

Welcome, everyone, on this Sabbath day.

The title of today's sermon is *Humility*.

Humility is the opposite of pride. Let's have a closer look at pride because pride is something that Satan uses to make us stumble and it is something we all have to deal with. Satan will always try to lure us into becoming haughty and proud in our lives.

We don't always realize this, but pride is an important weapon used by Satan. When you're pride-filled you usually don't want to admit your mistakes and you won't be motivated to say "sorry" to people when it is really necessary after you've treated someone badly.

When you're proud you'll want to keep following your own ways. Satan loves to see that in our lives, when we follow our own ways and not God's ways. He himself did the exact same thing when he rebelled against God. God says in His word that "He resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

We can actually say that pride makes us a friend of Satan and at the same time it separates us from the Father. Is it worth that? Do we really cause that separation between ourselves and God? Pride also leads to being judgmental and critical because then we think we know it all better and we consider our own opinions to be better than what God gives to us.

The better we get to know God and come to see how "Great" and "Almighty" He is, the more we come to see how small and puny we really are. Strive to always live your life in such a way that you will always want to admit it when you're wrong (when that happens to be the case), for then we truly have a humble attitude and can be considered to be "poor in spirit."

Let's have a look at Matthew 5:3. In order to be humble we must be poor in spirit. **Matthew 5:3 – Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.**

We go farther in Matthew 19 now. **Matthew 19:13-14**, a little further. Here Christ talks about the same subject, the Kingdom, and how we can get there. **Then (Jesus said) were there brought into Him little children (to Jesus), that He should lay His hands on them and pray: and the disciples rebuked them.**

Verse 14 – But Jesus said, Let the little children come to Me, and forbid them not to come to Me; for to such belongs the Kingdom of Heaven. The Kingdom is for little children, and that is the same message, but in other words. These are two statements by Jesus Christ spoken at different times. In Matthew 5:3 it is stated that you must be "poor in spirit." In Matthew 19 it says you must "be as a child." A child has the characteristic of being "poor in spirit."

Matthew 18 now. Let's go back one chapter and have a look at **Matthew 18:3-4 – Verily I say unto you: Unless you become as little children, you will in no way enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.** It states here if you don't change, if you don't repent, if you don't start to think differently, if you don't start keeping God's laws and statutes then you cannot enter into God's Family.

Verse 4 – Whoever therefore humbles himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. Everyone who humbles themselves will be lifted up in the Kingdom. We can read here that being "poor in spirit" means to be humble.

Genesis 3. We go back to the very beginning to see how Satan deceived Eve. **Genesis 3:5 – What sounded so appealing for Eve when Satan deceived her? Verse 5 – for God knows that in the day you eat it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.** From then on she would be able to decide for herself how she would behave. She would gain a deeper understanding of things that had been hidden from her up to that moment in time. Satan said that God kept all these things from them.

Verse 6 – And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise... Here we see lust coming to the surface. She would become wise. What really happened here? Satan used a couple of things that man desires here in a very cunning way. Man wants to be free. Man doesn't want to be told by anyone what he can or can't do. Man wants to be independent and have his own opinions.

So Satan used vanity and pride (the opposite of humility) to cause Eve to sin, and Adam sinned along with her as we can read in the rest of this verse ...**she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and she gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.**

We could say that before this account Adam and Eve were as children, humble and dependent on what God gave them. And all descendants of Adam and Eve from this point forward had the same desire and accomplished it in their own personal lives. One does not want to be humble. We've all done the same. I have done the same. And we must all constantly fight against this in our daily lives. God wants us to be humble because only then can He work with us. Only then He can mold and fashion us and model us. For only then do we have a spirit that is receptive (open) to God's laws and His goal for us, to become Elohim, part of His Family, to become His sons together with our elder brother, Jesus Christ.

Wayne Matthews recently touched upon the story of King David and when he numbered the people. That was not a humble thing he did, but one thing is for sure, David repented! And he repented after every sin he committed. That is why he is called "a man after God's own heart." We can take an example from that. Because when you repent, you humble yourself before God. You humbly confess you are wrong and ask for forgiveness and then you get up and go forward until you stumble again. And then the process is repeated all over. But that is what makes us stronger and more humble, and that's what it is all about.

God's longing is for us, but we are hardheaded and that head needs to be made softer and humbler so that the works can be done in and through us till the end, until God can say, "Now I know you. Inherit My Kingdom, My Family."

Daniel 4:4: There is an example in the Bible that always intrigued me. It shows how important the quality of humility is to God. We will take a look at what happened to king Nebuchadnezzar and at what, in the end, really humbled him. It didn't come to pass without a fight. Let's look at the story now. **Daniel 4:4 – I, Nebuchadnezzar, was living comfortably in my house and enjoyed great prosperity in my palace.**

Verse 5 – But I had a dream that made me afraid; and the visions that I saw while I was on my bed, troubled me! A while later, after the dream about the statue that was explained to him by Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar had another dream.

Verses 6-7 – Therefore, I made a decree to bring in all the wise men of Babylon before me, that they might make known to me the interpretation of this dream. Then came in the magicians, the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers; and I told the dream before them; but they did not make known to me the interpretation of it. Just as with the dream of the statue, the magicians, the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers could not explain the dream to the king.

In verses 18 and 19 Daniel has explained the dream: **verses 18-19 – This dream I, king Nebuchadnezzar, have seen; and you, Belteshazzar, declare the interpretation, because all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known to me the interpretation; but you are able; for the spirit of the holy gods is in you. Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was stricken mute for a while, and his thoughts troubled him. The king answered, Belteshazzar, don't let the dream or the interpretation trouble you. Belteshazzar answered: My lord, I wish the dream would apply to those who hate you, and the interpretation of it to your adversaries.**

And on in **verses 20-21 – The tree that you saw which grew and was strong, whose height reached to the sky and could be seen by all on the earth; whose leaves were beautiful, and the fruit of it much, and in it was food for all; under which the animals of the field lived, and on whose branches the birds of the sky had their habitation: it is you, O king, that are grown and become strong, for your greatness is grown and reaches to the sky, and your dominion to the end of the earth.**

And then there is one coming out of the heavens that orders that the tree be cut down. In other words, that the branches be cut off, its leaves be torn off and the fruit removed. Only the stump and the roots were to remain, and that was not all; the roots were to be chained.

Verse 23 – While You, O king, were watching, an angel came down from heaven and said, 'Cut the tree down and destroy it, but leave the stump in the ground. Wrap a band of iron and bronze around it, and leave it there in the field with the grass, and let it be wet with the dew of the sky: and let the portion be with the animals of the field, until seven times pass over him.' The only thing this tree would be getting until seven years had passed was the dew from the sky and the grass of the fields.

What did this dream mean?

Verses 24-26 – This is the interpretation, O king, and it is the decree of the Most High which is come on my lord the king: That you shall be driven from men and your dwelling shall be with the animals of the field, and you shall be made to eat grass as oxen, and shall be wet with the dew of the sky, and seven times shall pass over you; until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men and gives it wherever He will. And concerning the command to leave the stump of the tree roots; this means that your kingdom shall remain sure unto you, after that you shall have acknowledged that the heavens rule all the world. This dream was a forewarning to Nebuchadnezzar. God wanted to make known to him that he had to acknowledge (admit) that:

1. God is the Most High.
2. God appoints and removes kings.
3. "The heavens rule," meaning that God is above all and everyone, including Nebuchadnezzar.

Nebuchadnezzar was pride-filled, the opposite of humility. He considered himself to be the highest authority and the highest power.

In verse 25 God warned him that he will be forced to live like an animal for seven years if he didn't change his attitude and as of then started acknowledging (admitting) that God is the Most High Authority and the Most High Power. This punishment would not be effective immediately. He got one year time before the prophecy *would* be fulfilled.

But it didn't help one bit because one year later we can read the following in **verse 28 – All this did happen to king Nebuchadnezzar.**

Because as we can read in the verses 29 and 30 he kept giving all credit and honor to himself. **Verse 29-30 – At the end of the twelve months, while he was walking in the royal palace of Babylon, he said:** Is this not Babylon the great which I have built as a royal dwelling place by the might of my power and to the honor of my glory and majesty?

The prophetic threat then is executed in **verses 31-32: And while these words were still in the king's mouth, a voice from heaven spoke saying:** O king Nebuchadnezzar listen to what I say! Your kingdom has departed from you and you will be driven away from men, and your dwelling place will be with the animals of the field. You shall be made to eat grass as the oxen; and seven times will pass over you, until you will acknowledge that the Most High rules over the kingdoms of men and gives them to whoever He will.

But after these seven years he got his mind back, and then he praised the Most High who rules forever. **Verse 34 – And when the seven years had passed, I, king Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up my eyes to heaven and my mind returned to me, and I praised and honored the Most High, He who lives forever, for His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His Kingdom lasts from generation to generation.**

And on in **verse 35 – And all the inhabitants of the earth are as nothing to Him; He (God) does according to His will with the armies of the heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and no one can stay His hand, or tell Him: What do You?** No one can question what He does.

And in **verse 36** we read: **And at the same time that my sanity returned to me, the glory of my kingdom, my majesty and my brightness were given back to me. And my counselors and my lords welcomed me and my royal power was given back to me with even greater honor than before.** He became greater and more powerful than before, just as happened to Job when God showed him that He, God, must do the works and not man by himself. God's spirit "in" man teaches, builds, and molds and fashions him. And that can only be accomplished when the person is humble or when he or she is humbled by the things one experiences in life.

Verse 37 – And now, I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, honor and glorify the King of Heaven; who's works are truth, and who's ways are just, who possesses all truth, and who can humble those that walk in pride. He, Nebuchadnezzar, had become humble, but he had to learn this lesson through much suffering.

We too must learn that we are "as nothing," as we just read in the verses 34 and 35. But that doesn't mean that we don't then have to do what God desires from us. We must learn to be humble and then

with His help we can be of use to God. Then He can mold and fashion us so that we can enter into His Family, His Temple.

What have we been shown here? That God can force someone to give up their pride and become humble as a child through a special interference from Him.

Let's go now to Hebrews 11. I want to look at one example in the Bible of someone that did have a humble attitude, and that was Moses. In **Hebrews 11:24-25** we can read how Moses early on displayed a humble attitude when he preferred to suffer mistreatment alongside Gods people. **By faith, Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to share ill treatment with God's people, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a time.**

Verse 26 – He reckoned that to suffer scorn for Christ, the humiliation that Jesus Christ suffered in public, **was worth far more than all the treasures of Egypt; for he kept his eyes on the future reward.** He deemed it far more valuable to suffer with God's people than to live a life of temporary riches that lay within his grasp.

Moses was an important man, a prince of Egypt, and he was elected by God to lead His people out of bondage. We know that what happened to physical Israel applies to us spiritually; we must come out of the sins of this world, out of spiritual Egypt, out of the Babylonian system that was created by Satan. But as I stated earlier, Moses was an important man; he was a prince and he was used by God to free His people from bondage. He was the man that had to announce a message to Pharaoh on behalf of God, confronting Pharaoh with the Ten Plagues of Egypt.

Let's go to **Exodus 18:13** – He was a great leader of Gods people. Here it is stated that he occupied himself all day long leading and guiding God's people. **Verse 13 – The next day Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood around Moses from the morning to the evening.**

And then Jethro, his father-in-law, intervened. **Verse 14 – When Jethro, Moses father-in-law, saw everything that Moses had to do, he asked, What is all this that you are doing for the people? Why are you doing this all alone, with people standing around you from morning to evening?** At that time Moses had become a very important man because of the job that God had given him to do. God worked through him to accomplish His plan – the liberation of His people. He was the leader of the chosen people. He was the man through whom God had performed His miracles. God had forced Pharaoh down on his knees through Moses.

What would have been the normal reaction of carnal human nature at such a time? How would we react if were placed into such a position? Probably, "Butt out and go mind your own business! Who do you think you are! Don't you know what I am?!" But this was not Moses' response. He responded as follows in **verses 15-16 – Moses answered his father-in-law: I must do this because the people come to me to learn God's will. When two people have a dispute, they come to me, and I judge between a man and his neighbor, and I tell them God's commands and laws.** He was the one that had to teach the people about God's laws and Commandments.

Verse 17 – Then Moses father-in-law said to him: You're not doing this right. "You're not using the right method. I'll tell you how you should do it."

Verse 18 – You will wear yourself out, both yourself and these people that are around you. You are not able to do this all by yourself. In other words, "This is too much for you. You cannot do this alone. You are going about this the wrong way."

Verse 19 – Listen to my voice now and I will give you advice and God will be with you. It is right for you to represent the people before God, and that you bring their disputes before God. "Moses, please take my good advice!" And what was Moses' reaction? He did not say, "I'll be the judge of that. I do as I please. I'm the boss!" No!

We can read about his reaction in **verse 24 – So Moses listened to the voice of his father-in-law, and he did all that he had said.** Moses listened to the advice of his father-in-law and applied all that he had said. In this situation, Moses had a very humble attitude.

Numbers 12. Let's have a look at another example of Moses' humility. Here we read the account of the quarrel between brother and sister. **Numbers 12:1 – Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman he had married.** Moses had married a Cushite woman and an Ethiopian woman, and he got a lot of reproach because of that.

Verse 2 – They said, Has the Lord spoken only with Moses? Hasn't He also spoken with us? And the Lord heard what they said! "Do you think God only speaks through you and not through us too?" They were jealous of his position in leadership. They wanted his position as leader for themselves or at least they wanted to share in this leadership of Moses. But Moses didn't respond to these accusations, for in **verse 3** we can read, **Now the man Moses was very humble, more humble than anyone else on earth.** Moses was very meek.

In the dictionary we can find the following synonyms for this word "meek," and that's "gentle, peaceable, yielding, patient, long-suffering, mild, etc." If you have such a character, then you are truly humble. He didn't respond to these accusations and simply put it in God's hands. You can read about that in the rest of this story. And so must we do also, to leave things up to God. It's God who helped Moses in this struggle he had on his hands, and God also helps us, fights our fights for us. If we surrender ourselves to Him in all humility then God can work with us and fight the fight together with us, and then we can conquer.

What is not humility?

1. Being withdrawn
2. Walking around with your head down.
3. Being shy.
4. Having an inferiority complex.
5. Being servile or subservient towards people that are placed above you in authority (as for example, on your job).
6. Nor is it being sanctimonious.

You can read about true humility in Philippians 2:5. Let's go to **Philippians 2:5 – Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.** We must have in us that what was also in Christ. In the *Good News Bible* it uses the word "attitude." That attitude of mind, that character, is what we need, and humility is a big part of it.

As you can read in **verse 6-7 – Who, existing in the form of God didn't consider it robbery to be equal with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men.**

And then in **verse 8 – And being found in human form, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yes, the death at the stake.** If you embrace humility and thus humble yourself then you can be obedient to God like Jesus who set this example for us.

Humility is also described in **verse 2 – Make My joy full, by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.** That's the foundation of unity and oneness.

Verse 3 – doing nothing through rivalry or through vainglory, but in humility, each counting the other better than himself. Don't just think of yourself.

Verse 4 – each of you not just looking to his own things, but each, of also looking out for the things of others. So as we can read here, if you have humility in you, you can build up oneness of mind in the relations (fellowship) that we have with each other in God's Church. You could say that humility is the foundation of unity amongst God's people.

In **1 Peter 5:5** Peter admonished us to be humble, and he says that God gives grace to the humble. **Likewise, you younger ones, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yes, all of you gird yourselves with humility.** God values humility, and He exhorts us to be humble in this pride-filled world that surrounds us. **For God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.** We should all set an example to each other. We must practice this in God's Church, but of course, also outside God's Church, also, outside in the world.

And look at **verse 6 – Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, then He may exalt you in due time.** He (God) will exalt you in due time if "you humble yourself under the mighty hand of God." These are beautiful verses. We have been "made a little lower than the angels." We have no idea of what God has in store for us personally, but one thing is certain, we will be sons unto Him. We will be Gods. All the more reason for us to learn humility now and to conquer pride then our Father can work with us and give us grace. Then we can be obedient to Him, as we just read, and this humility will also produce unity (oneness of mind).

Verse 7 – Casting all your worries on Him, because He cares for you. We can take all our problems before Him. He cares for us *and* takes care of us! He helps us conquer (overcome) sin. And He gives His spirit to us to withstand Satan, so he will flee from us, but we must be humble and watchful!

Verse 8 – Be sober, be watchful. Your adversary the devil walks around like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. But if we are humble and watchful, Satan cannot devour us, snatch us away from God. No!

If we, **verse 9 – withstand him steadfast in the faith,** then (as we discussed in a previous sermon) God will give us more and more of His spirit in order to make Satan flee from us.

On in **verse 9...knowing that the same sufferings are accomplished in your brethren who are in the world.** We are not alone in this. We all have to fight the same fight. So we can *encourage* each other and help each other to go on and *never* give up.

God's plan for us is so awesome. We (and I'm talking to myself, too), have no idea of what is in store for us if we endure until the end *in* faith, humility, faithfulness, brotherly love, unity and obedience. Humility produces mercifulness and faithfulness. Christ is the prime example of that. He humbled Himself and "became in all things like His brothers."

You don't need to turn there, but in **Hebrews 2:17** it states – **Therefore He was obligated in all things to be made like His brothers, that He might become a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make atonement for the sins of the people.** By *His* humility (by Christ's humility) He reconciled (atoned) us to the Father!

1 Peter 5, we return to **1 Peter 5:10 – But may the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.** Just look at what is being said here. Wow! "After a little while of suffering, perfected!" He perfects us. He does it. We can do nothing but to humble ourselves in all this. Then God can "perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle us." Awesome, what is stated here.

Verse 11 – To Him be the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen. So, He has the power to "perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle us." If we stay close to our Father, we don't have to fear Satan. Satan cannot touch us because God gives all the power to us. He sustains everything with His spirit.

Withstand the devil, and he will flee from us. He tries to trigger that pride that we all have in us, to make us haughty, thinking highly of ourselves, and then God cannot work with us, and we're no longer humble.

Let's turn to James 4:4 to see what God has to say about pride and humility and what we can do concerning this. In the world Satan is active. All the broadcasts is aimed at causing rebellion against authority, wreaking havoc, hatred, jealousy, pride, and haughtiness. These are the strongest weapons. It's not easy to be obedient in a world based upon Satan's principles of selfishness, self-centeredness, and pride. And without God's spirit, it is simply impossible to be obedient. But we can ensure God's spirit in us to withstand the attacks and the wiles of Satan.

Truth is that most of Satan's attacks are aimed at God's Church. That's mainly where he wants to wreak havoc. So to speak, he has the world in his pocket already, but God's Church is a different story. He hates us more than any because He knows what Gods is working out – He wants to make us His sons. He wants to make us into His Family, into Elohim! And Satan knows! He knows.

James 4:4 – You adulterers and adulteresses, don't you know that friendship with the world is in enmity with God? ...is an enemy with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. We must come out of the world. Because this verse tells us, "Whoever, therefore, wants to be a friend of the world makes himself (automatically) an enemy of God."

And look at verse 5, and again I'm using the *Good News Bible* translation, which gives an alternative translation of this verse in the margin, which states – **Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "God yearns jealously over the spirit that He placed in us?"** He longs for this spirit with jealousy. God longs for us, and therefore, He has given us of His spirit. He loves us with Godly love, agape. And as we

all know, He wants to see that agape in us, and He desires to be able to develop that Godly love in us through His spirit.

And then in **verse 6**. Here James says the same thing as Peter did, what we read earlier – **But He gives more grace. Therefore, it says, "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."** He gives grace to the humble. *Fight* to be humble. Don't be proud (haughty)! *Fight* to reach the end goal, eternal life with Him and our oldest brother Jesus Christ.

Don't forget that Satan has a “trump card,” a snare that affects all of us whereby he can lure us into letting him stir up pride and vanity in us by his cunning attacks.

Pride is one of our greatest pitfalls. When we are pride-filled, we do not acknowledge our mistakes. When we are pride-filled, we don't say "sorry," or "I'm sorry" when we have hurt someone with words that come out of our mouth. We must have a humble attitude. We must say "sorry," or "what I did to you was wrong. Please, forgive me? I'll try to work on self with God's help." That is humility. And then God can give us grace. Then He can forgive our sins. But when someone is pride-filled, then they want to pursue their own ways. And Satan likes that, because he, too, follows his own ways. He certainly doesn't follow the way that God has planned out for us. God is preparing us to enter into His Kingdom. He is not preparing us for the grave, for death, eternal death, where Satan wants us to end up.

But what he says in verse 6 is that we must draw nearer unto God in order to be able to resist Satan. That is what James is saying here. Let's read that verse again. **James 4:6 – But He gives more grace. Therefore, it says, "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."** If we really understand this verse, we understand that pride causes a wall to stand between God and us. Is that worth it? Is that worth it for me? Of course not! Go forward, and don't give up. *Work* at being humble and ask God to help you. Pour out your heart before God and say to Him, "Father help me! Keep Satan away from me, for I want You! I want your way of life...and that way of life is one of humility, grace, mercy, faith and above all, Your love!"

And in verse 7. We look further in **verse 7 – Therefore, submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil...** resist! With God's help we can ...**and he will flee from you**. Then we are on the right track on the right road. As Christ says, "The narrow road."

And how do we submit ourselves to God? James continues in **verse 8 – Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.** We can draw nearer to God by submitting ourselves more and more to Him. We must long for His word and His way of life. We must also pray and ask Him to mold that humility in us. We need His humility in us...this humility in us. We need *this* humility in us in order to be able to endure until the end and never give up.

Continuing in **verse 8 – Cleanse your hands you sinners, root sin out, and purify your hearts,** stay in oneness of mind with all that has been given to God's Church, all that is given in the sermons and the postings that we receive weekly, **you double-minded!** Be not torn apart within yourself, but be of one mind and in unity with the faith.

Deuteronomy 8:3. Please keep your spot here, we're coming right back to James.

God says in **Deuteronomy 8:3 – And he humbled you**, He made you humble, **and allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna, which you didn't know, neither did your fathers know it; that He**

might make you know that man does not live by bread only – We must eat this spiritual bread. That is all that He gives to His Church now – the spiritual bread that we get today through sermons and postings from Ron – **but by everything that proceeds out of the Lord's mouth does man live.** God tells us here that we must live by everything – the sermons, the postings, the 57 Truths, etcetera, etcetera... everything that comes out of **His mouth, His spirit!**

And in **verse 11 – Beware lest you forget the Lord your God, in not keeping His commandments, and His ordinances, and His statutes, which I command you this day.** Don't forget this spiritual food!

Verse 12-13 – Lest, when you have eaten and are full, and have built good houses, and lived therein; and when your herds and your flocks are multiplied, and your silver and your gold is multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied... Don't be haughty and proud, but consider where your blessings came from, who gave them to you: "I, the Lord your God."

Verse 14 – then your heart be lifted up and you forget the Lord your God who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. God says, "I have led you out of Egypt." And we know what that means for us on a spiritual plane – He has called us and opened our mind! *Never forget that!* That is what God is saying here. Stay humble, don't lift yourself up, and practice humility!

A little further down in **verse 17 – and lest you say in your heart, my power and the might of my hands has gotten me all this wealth.** He gives the power and the ability to us so we can stay focused on His word, on His truth, and *then* we can live according to the way of life that He has laid out for us. *Then* we can keep on following in His Commandments and institutes, *His Feasts, His Sabbaths.* *Then* we can live according to His will.

Verse 18 – But you shall remember Yahweh, your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth. Only He gives us the power and the ability. Humble yourself, therefore, before the Almighty God. He does it. Of and by ourselves we can do nothing ...**that they may establish His covenant,** the covenant that you entered into with Him at baptism, **which he swore to your fathers, as at this day.** That warning given from God is still valid today. The Israelites couldn't understand this spiritually, nor "see" it. They didn't have God's spirit. God didn't dwell (abide) in them. But we do have Gods spirit; God does dwell (abide) in us! We do know that we must use this ability that God has offered to us, and we must humbly ask Him to keep on stirring that spirit up in us so that more and more we can ban, root out, this prideful spirit that is in us.

All that we possess (everything) both physical and spiritual, we have received by God's grace. If we do not conquer the pride that is in us, but instead have it stirred up in us by Satan, then we will judge (condemn), and criticize. Then we will think that we know better and that we ourselves are wiser than all that God has given to us. But that what God gives to us is true wisdom, and what we believe that we have out of ourselves, is not wisdom at all.

The more we get to know God, the more we come to truly see the greatness, and the more we will come to see how infinitesimally small we really are. The more we are willing to admit our mistakes – that we are wrong and God is right – the better God can work in us with His spirit. Because that is humility too, when you admit your sins and your mistakes before God and when you ask Him to help you conquer them... and should also forgive the mistakes that others make towards us, and God will help us.

Let's now go back to James 4 where we read in verse 8 about how we need to draw closer to God. And when we do, He will also draw nearer to us and we will be able to repent and be more at one with Him and with each other. There should not be *any* division. We've seen in the recent past where that leads us.

James 4:10 – Humble yourselves before the Lord... We must humble ourselves, and fasting is a good example of doing just that. Because when we fast, we humble ourselves. We humble ourselves before the Almighty God ...**and He will lift you up.** By fasting we show to God that we need Him and that we don't want to trust on self, but on Him. When we fast we show that we depend on Him, that we need Him to help us with repentance and with conquering our pride. That is why we need to humble ourselves. And fasting is the right tool to do so. When we fast we draw nearer to God. We become more conscious of the fact that we can only receive spiritual food from Him. And we are more conscious of the fact that we are human and that we are dependent on physical food, too. We are confronted with the fact that if we don't receive physical food we will die.

I'd like to turn to Isaiah 58. There are some beautiful scriptures there. If we fast with the right attitude, God will help and support us in the most awesome way. I will read in **Isaiah 58**, in the fast chapter, **verses 8-11 – Then you light shall break forth as the morning, and your wounds shall be healed quickly; and your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then shall you call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry, and He will say, Here I am. If you take away from the midst of you the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking wickedly; and if you draw out your soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul, then shall your light rise in darkness and your darkness shall be as the noonday; and the Lord will guide you continually and satisfy your soul in dry places, and make strong your bones; and you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters don't fail.**

Summarizing this: The intent, the goal of fasting is to humble yourself before God in order to get a better insight into your sins and to learn how to better battle our sins. We must repent from our sins because that is what God wants us to do. And He also wants us to learn to be humble and to practice His way of life.

The power that He will give to you will enable you to grow closer to Him. Our prayers will be more inspired. Our prayers will be more zealous. And as we just read, "Then shall you call, and the Lord will answer." So fasting is *the* means to learn humbleness and become truly humble so that God can better mold us in order for us to better fit into His Temple.

When you are humble your conduct will be proper. You won't be lifted up, you won't think highly of yourself, you won't want to be a center of attention, and you won't rely on self. But we shouldn't go to the other extreme either by saying, "I'm no good at all, and I'll never be any use at all!" Surely, when God's spirit lives in you, you are precious to Him, you are of great value to Him, and there is no place for any attitude like, "I'm no good for nothing." When you over-emphasize that you are "no good for nothing," then that can be pride, too.

When you are truly humble, you will realize that you need to repent. When you're prideful you don't want to repent. You then feel superior and think highly of yourself. In order to be humble we need a deeper consciousness of the fact that we can't do anything without God. Jesus talks about this in the parable of the vine where He says: "Without Me you can do nothing." So we direly need God the Father and His Son in order to be able to bear "fruit," and humility is one of these "fruits."

When we do our own will, we lift ourselves up. And God says that we should do just the opposite. We should lift God up and do His will, for then we humble ourselves and we act truly humble. When we lift up God and His way of life by obeying His laws and statutes and doing His will *then* we are humble.

Philippians 2:2. Let's go once again to **Philippians 2**. In the CEV (Contemporary English Version) the title for this chapter is "True Humility." **Verse 2 – Make my joy full by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.** When you are of one mind and humble then automatically you have more love for each other because then there will be no haughty nor proud thoughts coming into your mind whereby you might think that you are better than anyone else in God's Church.

Verse 3 – Doing nothing through rivalry or through conceit, but in humility, each counting others better than himself. It's a fact that when you count others to be better than yourself, you can more easily control any selfish feelings from raising up their ugly head.

Verse 4 – Each of you not just looking to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others. If you look to the needs of others then unity will automatically be kindled, as we touched upon earlier today.

I'd like to read part of the article that Ron wrote on the 5th of December, 2013. The title to this article was "True Fellowship – Part 1." Ron wrote the following:

Paul explained that we are to walk (live) in a worthy manner of our "special calling" from God. He explained how this is accomplished (made possible) by exercising (living) humility (the opposite of pride), meekness, patience, and love (agape – God's love in us). However, the reality of this is that no one can accomplish this of themselves. Humility, meekness, and patience are not traits of human nature, as selfishness cannot produce such true qualities of character. Mankind can only achieve a very small semblance of such traits that "seem" to be genuine. We must have God's spirit "in" us to achieve the ability to practice and live such traits as they are molded into our character through God transforming our mind (the way we think).

The point Paul was making of our need to seek such traits, which can only come from God through the power of His spirit at work in our thinking, is so we can work to accomplish what he states next. The reason we need such qualities to be at work in our thinking and behavior (actions that follow) is so we can then work at what is most important about our very calling to begin with: "Endeavoring (Gk. – diligent, laboring, working hard) to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3).

To be in the Family of God – Elohim – we must grasp the magnitude of the importance of coming into absolute unity and oneness with God and His one and only true way of life (into full unity with the Word). It is "His way" alone that will give true and everlasting peace – spiritual Jerusalem. Unity with God is the bond that holds true "peace" together.

Unity

To grow in such unity, one must fight against pride and learn to embrace humility (wearing sackcloth). If that is not practiced continually then pride will “raise up” (idolatry) some other idea, belief, perceived understanding, and/or selfish interest or desire above what God teaches as true. To grow in unity, one must become teachable (meek) and fight against “the way I see it” or “the way that seems right.” To grow in unity, one must be patient and wait upon God’s timing to reveal to us what we need when we need it. Impatience only leads to taking things into one’s own hands and/or simply acting rashly in life. These three traits of humility, meekness, and patience must also be practiced in our relationship and interaction with others.

So much for the excerpt from the December 5, 2013 article.

On the last night He spent here on earth, Jesus Christ showed us that we must be humble, and at that time He added the foot-washing ceremony to the Passover service. And He also added the wine and the bread at that time. But the foot-washing should teach us that this physical act contains much, much more than just washing and drying of someone's feet.

When we partake of the Passover (something you can only partake in when you have been baptized) and we perform the foot-washing ceremony, we show forth that for the time that is still ahead of us in this lifetime we are willing and prepared to bow our knee to humbly serve others. And that is far more difficult than bowing down to wash someone's feet once a year. I know, because it is a daily struggle for me to kindle that willingness in myself and to learn humility. I have God's spirit living in me, and only *with* God's spirit is it possible to learn this mind and attitude ...and it is a lifelong process.

We must all be open to teaching, and humility is opposite to the attitude of, "I know it all. I have no need of no one telling me what to do or what to learn."

You don't need to turn there, but in **Proverbs 11:2** it says, **When pride comes, then comes shame.** Wikipedia relates the word "shame" to "confusion of mind." Pride and haughtiness cause a state of "confusion of mind" in us, "a bad and harmful state of mind." And on in this verse it says ...**but with humility comes wisdom**, insight and understanding. We can see here that humility, wisdom, insight, and along with that, understanding, give us the ability to live God's way of life. Humble people are willingly teachable.

1 Corinthians 1... we go to 1 Corinthians 1. This is one of the main reasons why God has not called the "great" of this world, but rather those who are considered the foolish to this world. Let's just read those scriptures that cover this. We know these verses, but still, every time we read them we come to "see" (understand) a little more about them.

1 Corinthians 1:26-29, I will read... **For you see your calling, brothers, that not many are wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, and not many noble; but God chose the foolish things of the world that He might put to shame those who are wise. God chose the weak things of the world, that He might put to shame the things that are strong, and God chose the lowly things of the world, and the things that are despised, and the things that are not, that He might bring to nothing the things that are: that no flesh should boast before God.** "That no flesh should boast" – God causes haughtiness and pride to

be put down so in the end no one can say: "I did it all by myself."

1 Corinthians 3:18-19, two chapters down – **Let no one deceive himself. If any of you think that you are wise by this world's standards, you should become a fool, in order to become wise.**

Verse 19 – For the wisdom of the world is foolishness to God. For it is written, "He has trapped the wise in their craftiness." God wants us to be open to His teaching, and we should get rid of our own ideas, our own convictions and our human nature in general. And we accomplish this through repentance, through prayer, and by staying close to our Father and by seeking Him diligently. We also have to ask Him daily, "Father, please help me. Do Your works in me. Do with me as You please, because I want You and Your Son to help me become humble, so that You can teach me of Your Ways, so You can show me the path that You want me to walk in."

One can also have a fake humility whereby one emphasizes an outer show of humility. And of course, that is not what God wants to see in any of us. That is not what He is looking for. Don't forget that God sees *everything*. He knows your thoughts, your thinking. You cannot hide anything from Him, including fake, pretend humility.

You can see this kind of thing on TV sometimes. People in the world try to humble themselves by torturing themselves in a show of penance. But we know that there's only *one* who did so – Jesus Christ! That kind of penance is utterly fake and actually total vanity. They prostrate themselves on a bed of nails, cut themselves with knifes, or as you can see during the world's Easter, they flog themselves on the back until blood comes pouring out. Some people crawl on their knees along the rugged pavement until their knees are bleeding. And it is even more disturbing and sad to see people that have themselves nailed to a cross though the hands and the feet. There are also those (and we can see this mainly in the Catholic Church), who take a vow of abstinence, to live in celibacy. They abstain from all pleasures in life.

Colossians 2:18. This kind of "humility," which is fake and false, is the kind of humility that Paul warns against. **Colossians 2:18 – Let no one beguile, (cheat, deceive), you of your reward, by a voluntary humility towards and a worshipping of angels, dwelling in things which they have not seen, being vainly puffed up by their fleshly mind.** Don't engage in all kind of rules and precepts that come from human thinking, form the human "fleshly mind" as it is stated here, because that kind of humility is puffed up, Paul says.

And a little further in **verse 20 – If you died with Christ, from the elements of the world, why as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to ordinances?** "If you have Christ in your life through baptism and the promise of faithfulness to God, why then do you live as the world does, with its statutes and ideas about humility?" "Why should you do so?" Paul asks of us.

Verse 21, ordinances as, "**Don't handle this.**" "**Don't taste that.**" "**Don't touch this.**" Don't even start. Why would you? It's all vanity and false.

Verse 22 – All these refer to things which become useless once they are used; they are only human rules and teachings. All human reasoning and customs, don't touch them, stay away from them, is what

Paul admonishes us here.

Verse 23; I used the "King James" translation here because it mentions, "the satisfying of the flesh," which is the true reason to enter into "subjecting yourself to such ordinances." **Verse 23 – which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honor to the satisfying of the flesh.** It all seems real. It seems humility, but it is *not!* It's a chastening one willingly subjects oneself to in order to satisfy the self, and such is of no value whatsoever!

God wants us to be spiritually and inwardly humble. God wants us to have a true humility, not an outwardly show of humility to be "seen of others." It should never be like, "Look at me! Look at how humble I am!"

If truly spiritual, we want God to strengthen this true humility in us. If we want to develop this humility in us with all our heart then God will surely not turn us down. He will surely help us attain to the right humility. He will give the right kind of humility in us, visible, discernible to others – especially others in God's Church. Our fruit shall be manifest.

Mr. Armstrong said that acquiring quality in the form of physical goods is a good thing. God wants us to strive for the best, for perfection. He does. Striving for quality has nothing to do with pride. God wants us to have *inner* humility, not an outwardly show of fake, pretend humility!

Gods says in Isaiah 66:2 (you don't have to turn there, I'll read it to you). **Isaiah 66:2 – For all those things My hand has made, and all those things have been, says the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is of a poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembles at My word.** So our Father looks for a humble spirit, for someone who truly wants to follow His word, His law, and His way of life.

Fearing God is doing as He says, and being humble is part of that. Humility goes hand in hand with modesty. Humility also means knowing when to be inconspicuous. Jesus told us that we shouldn't always draw attention to ourselves when we do good works. We are to give alms anonymously and pray and fast anonymously. These things we should do quietly. God will see it, and that's most important to us.

So now I want to read in Matthew 6:1-18. There we can read that modesty and humility cannot go without each other. Let's turn to **Matthew 6:1-18 – Be careful that you don't do your charitable giving before men, to be seen by them, or else you have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. Therefore, when you do merciful deeds, don't sound a trumpet before yourself as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may get glory from men. Most assuredly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you do merciful deeds, don't let your left hand know what your right hand does, (verse 4) so that your merciful deeds may be secret, then your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. (5) When you pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites, for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets that they may be seen by men. Most assuredly, I tell you, they have received their reward. But you, when you pray, enter into your inner chamber, and having shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. In praying, don't use vain repetitions, as the gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard for their much speaking. Therefore, don't be like them, for your**

Father knows what things you need before you ask Him. Pray like this: "Our Father in heaven, may Your name be kept holy. Let Your Kingdom come. Let Your will be done, as in heaven, so on earth. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors. Bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen." For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you don't forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. As we know, Jesus is giving us a seven-step model here, seven subjects to pray about. It's a seven-step model.

Verse 16 – Moreover, when you fast, don't be like the hypocrites, with sad faces. For they disfigure their faces that they may be seen by men to be fasting. Most assuredly I tell you, they have received their reward.

Verse 17 – But you, when you fast, anoint your head, and wash your face so that you are not seen by men to be fasting but by your Father who is in secret, and your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you.

We've seen that modesty and humility go hand in hand. We know that our Father sees all that we do, and He says He will reward those things in the open, in the public. This is referring to what's in the future, the Kingdom, when you will be fully functional in His Family. Then people will see you in public when at that time you will manifest yourself in physical form. We know that the 144,000 will be resurrected, and that at the end of the thousand years an even greater harvest will follow. And if you are part of one of these groups, it will become manifest that you have fought the good fight and finished the race, and keeping the faith.

Because after the thousand years (when the thousand years are over) there will follow a second resurrection. And when they are over (the thousand years) we will see who else will be part of God's Family. What a reward, to receive eternal life. All the treasures of the world cannot compare to what we will receive if we hold fast until the end to all what God expects from us – mercy, faith, grace, humility, and above all, agape (love, Godly love).

Verse 19 – Don't lay up treasures for yourselves on the earth. As I just said, all the treasures of the world cannot compare to what God has set apart for us, what He has in store for us ...**where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break through and steal.** You must ensure that Satan doesn't steal away what God has given to us.

Verse 20 – but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consume, the "treasure" is the way of life that we must live, and this also entails humility, **and where thieves don't break through and steal.** Because when you implement these treasures in your life all the spiritual properties that can be summarized in "one love" or "agape," then Satan cannot break through and steal them, because he cannot contend with God. And if you lay these treasures up, with Gods spirit, then he doesn't stand a chance. Because "greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world." He is no match for us if we zealously and diligently seek to repent and engage in the battle to overcome our human nature. And *that's* a lifelong process.

Verse 21 – For where your treasure is, there your heart will be, also. What a beautiful scripture. If our heart is true and sincere and if we have the will in us to be humble, then the true treasure that we are "laying up" is eternal life.

I'd like to emphasize that meekness and humility are *not* the same as weakness. It certainly isn't. Jesus Christ was meek and humble, yet He certainly wasn't "a wimp"! He cleansed the Temple with a firm hand, unshaken. And He wasn't at all the way the world loves to portray Him, as a gay-like figure with long waving hair. No! He cleansed the Temple resolutely. He had been a carpenter before He started preaching the gospel during those last 3½ years of His life, so He was a strong man. He cleansed the Temple because He wanted to show that God's physical Temple was a house of prayer and not a house of merchandise. And actually, He cleansed the Temple twice! In John 2 you can read about the first time He cleansed the Temple. And the second time He did so is recorded in Matthew 21, Mark 11, and Luke 19.

We've just looked at how, when we are humble and modest and when we implement all those other Godly characteristics into our lives, we will ultimately enter into God's Family.

Now let's look at a few more scriptures, where God tells us that He rewards the humble, which is true for the present time, too. Let's go to **Zephaniah 2:3 – Seek you the LORD**, seek God diligently and zealously. Live His laws and statutes **all you meek of the land, who have kept His ordinances. Seek you righteousness. Seek humility. It may be that you will be hidden** (protected) **in the day of the LORD's anger**, so you may enter into the Millennium.

John 14; you don't have to turn there. We have received God's spirit upon baptism. Our sins of the past have been forgiven and we start a fresh new life. And that new life is guided by our Father and His Son Jesus Christ. In **verse 2** we can read, **In My Father's house are many mansions. If it weren't so, I would have told you. I am going to prepare a place for you.** God and Jesus Christ start to live in us. They dwell in us to guide us and to do the works in us. We have to do our part. We must change and start to think differently. In other words, we must repent and convert. And that is only possible because they live *in us* because they help us.

I've only come to better understand this bible verse after the scattering, when once again I came into God's only true Church and heard Ron explaining this verse. That is when, for the first time, I saw the deeper meaning of this verse. This only comes when God gives it to you, and at that time He gave it to me.

Ron always says that John 14 is his favorite chapter in the Bible, and it truly is awesome what is stated here, *if you can grasp its deeper meaning (as I just mentioned), if you can see what God does with us into eternity, because He will keep on dwelling in us with His spirit for all eternity.* Incredible! Humility is so important to God. He says that He can only dwell in someone that is humble.

We can read about this in **Isaiah 57:15 – For thus says the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy,** He lives in what is holy. We have God's spirit. We have been set apart for holy use and purpose, to be born into God's Family. And if God's spirit lives (abides) in us, and if we make sure that His spirit remains in us, then we will attain to that goal – to be born into His Family.

Notice what is stated next in **verse 15 – I dwell in the High and Holy place,** He lives, **with (in) him also who is of a contrite and humble spirit;** He lives *in* those who have a *contrite* (shattered) and *humble* spirit. You see how important humility is to our Father... **to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite...** the one that has a *contrite* (shattered) heart (mind). He will give eternal life to the ones with a *contrite* (shattered) heart – those that have gone through trials and

hardships, who have repented (converted), who never gave up, and who allowed the Almighty God to mold and fashion them!□