

JULY 2020: Benefits of Humility

Dear Partner,

When most people start a job, they want to know about the benefits package – does the company offer health insurance? What about vacation time? Will they make matching contributions to a 401(k)? Can employees participate in profit sharing? Some employee benefits are automatic, but others require the employee to sign on for them.

Today I want to share some of the benefits that God offers each of us when we walk in humility. Humility may not be a fun subject, but it is tremendously powerful.

Are you ready to sign up for the benefits, Partner?

The first benefit might be the biggest. When we humble ourselves before God, He pours His favor and grace upon you.

But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you (1 Peter 5:10).

Grace has many definitions in the New Testament. One of them is the *favor of God*. Having God's favor is better than having favor from the President of the United States; it's more powerful than being in good standing with the Prime Minister, King, or Queen of any nation. When God's grace is poured out on you, you will operate in signs, wonders, and miracles. When you humble yourself before God, His anointing will be upon you in greater measure.

I've heard it put this way: "*The way up with God is down.*" In other words, we've got to lower ourselves in our own eyes, humble ourselves, and walk in love more than ever if we want to go higher in the things of God. For example, we've got to walk away from arguments, not start them.

Partner, don't be moved by how people interpret your humility! Others may look at you on your bowed knee and assume that you are losing when in fact, you are winning!

Don't be concerned about defending your honor. Simply honor God, and He will exalt you in due time (*1 Peter 5:6*).

The book of *1 Peter* is about suffering in the flesh so that the Spirit can manifest. Christian suffering, according to the Bible, isn't sickness, disease, or poverty.

The affliction we undergo as children of God is the pain our egos suffer when we obey God by lowering ourselves and our pride and love unlovable people.

Partner, you know what I mean, don't you? When someone talks smack about you, doesn't your flesh want to retaliate? You may want to smack them – and maybe not with your words alone – but when you resist the urge to get even, you grow and become more like God.

Peter wrote that becoming *perfect (mature)* in the things of God would help to *settle and strengthen us*.

Partner, we're all growing in God's Word and His ways, so don't get impatient with yourself; just keep developing in faith, and you will care less about what others say and do. As I've become more mature in God's Word, I've been able to let the verbal attacks of others roll off of me like water off a duck's back. Things that used to make me fly off the handle don't affect me anymore! Life is more peaceful, joyful, and blessed!

James confirmed that God blesses us with *more* when we humble ourselves.

But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. (James 4:6)

You already have *some grace*, but as you humble yourself, God will give you more!

If you want promotion, if you sincerely desire to live the vision God has placed in your heart, you won't get there through pride or contention. The way to the top is down on your knees.

Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up. (James 4:10)

God doesn't promote based on education, experience, or appearance. He promotes people who have a servant's heart.

The principle of honor through humility runs throughout both the Old and New Testaments. For example, *Proverbs 29:23* says, *A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.*

The second benefit of humility is that it will help you stay calm even when others offend you or treat you wrong. Jesus taught that we were to be like little children – meek, teachable, and quick to forgive.

At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 18:1-4).

Not long ago, I went to my 3-year-old grandson's soccer game. He scored six goals, and as impressed as I was by his performance, I was more fascinated by the children's attitudes. He and his little teammates would run up and down that field trying to kick the ball, but every once in a while, one of them would get knocked down. The little one would cry a bit, but soon got back up and into the game. The children didn't scream at the referee to call a foul like parents often do. They didn't hold grudges; they fell, but they wiped their tears and got back up!

How do you react when someone knocks you down? What do you do when something happens to you that is unjust or unwarranted? Although we want life to be fair, we know that it isn't!

Our response to inequities in life is a critical factor in determining how high we can go in God.

Galatians 5:16 tells us to walk in the Spirit so we won't fulfill the lusts of the flesh, but when someone unfairly accuses or attacks us, our flesh wants to rise up and fight!

Have you heard of *road rage*? I almost got into it once. An individual cut me off in traffic and then gave me an undistinguished symbol using his hands. Before I realized it, my flesh rose up as if I weren't even saved! My foot hit the gas, and I began to chase him down. Then the Holy Ghost said, "*What are you doing?*"

Suddenly I came to myself. "*I'm a pastor. What was I going to do if I caught up with him? Was I going to jump out of the car and pound him?*" Seeking revenge would not have brought me higher; it would have taken me lower!

Partner, when we humble ourselves and trust God to correct injustices, He will protect us, always come through, lift us up, and promote us!

If we don't keep a check on our hearts, religious pride can keep us from enjoying the benefits of God's grace. Have you ever run into anyone with a Pharisaical spirit like the prideful religious man Jesus described in the 18th chapter of Luke?

Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted (Luke 18:10-14).

God exalted the publican for his humility. He admitted his sin and sought forgiveness. The Pharisee, who thought himself to be holier than other men, was humbled. No man was ever more spiritual than Jesus, and He humbled Himself to wash His disciples' feet!

Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean. So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them. (John 13:3-17)

I want you to note a few important things about Jesus' washing His disciples' feet. First, Jesus knew Who He was (*verse 3*). Jesus was the Word made flesh. He was with the Father in the beginning; all things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. (*John 1:1-3*). Picture that moment! The Creator of the Universe lowered Himself to wash Philip's, Peter's, John's, James' and even Judas' dirty, stinky feet!

Partner, when you know who you are in Christ, you won't be threatened by serving others.

When Peter tried to stop Jesus from washing his feet, Jesus told Him that he had to submit to receive the blessing from Jesus. **In other words, humility goes both ways. A certain level of humility is required to receive as well as to give.**

The third benefit of humility is happiness! Jesus said, *if you know these things, happy are ye!* True happiness comes from serving others with a humble spirit. So many people are searching for fulfillment in work, money, fame, or fleshly indulgences, but Jesus said that those who served would be happy!

A person with a servant's heart will not be full of worry, care, or fear. He or she won't be easily offended. Sadly, Christians are some of the most easily offended people in the world. They get upset over the silliest things – what the preacher says, the inflection with which he says it, where they sit in church, where they park, who gets to lead a song, who gets to lead prayer – you name it, and I've seen people get offended about it.

When we arrive at the level of spiritual maturity where we choose to humble ourselves and put others first, we will be full of joy and God will move in mighty ways in His church.

The fourth benefit of humility is wisdom. Partner, if you feel as if you're not making progress in what God has called you to do, maybe you need to take time to seek His wisdom. Perhaps you've researched on the Internet, asked experts their opinions, and done a spreadsheet on how to do what God's called you to do, but you haven't asked Him! Humility leads to wisdom and favor.

Partner, tap into the benefits of humility! It will end strife. It allows the anointing to flow and the power of God to operate. Humility keeps you free from worry and concern, and it opens the door for promotion. Humble yourself and watch God exalt you!