

Humility and Success

Air Dates: October 31 – November 4, 2022

Day One

In the Bible we're frequently told that we should be humble, but humility doesn't seem to be the way to get ahead in this world. How can a Christian be humble and still be successful

If you're looking in bookstores or online for books to help you be successful, you'll find titles like *Winning Through Intimidation*, but I doubt you'll find a book entitled *Finding Success through Humility*. That wouldn't be a best seller, because humility is viewed as a liability rather than an asset in the business-world and elsewhere.

Well, where does that leave those who are Christians trying to make a living in the world's business environment? Is the Bible's challenge for us to humble ourselves, as Jesus said, or to wear humility, as we read in Colossians 3, compatible with our desires to succeed in our careers?

I believe the answer to that question is yes when we understand the real meaning of humility. What most people think of when they talk about being humble is not the real meaning of the term, but rather a false humility.

Have you ever met someone who acted very humble but somehow you just didn't feel it was sincere? That kind of false humility never impresses anyone and gives humility a bad name. When we try to demonstrate our humility, then it's pretty certain we don't have it!

For example, refusing to accept compliments graciously is not real humility. Saying degrading things about yourself is not a sign of humility. Refusing to accept rewards or recognition for what you've accomplished is not a sign of humility.

Humility is a natural outcome of learning who we are in comparison to who God is. When we are in a life-long process of constantly learning that everything we are and everything we do is because of who God is, then humility becomes a natural characteristic. But it does not make us into a door mat nor does it keep us from achieving goals and ambitions. Indeed, true humility helps us in the business world.

Day Two

Are humility and success compatible? I believe they are not only compatible, but true humility can enhance our success. It may sound contradictory, but I think you'll find it's true.

We talked about the fact that humility is not generally viewed as a necessary characteristic for the successful career person. But true humility is indeed very helpful. Consider the characteristics of truly humble people.

First of all, they are teachable. They don't have a "know-it-all" attitude. They recognize that they can learn from others and that they don't have all the answers. They are open to suggestions and constructive criticism.

Now, I can tell you that those characteristics are extremely useful in any business environment. The person who is continually looking for ways to improve and is willing to learn from others will grow and improve much faster than the ones who think they know all there is to know.

The person who is truly humble is one who gives respect to other people and does not have an arrogant or condescending attitude toward others. The Apostle Paul said in Philippians to consider others better than ourselves. In other words, true humility is when we continually remind ourselves of the importance of other people, when we try to daily practice compassion and have empathy for others.

Again, this attribute is very well received in business circles. How often do you hear someone say, "They have really good people skills." Well, good people skills is another way of saying they treat people with respect and fairness, and they are considerate of their feelings and their needs. That is recognized in business today as a very desirable trait for a good manager.

And true humility gives us that kind of attitude toward people. It truly helps us develop good people skills, and therefore makes us better prepared for success.

Humility and success are very compatible, and as Christians in the marketplace, we'll find that striving to be truly humble will enhance our skills and our performance on the job.

Day Three

Humility and success are not exclusives. Indeed, humility can accelerate our learning curve and enhance our people skills and contribute to our success in any area of our lives. But how do we acquire true humility?

We've talked about how true humility can be a great asset for us in the business world, because it causes us to be more teachable and more respectful of others. But the question I always ask is "How do I acquire true humility?" It seems very elusive for me at times.

Well, in 1 Peter 5 we're told to humble ourselves. What are some specific things we can do to humble ourselves?

First, we can learn to be better listeners and truly care about what other people have to say. James says to be quick to listen and slow to speak, and that would surely be a good way to learn to humble ourselves.

Second, we can make a list of the areas in our lives that need some work and ask God to help us make the needed changes. I always need to be more patient, and I can learn to humble myself if I will continually concentrate on putting on patience.

A third way to humble yourself is not to talk about yourself all the time, even when you have an opportunity. When we talk about ourselves a lot, we easily get into bragging and trying to make ourselves look good.

Fourth, we can humble ourselves by asking others to give us any input that would help us to improve. Have you ever done that with your boss or a coworker? They may be able to offer some suggestions about your performance that could be very helpful. It takes a little courage, but it surely is one way to humble yourself.

Jesus said that whoever humbles himself or herself is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, and he described himself as gentle and humble in heart. Therefore, there is great gain for us in learning to

humble ourselves. The most important result is that it makes our lives more pleasing to our Lord. The side benefit is that it enhances our opportunity for success in anything we undertake.

I challenge you, therefore, to decide to humble yourself and discover that humility and success are very compatible attributes.

Day Four

Recently I realized there were only two occasions in Scripture where we're told that Jesus was amazed. Do you know what they are?

The first occasion is recorded in Luke 7, which is the story of the Roman Centurion who asked Jesus to heal his sick servant. Roman soldiers were characteristically hard, tough men, with little compassion or concern for others, certainly not for servants. We would expect this man to be ruthless and uncaring, so we cannot help but be impressed that he would care about a servant, and that he would be willing to come to Jesus on his behalf. This man was truly humble.

Also, he had been very generous with the Jewish people who were under his command, and had built them a synagogue, though he was not himself a Jew. This was indeed an unusual man.

What is really amazing is his profound comprehension of who Jesus was. As Jesus was going to his home to heal his servant, the soldier sent friends to say to him, *"Lord, don't trouble yourself, for I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. That is why I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my servant will be healed"* (Luke 7:6b-7).

Here was a Roman soldier that somehow knew the power and authority that Jesus had. In addition, he was a truly humble man, feeling unworthy for Jesus to even enter his home. He showed great faith in Jesus, believing that he could heal his servant by just speaking a word, without even seeing the servant.

And when Jesus heard this, we're told that he was amazed at him. In fact, Jesus said, *"I tell you, I have not found such great faith, even in Israel"* (Luke 7:9b). Jesus was amazed at his faith.

He was amazed at the depth of his faith, and at his persistent in seeking Jesus. Surely it was not considered smart for a man in his position to believe in this itinerant, controversial Jewish preacher. Yet he unashamedly goes to Jesus for help.

He had amazing faith. I would like to have that kind of faith - the kind that amazes Jesus, wouldn't you?

Day Five

What would amaze Jesus Christ? Well, there are only two occasions where we're told that Jesus was amazed. Jesus was amazed at the faith of the Roman Centurion who asked him to heal his servant. He had great faith in Jesus even though he had little teaching or knowledge of our Lord.

In Mark 6 we see where Jesus was again amazed, but for different reasons. He was in his hometown of Nazareth, teaching in the synagogue. But those who heard him couldn't believe that he was the Son of God because this was their home-town boy, the carpenter's son. So instead of believing in him, they took offense at him. And because of their unbelief, Jesus could not do many miracles there. And again we're told that Jesus was amazed at their lack of faith.

Here are people who should have known who Jesus was. He was a fulfillment of all their prophecies, and he had demonstrated his power to them many times. But Jesus didn't suit their notions of what the Messiah should be like, and their stubborn, proud hearts kept them from believing what was right in

front of their noses. And Jesus was amazed at their lack of faith. He left there and went elsewhere.

I wonder if Jesus is amazed at my faith or at yours? Is he amazed that you have faith in him, regardless of the circumstances, regardless of the prospects, even without complete understanding? Do you amaze him with your consistent faith in him and what he can do? Or rather, is he amazed to see that in spite of all you know and all the experience you've had, your faith is still weak and anemic?

Recently someone said, "Faith is not only believing a certain thing will happen. Faith is turning everything over to the Lord and trusting him with what happens, knowing that he will bring to pass what he knows to be best." I want to have that kind of faith that will trust to him every situation, every circumstance, unquestioningly and without hesitation. I want some amazing faith, don't you?