honor and a mighty kingdom but when his heart was lifted up and his mind hardened in pride he was deposed from his throne and compelled to go through the most severe humiliation. His son Belshazzar came to his sad end because he did not humble his heart before God.

King Saul was exalted to be head of the tribes of Israel when he was little in his own sight but his deplorable experience of being dethroned and at last his disgraceful death stands out in history like a danger signal to us all, warning us to keep far off from the rock of self-exaltation upon which thousands have been wrecked in the past.

To secure the safety of vessels along the Pacific coast and near the entrance of harbors where there are hidden rocks lying near the surface, there is placed near each of these dangerous spots a buoy. Some of these are so constructed that the motion of the waves rings a large bell. Others blow a loud whistle keeping up their doleful sound day and night constantly. In passing one of these away out in the ocean a thought of sadness comes to the heart that perhaps there has some time been a wreck and some poor sailor has gone to the bottom. Then a thought of gratitude takes its place; for were it not for this danger signal our ship might strike this same rock and we might also sink into a watery grave.

Oh my dear brethren, we need not look around us very far to see some of these sad wrecks! A poor perplexed soul, who once

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enjoyed the experience of sanctification and was called to the ministry but who lost his experience, then tried to follow the ministry by joining one of the popular sects and fell into utter darkness. He came to ask advice and then told his sad experience. In the conversation he said, “I see holiness wrecks all over this country.” After he left I was solemnly impressed with his case but the term “holiness wrecks” conveyed a more solemn thought to me than anything else. As I meditated in silent reflection upon the subject, I could see all around some sad living wrecks— living, yet dead; for all they have in resemblance of life is a profession. Zealous in work, like the church at Sardis, possessing a name to live, but dead.

From my early Christian life I have noticed cases of hopeful, bright, thoroughly saved, useful men and women who were indeed greatly used of God and whose lights shone with heavenly brilliance all about them, but suddenly a perceptible dimness began to grow over them like when a fog arises from the sea and obscures the bright rays from the sun and, gradually in some instances and suddenly in others, the light has gone out. Many a young convert of superior natural ability and a great measure of grace, who in his early period of divine experience had unusual power of the Holy Spirit, has suddenly dropped out of usefulness and simply remained a nominal professor. In some sad instances he came to a disgraceful end leaving a stigma upon his character and a reproach upon the precious cause of Christ.

Many of the most prominent men in the ministry in the last quarter-century and some who have in this very evening light reformation caused many to turn to righteousness are today among the fallen and may appropriately be called “holiness wrecks.” The fact is indeed a most alarming one and every saint of the most high

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God should be awakened to prayerful diligence in self-examination of his own heart, then with open heart and upturned face to God cry out in the language of the Psalmist: “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” Psalm 139:23, 24.

What is the cause of these failures? Ah! the answer has already been given in the experiences of men in Bible times. The taproot of all the trouble is self-exaltation. It is the hidden rock that has broken in pieces many a beautiful bark on life’s ocean and caused its precious cargo to sink and be lost; where if true humility had been maintained and practiced there would have been a successful voyage over the waters and a triumphant entrance into the glorious haven of rest where a crown of life awaits the faithful.

The apostle Paul to Timothy speaks of some who made shipwreck and in the same epistle tells how men became drowned in destruction and perdition. The only place of absolute safety is in deep humility—“under the mighty hand of God.” He knows just how to guide us past the dangerous places where others have made shipwreck. One of the most astounding facts is that the greatest danger of self-exaltation lies nearest the most glorious victories. The enemy knows this and it is necessary that we know it too.

The more there is to be done for God the more need there is of true Bible humility. We’re all seeking to be more useful in the hands of God and oftentimes we fail to find this place because it is down so low in the path of humility that to take such a path seems to lead us into complete uselessness and the qualifications we have sought seem to prove to us to be disqualifications. Now we must learn to become disqualified. This is what God wants to teach us. He only can work perfectly in us when we are wholly abandoned to Him.

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We have never been over this way before and know not the dangers in the way. Our wily enemy knows our ignorance and utter helplessness when left to our own judgment and wisdom; therefore it is no wonder that man totally fails when taking counsel with his own soul and it is no wonder that our loving Father demands of us such perfect obedience and humility to Him. He wants to do for us. He wants to protect us from these dangers and glorify His name in us and will most certainly do so when we have properly humbled ourselves under His hand. The potter cannot shape the clay until all the hardness has been taken out; then he can accomplish his design. So it is with us in the hand of God. Let us seek the very best qualification—and upon which every other one depends—Bible humility. Then our loving Father can have perfect right of way in us and by sinking us out of sight to all human usefulness can exalt us under His own mighty hand.

## The Humility of Jesus

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.”  
Philippians 2:5-9.

Jesus was a perfect pattern in every phase of humanity. His example of humility is the standard for us.

We see His example to us corresponds with God’s requirement of us. The Father could not have fulfilled His design in the Son had He not kept under His hand every moment. Jesus acknowledged that He could of Himself do nothing. It was the Father that dwelt in Him who did the work, but that work could never have been done through Him had He not humbled Himself to every precept of the Father’s will.

Notice in the text we are told what He did with Himself. God did not humble Him nor compel Him to take this lowly position. He did it Himself, of His own free will. He “made Himself of no reputation” and “humbled himself.” From the highest reputation in heaven He descended to the lowest plane of no reputation on earth. From the exalted position of equality with God in heaven, He



descended to the plane of the most humble servant on earth. He truly counted all things of honor and advantage but loss, for the blessed privilege of doing the Father's will, to redeem us unto God.

Now there is no question about this being a great humiliation to Him. His servant life on earth was one of continual self-denial and hardship. Think of it, the Son of God, the most honored of heaven, taking a place on earth as a homeless mortal, even below the foxes and birds, not having a place to lay his head. When He had accomplished His mission on earth in going about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, He humbled Himself yet more and took the place of the most dishonored of earth, being numbered with the transgressors, and died on the cross. Greater humiliation cannot be comprehended.

Thank God, we see the exaltation of Jesus was in proportion with His humiliation. He humbled Himself under the mighty hand of God and was exalted in due time. Now He speaks through His apostle Peter to us with the command to humble ourselves likewise and, as in the text, we are admonished to let this same mind be in us—this same humility that can cheerfully follow the footsteps of Jesus into every detail of our Father's will. As He came to do the will of God so we must do the same. We may never be called to die as cruel or shameful a death as He did and it is impossible that God's purpose in our death could ever be what it was in that of our Redeemer. But it is very clearly set forth in His will concerning us, that our life should be completely yielded up to Him for service or sacrifice, just as He may be the most glorified thereby.

The very least that we possibly can do for Jesus, to be consistent with His great love wherewith He loved us and our profession of love to Him, is to yield ourselves up to the will of God, as freely for Him as He did for us—to humble ourselves as willingly under the

mighty hand of God for Jesus' sake as He did for our sakes. If we can share with Him in His humility we may also share with Him proportionately in His exaltation. In His prayer (John 17:24) He says, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: . . ." First, the humiliation, then the exaltation. The one we must do ourselves through grace. The other God does for us.

Oh, let us follow our blessed Example, the meek and lowly One, that we may be able to perfectly represent Him in this sinful world!

## The Experience of Paul

“Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.” Ephesians 3:7-8. “. . . Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews.” Acts 20:18, 19.

All over the civilized world Paul is spoken of as the “great apostle.” In his own words when compelled to speak of his apostleship and calling in comparison with some who had assumed to be apostles of Christ he said, “I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles;” yet in his own estimation of himself he considered himself “less than the least of all saints.”

It would indeed be a fair and ordinary example of humility among men for one like our brother Paul to truly consider himself on a common level with the rest of us saints. But he says he is less than some of the Ephesian saints and we would suppose that the saints in that city were on a common level with all the saints everywhere. The apostle is truly, in his own estimation, on a lower plane than some saints. His expression carries him to a still lower degree. He is not only less than the saints but less than the least of

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the saints, and in order to make no room for anyone below him he takes the lowest place and says he is “less than the least of all saints.”

There is no room for the shadow of a doubt as to his sincerity in this expression. It truly portrays his deep humility. All the advantages that he has as pertaining to the flesh and those things he previously thought were gain to him he counted loss for Christ. He willingly humbled himself continually under the mighty hand of God. He was graciously helped in this respect and when through the abundance of revelations because of his unusual humility God gave him abundant grace to keep in this condition so that yet greater usefulness and efficiency might be realized. He could truly say, “When I am weak then am I strong;” for when self was in its proper place, God did most wonderfully manifest His power.

We all look with admiration upon the useful life of this apostle and it would be natural that we all should desire to be used of God to the same extent as he, but would we be willing to go through the extreme humiliations with him? His life was one of continual hardships and sufferings. On every hand he met the deepest humiliations of affliction, reproach and distress. It is evident that aside from His death on the cross for sin Jesus suffered no greater afflictions than Paul, who himself testifies that he was “always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus” and, “We which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death worketh in us, but life in you.” “Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for his body’s sake, which is the church.”

These unusual trials doubtless were the “thorn in the flesh,” and all served the great purpose of keeping him living low down in the valley of humiliation, where the great grace was continually poured

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out upon him. When under the extreme pressure of all these things his human strength would yield and his pitiful cry would be poured out into the heart of the blessed Master to remove this thorn; the answer came back, "My grace is sufficient for thee." Praise God! There has never been a need but there has been on hand sufficient grace for every humble child of God.

We may truthfully conclude that the secret of this apostle's power was in his humility; for here only could Christ be magnified in his body.

## **Be Clothed With Humility**

“. . . Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.” I Peter 5:5. “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering.” Colossians 3:12.

These texts teach that we can put on this beautiful garment of grace by which we are made presentable in the hand of God to represent Christ before men. He provides the garment; we must put it on and wear it. When a citizen enlists to become a soldier he is provided with a uniform furnished by the government. If he will be a soldier he must expect to wear a soldier’s uniform. God provides His soldiers not with any particular shaped or colored literal garment but with the garment of humility that is the very best adapted to our needs. Nothing else can possibly cover the nakedness of the self or soul life and render us fully acceptable before Him. It is not only our most beautiful adornment in His sight but when once we become perfectly adjusted to it, it becomes the most comfortable, convenient, delightful and healthful article of apparel to our spiritual being that we ever wore and above all it proves to be to us, in the time of battle, an impenetrable coat of mail. No sword, spear, nor missile of the enemy has ever pierced it. Therefore we all should be the more eager to put it on and keep it on, for it is indispensable to our safety and protection.

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I have seen some specimens of ancient coats of mail that were exceedingly bunglesome and heavy which must have rendered the warrior very weak in everything but the defensive, but the beautiful garment of humility is easy and light (Matthew 11:29, 30) and is equally helpful in the offensive and defensive. Without it we are both helpless and useless in our Christian warfare.

Let us remember that this Bible humility cannot be made by human effort. It is divine and furnished us as freely as salvation. In his epistle to the Colossians the apostle speaks of a voluntary humility, which we are warned against. This is the counterfeit and has the appearance of the genuine in many respects. In the text (Colossians 2:18) it will be noticed that this false humility is associated with the fleshly mind. Instead of it being a true humiliation it is a vain puffing up and exaltation. It has a form of will-worship but it is generated by a spirit of self-pride and finds a productive soil in the hearts of the unsanctified. Some of the very proudest hearts are covered up with this false humility, making much of forms and exterior appearance, but lacking the true humility of heart.

Dear reader, let us be sure first that we have a clean heart; then put on the true Bible humility which can only be found under the mighty hand of God.

## Outward Adornment

“Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands.” I Peter 3:3-5.

“I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.” I Timothy 2:8-10.

These two texts show us the standard of Bible humility in outward adornment. They are the teaching of two different apostles, written at different times and places, and both express the same truth upon the subject. We all believe they were inspired by the Holy Spirit and therefore should all accept what they have stated. The uniform teaching and spirit of the entire New Testament agrees therewith and there should be a cheerful response in the heart of every professing child of God to the same.

We claim to take the whole New Testament for our rule of faith and practice, and unless our walk corresponds with and measures up



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to this standard, we are guilty of a gross inconsistency and weaken the power and testimony of the Word of God to the world. The fruit of true humility must be borne out to the world. The hidden man of the heart will show out every characteristic of His nature—if it is the old man with his corrupted and depraved nature, or if it is the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Seeing that we have put off the old man with his deeds, let us also see that all the furnishings and adornments that belong to him are put off, not only in our conversation and deeds, but in our every appearance. A meek and quiet spirit in the heart, if unhindered, will permeate to the exterior and will harmonize the outside with the nature of the inside.

In my native state the white oak tree grows very abundantly. In the fall of the year nearly all the trees shed their leaves, but the white oak holds tenaciously to its dead foliage all winter; even the beating storms of snow and sleet accomplish but little in stripping it. All the frozen elements and storms seem to cause it to cling tighter to the outward adornment of its old life. When the cruel blasts of winter are driven back by the April sun we begin to notice a letting go of the tight grasp of the tree and a gentle rain or a soft wind will bring down showers of leaves to the ground.

What is the matter with the tree? Ah, the new life on the inside is working its way up into the branches; the new buds are swelling and beginning to unfold. All that pertains to the old life must be put off. So it is with the blessed life of the Spirit of God. It will work out and crowd off everything that has ever been cherished by the old nature.

Many a child of God has been led astray by false teaching in this respect. Hireling preachers say that it matters not about the outside, just so the inside is all right. This false adage has been worn

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threadbare by professing Christians who seek to justify themselves in their pride. Many young converts have become perplexed, not knowing sufficiently well the voice of God and the gentle leadings of the Holy Spirit, who would in every instance lead unerringly up to the Bible standard of outward adornment but for the evil influences of worldly professors who treat lightly the sacred Word of God and put false constructions upon those scriptures which, if properly accepted, would bring such professors under condemnation. Yes, dear reader, it does matter what is on the outside because the Word of God says so, which the texts of Scripture quoted clearly show. The outside and inside must and do correspond. Jesus said to the Pharisees, “Cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.”

It is unquestionably true that real humility and modest apparel belong together and no bodily ornamentation is desired, much less needed, where Christ is enthroned in the heart. The ornaments desired are good works, inspired by the hidden man of the heart, with a modest, unassuming outward appearance.

## **Worldly Adornment Forbidden**

Let us consider this part of the subject from the texts. Certain articles are here forbidden. Some might say that both texts speak only of the apparel of women but no one could consistently contend that man is not included in this requirement. In the text quoted from Paul he says, “I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting,” and then follows, “In like manner also, that women adorn themselves . . .” This proves that both are equally brought under the same Scriptural requirements. It is very likely that men in those days, as it is now, were not given to that feature of pride to the extent that women were. The same natural tendency to worldliness exists equally in both, but it is evident that fashion makes a greater slave of woman than of man; while man naturally falls more readily into other sins of equally destructive effect to the spiritual, moral and physical life.

The apostle here mentions “modest apparel” as the standard. There might be a great difference in judgment in the interpretation of this term, had he not explained his meaning, but he goes on and specifies what shall not be worn, first mentioning:

### **Broided Hair**

In the parallel text from Peter it is termed “plaiting the hair,” which signifies the ornamentation of the hair as was the custom in those days. A writer says, “The Eastern women are remarkable for the great length and number of the tresses of their hair.” One lady

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was seen who had one hundred and ten tresses, all natural, on her head. These are frequently braided in with gold or pearl ornaments. This was an object of much pride and vanity and was doubtless what is forbidden in these texts.

### **Wearing Gold**

Let us next consider the wearing of gold. This is plainly forbidden. A popular clergyman once said, “There is no place in the Bible where the wearing of gold is plainly forbidden.” What an utter contradiction of the Word of God! Peter says, “Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, . . .” Paul says, “Not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; . . .” Here are two plain texts where the wearing of gold is forbidden.

It is remarkable what excuses people make who live in open violation of these scriptures. Everyone seems to think God has granted them a special privilege of living in disobedience to His will in this respect. Many who make a loud profession of holiness wear gold rings and other jewelry and adorn themselves in the same vain apparel with the world. When their attention is called to this by some humble saint, they excuse themselves by saying, “Oh, I never think of these things.” Others have said they are so filled with God that they have not time to think or speak of these things. There are two reasons why such excuses are Scripturally invalid and the persons who make them are sadly ignorant or deceived. If these things were never thought of, they would never be put on. If they are worn because they had been put on before conversion and become perfectly natural to a person so that since conversion they have, for this reason, never thought of them, then such persons are ignorant of the Word of God and need teaching. In such a case every honest, unbiased mind will at once accept the light of God’s Word upon the

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subject and the Holy Spirit, the Teacher and Guide into all truth, will certainly make this matter plain.

Evidently there are cases where ignorance of God's Word is excusable. There are some dear souls who have had no teaching but the Holy Spirit will not leave such in the dark very long if the heart is open to conviction. A dear brother, who was a missionary to Africa, told me of a touching instance which shows how the Spirit will teach all who are willing to obey God. A converted heathen had brought his unsaved wife to the mission and made it their home. The wife would not yield to God and became very much dissatisfied to remain at the mission. She insisted upon her husband going back to their old home and living as they had done. The husband refused to do this and insisted upon her to yield to God. She would not and at last left the mission. He went after her and brought her back. She left again. He went again and brought her back and did all he could, assisted by the missionaries, to bring her to repentance but all was in vain and she left again.

The poor husband came perplexed to the missionary, feeling in his heart that God's Word must contain something to suit his case, and asked: 'Teacher, what says God's Word about a man whose wife won't live with him because he's a Christian?' The missionary read to him I Corinthians 7:15—"If the unbelieving depart, let him depart." The convert brightened up with joy and said, "So my heart says." Every willing heart will always have a cheerful response to the Word of God and, if ignorant of the written Word, the Spirit will write the Word in the heart so that when light comes from the written Word the heart says, "Amen."

Some excuse themselves in wearing a gold ring because it was given by some dear friend who now perhaps is gone and the ring is worn in remembrance of the friend. This is certainly an excuse that

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no child of God should dare to make in the face of the plain Word of God.

A dying lady once sent for me to come to see her. We had never met before and, as her pale hand lay upon her breast, I was impressed in the Spirit to speak to her about a large gold ring she was wearing. She answered, "Oh, this ring was given me by my dear old father who lives three thousand miles away." "Well, sister," I said, "do you want to obey God? Could you not as well keep that ring as a remembrance of your father by putting it in your bureau drawer and thus keep from violating God's Word?" I marked the Scriptures for her and left, promising to return. When I entered her room the next time she held up her hand without the ring, saying, "Praise the Lord, brother!" She had received a wonderful blessing in her soul and could not be thankful enough to God for having her attention called to this open violation of God's Word. In a few days she passed into eternity and my soul was overwhelmed with gratitude to God for the privilege of helping that dear soul to meet the divine requirement in this matter and for her own testimony that she pleased God.

### **Wedding Ring**

Another very common excuse for wearing gold is the wedding ring. With some people it would be considered a breaking of the sacred marriage vow to take off the wedding ring. Many have declared they would not take it off. Many professors of holiness stubbornly persist in wearing their ring, no matter what anyone may say or think. This is a serious matter and should not be slightly passed by. Many a dear soul has displeased God and gone into spiritual darkness at this point.

We have come to the place in our experience where two ways meet. Custom, tradition and friends tell us to take one way; the Word

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of God tells us to take the other. We stop, reflect and pray. If our heart is open to God as it should be, the Holy Spirit points us to the Word. If we want to please our friends or ourselves, or if there is the least unwillingness within us to walk in the self-denying way of the cross, we can be easily persuaded to excuse ourselves and think that it does not make much difference.

We see many others whom we think are good Christians who are much older than ourselves in experience, who wear gold and dress according to fashions of the world; therefore, we conclude to take the same way they have taken. Now, dear reader, we must not thus take counsel with our own soul. If we do, we open the door to the delusions of Satan. This is a serious point and our decision involves our highest interests. Let us decide for God and obey His plain Word.

Every child of God should as readily ignore the custom of wearing a wedding ring as anything else that is plainly forbidden in the Word of God. If those who seem to think their loyalty to their vow depends upon wearing the ring would make sure that they had a Bible experience of salvation, they would soon find that a more sacred and stronger tie than a gold ring binds them together. In a case where an unsaved companion objects to a child of God taking off the ring, I would suggest a very careful and prayerful course in the matter. Take a bold, firm stand for God's Word. Explain your reason for doing as you do and show your companion that it is no lack of fidelity on your part but it is because you must obey God.

There are many professors of holiness who are doing an incalculable amount of harm to others who are looking upon them for example. To many young converts the Word of God is made of none effect because some influential person fails to obey it in some of these things, thus bringing themselves and others into a state of

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disobedience. Oh, I would warn every professing saint to measure up to the standard of God's Word no matter what the sacrifice or apparent cost! You cannot afford to take the chances outside of God's perfect approval. Let the life of true humility work its way through your entire being. If the desire for wearing gold is in your heart, it proves that you have not reached the humble state of grace where God would have you. If there is no such desire there, then let your outward appearance correspond with the heart and the Word of God.

The wearing of all jewelry is equally as unscriptural and displeasing to God. In the Revised Version the text in I Peter 3:3 reads, "Let it not be the outward adorning of plaiting the hair and wearing of jewels of gold," etc.

The wearing of pearls is also mentioned and forbidden in the text by Paul. (I Timothy 2:9.) Had diamonds been worn then as they are now, they doubtless would have been placed on the list and forbidden.

### **Costly Array**

In the Revised Version this is translated costly raiment. It includes not only all superfluous outward adornment, but every expensive article of wearing apparel which would require an unnecessary outlay of the Lord's means. In this respect, again, there might be a variety of opinion or of judgment as to what constitutes costly raiment but no one who has reached the standard of Bible humility will find any difficulty in drawing the line for themselves or setting a good example for others who have not yet come to a true knowledge of this subject.

Modest apparel does not signify, as some would interpret, a carelessness of our outward appearance. We should always aim to



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be neat and presentable, unassuming and unattractive, always being careful to maintain a perfect correspondence in every respect with the plain teachings of the Word of God so that we may be able to appear among the poor or the rich, as necessity may demand, without any unnecessary attraction to our clothing from either class, more than that distinction made by the Word of God, which certainly implies a beautiful, easy and graceful medium, free from the awful bondage of fashion and style.

Hundreds of thousands of dollars are annually expended by professing Christians for unnecessary dress, in our so-called Christian United States statistics show that there has been more money expended in one year for ostrich plumes than for the missionary cause. Of course the professing Christians are not guilty of all this but an alarming proportion of it is chargeable to them. Many professing Christians, when requested to help the poor or when any need of the work of the gospel is presented to them, plead poverty themselves when, at the same time, they practice real extravagance in their wearing apparel. There is not the least doubt but we all may economize in our personal expenses in this respect and become much more able to be a blessing to others who are in need of actual necessities.

There is a most delightful liberty here, where Christ, the hidden man of the heart, has the perfect control. One of the greatest sins in the religious world is the idolatrous devotion of soul and body to the goddess of fashion and style. Thousands who once may have had a good experience of conversion have been led captive by this subtle spirit of pride and are now spiritually dead or else lean and starving, and yet perhaps, in some cases, not aware of the cause. Ah, dear soul, come with me and let us take a prayerful look into the mirror of God's Word. You have forsaken God and bowed down to idols.

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Repent of this, ask forgiveness and promise God all of your heart, soul, mind and strength. Then apply to the cleansing fountain for a clean heart and be filled with the Holy Spirit so that the meek and humble Christ can dwell within and live the life of Himself in you. You have no time nor means to waste in the vain things of the world. Those things which are highly esteemed among men are an abomination in the sight of God.

The depraved mind of the world has no power to comprehend that which is truly beautiful in God's sight. For the children of God to endeavor to appear beautiful to the eye of the world is therefore to greatly displease God. The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit will beautify the countenance and cause it to shine forth with true heavenly brightness in the sight of God and before the world.

“In that day shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people.” Isaiah 28:5.

“For the Lord taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation.” Psalm 149:4.

“I will also clothe her priests with salvation: and her saints shall shout aloud for joy.” Psalm 132:16.

“Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.” I Chronicles 16:29.

Salvation is the only true adornment: therefore, the one which everyone must seek to obtain and that which God alone can give. This will shine forth with the fruits of the Spirit in true loveliness and cause us to greatly glorify Him in good works, which come spontaneously from the hidden man of the heart and make us a diadem of beauty in the sight of God. A heart thus filled with God will have no room, need, nor desire for the vain, worldly, outward

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adornments. Beloved reader, let us seek earnestly to meet every condition of perfect obedience to the blessed Word of God.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” Romans 12:1, 2.

“. . . Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.” I Peter 5:5, 6.

**The End**









