

MARVEL

ORDINARY PEOPLE, EXTRAORDINARY POTENTIAL

Participant Guide: Extraordinary Humility (Week 4)

SERMON RECAP: WHAT DID THE TEXT MEAN? WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Our passages this week were 2 Samuel 12:1-14 and Psalm 51:1-13:

We learned several key points from Sunday's message on Extraordinary Humility:

Humility involves the willingness to remain vulnerable to God and others. Extraordinary humility means...

1. I am willing to accept wise council
2. I am willing to admit my failure
3. I am willing to seek God's favor
4. I am willing to share God's story

What did God reveal to you from the message that you'd like to discuss with the group?

WARM UP

Do you have at least one person in your LifeGroup who knows most everything about you? If not, what has kept you from that level of vulnerability?

THE TEXT: WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR ME?

In Sunday's message, we learned about David and saw him display humility when Nathan confronted him with his sin. In this lesson, we'll take a deeper dive into humility as a group and discuss its impact on our lives.

Question: Who are some other examples of people you know that exhibit extraordinary humility?

While there are many examples, one woman that is often mentioned is Mother Teresa. Why do people consider her to be so humble? Her self-described mission was to serve "the hungry, the naked, the homeless, the crippled, the blind, the lepers, all those people who feel unwanted, unloved, uncared for throughout society, people that have become a burden to the society and are shunned by everyone."¹ Wow! She lived her life among the poor in India, never choosing fame or accolades, but yet she influenced many and received the Nobel Peace Prize.

Mother Teresa stands out as the exception rather than the norm within our culture. Our culture in the West, which promotes upward mobility, generally tells us that power is a good thing and that powerlessness is a bad thing.

¹

Kathryn Spink, *Mother Teresa: A Complete Authorized Biography* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997), 18-21.

Consider this quote from Henri Nouwen: “It seems nearly impossible for us to believe that any good can come from powerlessness. In this country of pioneers and self-made people, in which ambition is praised from the first moment we enter school until we enter the competitive world of free enterprise, we cannot imagine that any good can come from giving up power or not even desiring it. The all-pervasive conviction in our society is that power is a good and that those possessing it can only desire more of it.”²

Now read Philippians 2:1-4 as a group.

Question: What does this passage say is the typical driver of our motivations?

As we learned on Sunday, the opposite of humility is **pride**. The essence of pride, as shown in Phil 2:3, is self-concern.

John Stott once wrote, “At every stage of our Christian development and in every sphere of our Christian discipleship, pride is the greatest enemy and humility our greatest friend.” If pride is self-concern, it is a great enemy because it is nearly impossible to love others if you are consumed with yourself. Our pride leads us to think and act like **consumers**.

Question: In Phil 2:3-4, what does the author Paul say is the posture most associated with humility?

In his classic book *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis wrote: “True humility is not thinking less of yourself; it is thinking of yourself less.” Humility is the freedom that comes from self-forgetfulness. When we are able to stop obsessing about ourselves, we can think and act like **servants**.

The following table, created by pastors Bob Thune and Will Walker, illustrates some of the differences between a consumer and a servant.³

A CONSUMER	A SERVANT
“What’s in it for me?”	“How can I serve others?”
“Who’s going to relate to me and meet my needs?”	“Who can I relate to and whose needs can I meet?”
Criticizes the group’s faults and weaknesses	Looks for God’s grace at work in the group
Gravitates toward people who have something to offer	Recognizes the diversity of gifts in the body
Uses others for personal gain	Empowers others for the good of God’s Kingdom

Question: On the consumer side, which aspects do you most identify with? How have you seen this impact how you approach relationships outside your LifeGroup? Inside your LifeGroup?

Question: On the servant side, which aspects do you most identify with? Which of these areas would you most like to grow in over the next year?

Read Philippians 2:5-11 as a group.

Question: Specifically, how did Jesus become the perfect model of humility? What did he give up in order to serve and save us?

Another powerful quote from Nouwen: “The story of our salvation stands radically over and against the philosophy of upward mobility. The great paradox which Scripture reveals to us is that real and total freedom is only found through downward mobility. The Word of God came down to us and lived among us as a slave. The divine way is indeed the downward way.”⁴

² Henri Nouwen, *The Selfless Way of Christ* (New York: Orbis Books, 2007).
³ Bob Thune and Will Walker, *Gospel-Centered Community* (Greensboro: New Growth Press, 2013), 82.
⁴ Nouwen, *The Selfless Way of Christ*

As we read earlier in Phil 2:1, the encouragement and comfort of Christ, through the Holy Spirit, produces heart change in us to make us more like Jesus as humble servants. He frees us to live for Him and His purpose rather than our own (2 Cor 5:15).

Question: How can your group collectively turn from consumer tendencies to become more like Jesus in serving each other? In serving the overwhelmed, under-resourced, and far away?

DIGGING DEEPER

Before closing, choose one person in the group (not in your family) that you will practice humility with in two ways: 1) be vulnerable in sharing something about yourself that you haven't shared openly with the group; and 2) ask the person how you could serve them this week and then make plans to do it.