



LESSON ESSENTIALS

CHRISTIAN CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

LESSON 3: HUMILITY AND PATIENCE

We are born as selfish people. Little children often think that the world revolves around them and for them. Some people never grow up in this regard, and still believe that the world should exist to please them. They want what they want, and they want it now! Jesus calls us to lives of humility and patience, modeled after His own. Read on to learn how you can develop these in your life!

“When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with the humble is wisdom.”

Proverbs 11:2

Having right beliefs is vital to right behaviour. When we incorrectly believe that we are superior to others, or self-sufficient, we are likely to become proud or impatient.

We all hate waiting. We wait for a friend or family member to arrive, we wait for our holiday, and we wait to reap the rewards of hard work. But in this modern world, we have become impatient. Technology seems to have quickened the pace of life, and we expect easy answers, prompt responses and instant gratification. All these things make us less patient. Yet God calls us to be patient with one another, and to wait patiently on Him. Is this an impossible task?

A virtue related to patience is humility. Humble people do not fight their way into first place. If we are humble, we neither have an inflated view of our life and importance, nor do we have too low a view of ourselves. When we have a healthy and Biblical perspective of who we are (God's precious creation), we can extend grace and love to others. When we stop ranking people and determining their worth to us, we can truly love them. This requires humility.

Having right beliefs is vital to right behaviour. When we believe that we are superior to others, or self-sufficient, we are likely to become proud or impatient. Whenever we think that we are more valuable than others, we lack humility and are impatient with them.

But Jesus taught us to be humble and to recognize that God is above us and we are in need of His grace. Jesus demonstrated humility, even to the point of death!

Jesus saw selfish behaviour among His followers and disciples, and He taught them a better way. He told them this story: "When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in a place of honor, lest someone more distinguished than you be invited by him, and he who invited you both will come and say to you, 'Give your place to this person,' and then you will begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when your host comes he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher.' Then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at table with you. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted" (Luke 14:8-11).

Lack of humility and patience will become evident in many situations throughout our day. We might have impatient and angry thoughts while being delayed in our daily chores. We might think that we are better than those around us and that our life and plans are more important than theirs. To exercise patience and humility requires us to choose love and respect for others, and to leave the daily struggles of life in God's hands.

Next time you find yourself frustrated with someone who is just not acting as you want them to, or feeling glad you are not like your neighbour, choose to dwell on loving thoughts and remember that to follow Christ is to choose the path of sacrifice and servanthood. As we humble ourselves, God will exalt us at the proper time. But better that praises come from others' lips than our own, and better God's timing for everything than the course of events that we dream up on our own!

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IN REVIEW

- Humility is having the right view of ourselves – that we are God’s creation, but in need of His grace for salvation. It is not thinking too highly of ourselves (which is pride), but also not debasing ourselves (denying our identity in Christ). Humility is recognizing our life is no more important than anyone else’s.
- Patience is the ability to endure deferred satisfaction or reward. It may involve waiting for others, waiting for our life circumstances to unfold, or waiting to see what God will do. A patient person does not get angry while waiting, and does not sit back waiting for others to act.
- Jesus taught us to humble ourselves and honour others before ourselves. This is the true path of patience and humility.

