



Humility

noun

noun hu·mil·i·ty: the quality or state of not thinking you are better than other people : the quality of being humble; not proud or haughty; not arrogant or assertive; reflecting, expressing, or offered in a spirit of deference submission; from Latin humilis low, humble, from humus earth



Take a deep breath! After gathering in your circle over the past few weeks, you have landed. Here. Today. Any ‘ah-ha’ moments...or perhaps ‘uh-oh’ moments?

QUESTION:

- Take a minute to share a word, thought or conversation that has made an impact on you over the last few weeks. Be honest. Be real. Maybe it’s just been a new experience for you to gather together without pressure to have the right answers, and an invitation to respond to some amazing questions.

Here’s the thing. None of these kinds of conversations would be possible if they weren’t modeled for us first in the conversations that Jesus had. He opened a door and invited people into his circle to listen to His voice, and watch him take risks. They heard Him deliver the truth with grace and skill, while He created a generous space for them to belong, especially the ones who weren’t about to fit in anywhere else.

What magic did Jesus’ conversations embody which made Him the most written about, talked about and followed man who ever walked the face of the earth? He could have been a celebrity. In today’s culture, He could have the largest social media following, and been on every late night talk show on television. In His lifetime, Jesus could have been a King ruling on an earthly throne with great power instead of riding a donkey into Jerusalem.



READ: John 12:12-19

Jesus knows that he has the love of the majority of the people in this moment (except for the existing powers that be who were threatened by His popularity). He can use His power to take His Messianic throne and take the power that His followers wanted Him to have so they too, could be great.

Instead He responds by finding a young donkey to sit on, thereby making a mess of the picture they were creating. He should have found a horse to ride on or made use of some other symbol of power. Instead he paints from a different palette. His action undercuts their desire to be great and points in a different direction, evoking an image from the Prophets: *Do not be afraid, O Daughter of Zion; see, your king is coming, seated on a donkey's colt (v. 15; from Zech 9:9)*. He is indeed king, but not the sort of king they have in mind.

He messed with their perceptions of how a King should look and how a King should act.



QUESTION:

- When have your perceptions about someone in authority been validated by their behavior in the way they used power, or exerted their influence?
- When have you seen someone with influence lay it aside and not refer to their position or title?
- Which type of person would you be more comfortable with sharing the brokenness of your life with?

Jesus declares boldly in John 11:25-26: *“You don’t have to wait for the End. I am, right now, Resurrection and Life. The one who believes in me, even though he or she dies, will live. And everyone who lives believing in me does not ultimately die at all. Do you believe this?”*

There is no other person on heaven or earth who ever lived, who trumps Jesus in either authority or power. Jesus alone even has the power over life and death. You would expect Him to act out this out with issuing commands or asserting His superiority over everyone.

Instead...instead, the behavior of the King of the Universe looked quite different. And here is what He did:



READ: John 13:1-11

Really? This is how He showed them that there was no one else in all of heaven and earth who was greater or more powerful? By washing their feet?

Yes. And here’s why. Let’s read John 13, verses 12-17 from *The Message*:

Then he said, *“Do you understand what I have done to you? You address me as ‘Teacher’ and ‘Master,’ and rightly so. That is what I am. So if I, the Master and Teacher, washed your feet, you must now wash each other’s feet. I’ve laid down a pattern for you. What I’ve done, you do. I’m only pointing out the obvious. A servant is not ranked above his master; an employee doesn’t give orders to the employer. If you understand what I’m telling you, act like it—and live a blessed life.*

The culture at the time was full of power-mongers who wanted to grab a bit more earthly authority while they could. We see it all the time. We do it all the time. We get a promotion. We earn a degree. We make sure people can see it when we sign off in an email, so we put our credentials after our name. And we may think we should be treated differently...better.

Jesus comes along and places Himself right in the middle of the power-hungry, kingdom-seeking culture of His day and instead radically pushes back against those who would control from their positions of power and authority. Even His birth has no dignity by human definition. He is born into the mess and dirt of a manger in the least favourable circumstances to the least likely young woman, with no pomp and circumstance. Jesus decides from His first breath to use Humility as His weapon of choice. He knows it is the strongest forged tool to radically redefine and reshape the culture from one of power to one of servanthood.

In Luke 22:25-26 we read: So Jesus declared, *“The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those in authority over them call themselves benefactors. But you shall not be like them. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who leads like the one who serves.*



QUESTIONS:

- How vulnerable would you have to be to do away with power structures and not define yourself by your title or your role?
- How much courage would it take to put aside any external definers, such as accomplishments, famous people you know, where you live, how much you own, how educated you are, and where you shop, in order to make yourself equal with the woman who is new to your country and owns nothing but the one dress she is wearing?
- What would it mean for you personally for you to push back against the culture of achievement and recognition, and *'not be like them'*?
- What would you have to strip off, or give up, in order to kneel down and wash someone else's feet?

Jesus had to have a strong and clearly defined sense of self to be confident enough to not take on the power labels those around Him wanted to define Him by. In fact He stripped those expectations off freely in order to kneel down and wash the dirt off of Peter's feet. He did the unexpected. He did the unheard of. He was like no other man. He is like no other God.

Read together the following verse:

You know the generous grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, so that by His poverty He could make you rich. 2 Corinthians 8:9 NIV.

We've read this verse before. We see echoes of the servant nature of Jesus in His pitching His tent right in the middle of messy, broken humanity and pulling up a donkey and making Himself comfortable. He never did find His way into the palace, except to be humiliated, wrongly accused, beaten and sentenced to a grisly death on the cross.

His place was with His people. His place is with you. Where is your place?

The answer is your place is with Him. Your place is with others. How are you to be with God? How are you to be with others? Like Jesus was. *"I've laid down a pattern for you. What I've done, you do."*

Humility is the currency of the Jesus kingdom. Not out ranking or over performing or over pleasing. It is bowing low to raise others up. As He raises you, when He bows to wash your feet and pours Himself all over you to make you spotless and worthy.



QUESTIONS:

- How can you wash the feet of others around you?
- How can you show others that there is a place they can be themselves with you?
- How can you demonstrate vulnerability, generosity and humility?
- How do you think your act of humility will radically shape the culture you live in and work in?

You've got this, girls. Go be like Jesus. Go talk like Jesus. Have the conversations He had. Keep it real. Invite any and all to your table: the ones who look like you, and the ones who would never belong unless you made space in your circle. He is radically reshaping your relationships, one conversation at a time, Now go and do likewise.

Go. And Gather.

PRAYER

By Elle Pyke

Humility

You are the masterpiece of humility God.
Each page of Your life, poetry of perfect humbleness.
Your mighty strength; the beauty of Your vulnerability.
May we be women who mirror the majesty of
Your humility, circled with love, gifted with grace.
May we be women who are clothed in the humility
of our Christ.
May we be women whose lives are marked with humble
service to others.
Humility is the currency of your Kingdom.
It is the holy calling you've breathed on us.
May we receive & humble ourselves in the sight of you, our Lord.
Amen.



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1 <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/generosity>

2 The Message (MSG)

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