

# Thoughts on Christian Education

by John Piper

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*This sermon delves into the topics of Serious Joy, Cultural Conflict, and Christian Humility in the context of Christian education. It emphasizes the importance of instilling habits of mind and heart that lead to observing, understanding, evaluating, feeling, applying, and expressing reality for the good of the world. The sermon highlights the need for Christian education to be rooted in conscious reliance on the Holy Spirit, trust in Jesus Christ, glorifying God, and being governed by the authority of the Bible. It also explores how serious joy sets believers free from cultural control, the necessity of humility in the face of cultural conflict, and the balance between asserting truth with conviction and remaining teachable and open to criticism.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 10:24, James 1:2, 1 Peter 5:6, 1 Corinthians 13:6, Ephesians 2:8, James 3:17, 2 Corinthians 5:11, James 3:17, Galatians 5:22

**Topics:** "Serious Joy", "Christian Humility"

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## Description

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## Transcript

Let's pray one more time. Father, we've mentioned much about serious joy, and so I pray that you would grant the gift of this miracle, that you would create free people who can swim like dolphins instead of jellyfish, and I pray that we would be humble as we take our unflinching stand for truth. In Jesus' name, amen.

My title that I came up with the day before yesterday is Serious Joy, Cultural Conflict, and Christian Humility, Thoughts on Christian Education. That's a long title. Let's begin.

I'll outline where we're going so you can follow. Let's begin with a definition of education. I'm not talking about schooling here.

Education. Education, what makes it Christian? Why does that definition lead to a focus on serious joy? How does serious joy then relate to the conflict with the culture, and what has that got to do with Christian humility? There's the outline of where we're going. So let's start with what is education? I'll just say it again.

Education and schooling are not synonymous. Most education happens outside school. I'm glad there are schools.

I represent one. I love Bethlehem College and Seminary. I'm asking about what's education in general? Parents do it.

Pastors do it. Teachers do it. Older people do it to younger people.

What is it? So here's my definition of education. This is not Christian education yet. Education is the instilling.

I'd love to linger there for about five minutes to show why I chose that word, but I won't. Education is the instilling of habits of mind and habits of heart that incline and enable students, for the rest of their lives, to do six things. One, observe the world.

Everything. Books, insects, planets, mountains, politics. Observe the world carefully.

Two, understand what they have observed clearly. You can see something and it doesn't make sense at all. You'll see it for what it really is and then understand it.

Three, evaluate what you have seen and understood fairly. Four, feel that evaluated reality proportionately. A well-educated person ought not to have strong feelings about insignificant matters or small feelings about magnificent matters.

A proportionate emotional life. Fifth, apply all those discoveries wisely. And sixth, express clearly, accurately, creatively, winsomely with your body and with your mouth and with your writing in the world for the good of the world.

However you define it, since we're not talking about Christianity yet. I would stand in front of a thousand educators who don't know Jesus and defend that definition for education. Now, I'll say it again, shorter form.

Education is the instilling of habits of mind, habits of heart that incline and enable students for the rest of their lives to observe and understand and evaluate and feel and apply and express reality for the good of the world. Parents should be doing that. Schools should be doing that.

Universities should be doing that. Churches and pastors should be doing that. Sunday school teachers should be doing that.

Forums and societies and clubs and seminars and conferences should be doing that. Now, what would make it Christian? What would you have to change? What would you have to add? What would you have to subtract to make that definition of education Christian? Education as I have justified it is Christian if it has four elements to it. You can talk about your parenting, your preaching.

All of it is pursued in conscious reliance upon the gracious empowering of the Holy Spirit. Morning till night, Christian education is carried out in conscious reliance upon the gracious empowering of the Holy Spirit. Number two, Jesus Christ, crucified for sinners and risen, is trusted as the basis of that empowerment.

Doesn't come out of nowhere. Nobody deserves it. If you're able to rely upon the power of the Spirit to observe the world rightly, He bought it for you.

That's a gracious gift and Christ is underneath it, crucified and risen. Number three, you do all of that for the glory of God in Christ. It's not resting on Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit for the glory of God.

And number four, it's governed by the authority of the Bible through and through. Those four things would make education Christian. So, short form, Christian education is the instilling of habits of mind and heart that incline and enable students for the rest of their lives to observe and understand and evaluate and feel and apply and express reality in reliance upon the gracious help of the Spirit of God purchased by the blood of the risen Christ for the glory of God and the good of the world, all of it in accord with God's Word.

That's what turns education into Christian education. Now, that's what we try to do at Bethlehem. That is a summary of a lot of years of reflection upon what are you supposed to do if you're an educational institution like the home or the church or the school.

Here's my third question. First question, what is education? Second question, what makes a Christian? Third question, what's that got to do with serious joy? Why would doing education that way, why would observing the world that way and the Word that way lead a person to put serious joy into a message or into a life? Listen to these phrases from the New Testament. And I assume that if you observe the New Testament carefully and you understand it rightly and you evaluate it fairly, you're going to see these.

And you're going to stop and you're going to say, whoa, what is that? I have 14 of them. Just bang, bang, bang, bang, bang. I'll just read them.

Fourteen texts. You joyfully accepted the plundering of your property. Hebrews 10.

Count it all joy when you meet trials. James 1. When others revile you and persecute you, rejoice and be glad. Matthew 5. In his joy he goes and he sells all that he has.

Matthew 13. They rejoiced that they had been counted worthy to suffer for the name. Acts 5. We rejoice in our sufferings knowing that suffering produces endurance and endurance produces character and character produces hope.

Romans 5. In a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and extreme poverty overflow with a wealth of generosity. We are glad when we are weak and you are strong. Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon your faith, I am glad.

What a man. That's Paul. I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake.

Colossians 1. You receive the word in much affliction with joy in the Holy Spirit. 1 Thessalonians 1. For the joy that was set before him, Jesus endured the cross. Hebrews 12.

You rejoice though now for a little while you grieve. 1 Peter 1. Rejoice. Rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings.

What would you call that? I would give it a name. We call it serious joy. It's sure not flippant.

It's not light. There's blood everywhere. Shame everywhere.

Rejection everywhere. And joy everywhere. Boy, I tell you, you raise up churches like that, this city will get turned upside down.

So boil it down. Boil it down. When we observe, when you do Christian education at home, in the church, in the school, when you do observing and understanding and evaluating and feeling according to reality, there's joy in trial, joy in grief, joy in affliction, joy in being poured out, joy in weakness, joy in poverty, joy in shame, joy in selling all, joy in persecution, joy in being plundered, joy in the cross, joy in sharing Christ's sufferings.

That's breathtaking. I hate the prosperity government because it lacks this. This is the center of life.

We live in a Disneyland. We do in America. We do.

Yes, it's getting worse. But just go to Iran and watch. The fastest growing church in the world is in Iran right now.

And they pay dearly. Who knows what God's doing in North Korea? This is the way it is. Serious joy.

So when our careful, sustained, thoughtful, understanding gaze works in education on the Bible, that's the joy we see. We have some favorite phrases at Bethlehem we like to use. We take them from the Bible.

The most significant one is 2 Corinthians 6.10 where Paul says, Sorrowful he is, sorrowful yet always rejoicing. Now do you notice that that means that sorrow and joy are simultaneous, not sequential? Sorrowful yet always. It's not like sorrowful always and sometimes rejoicing.

Sorrowful sometimes but always rejoicing. Which means at times they're simultaneous. And if you're over 30 and you've been a Christian since you were 16, you can point to that somewhere in your life where you're bawling your eyes out and your heart is leaping for the goodness of God in whatever is making you cry.

You can remember what it was like. Sequential is also in the Bible. Weeping may last for the night.

What comes in the morning? Joy comes in the morning. Now obviously then two texts are not contradictory. So there are real experiences of sequentiality.

Is that a word? Sequential. Real experiences of sequential. Really sad night, really happy morning.

But Paul says that sad night had joy in it. If you're a Christian, that sad night had a little seed. It didn't die.

It didn't die when your husband died. It didn't die when your mom died. It didn't die when you lost your job.

It didn't. It didn't. Don't tell me.

It did. It didn't. Please.

Sorrowful yet always rejoicing. So we believe that central to the life of Christ, central to life in Christ is education in serious joy. And we feel warranted to make it that sweeping because of two passages where

Paul describes his apostolic goal in life.

I love this. Remember 2 Corinthians 1.24? He says this. Not that we lord it over your faith, but we are workers with you for your joy.

Okay, Paul, describe to me what your calling is. What do you do? You go from city to city and you raise up churches and you nurture them and you appoint elders and you move on. You want to go to Spain? What are you doing? I'm working with people for their joy.

I'm rescuing people from hell into everlasting joy. I'm building up this church to make their joy survive anything. That's what he does.

That's his calling. That's your calling. That's my calling.

That's all I've lived for for 50 years. I'm trying to make people happy while they die. Happy while they go through the most horrible things in the world because God is good all the time.

That's my calling. Or Philippians 1.25. A young man last night said to me, No, I haven't been here that long. It was this afternoon.

He came up and he said, So do you want to stay or do you want to go? Live or die? And I said, I'd like to go, but I think I should stay, which is what Paul said. I'm just quoting Paul. Trying to bring my heart into alignment.

He said, To die is better. To be with Christ is better. He said, It's better, but to remain in the flesh is better for your sake, so I'll probably stay.

What did he mean when he said, I'm staying for you? This is what he said. This is verse 25. That was verse 20 to 22 is 25.

I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith. If I have to stay on the planet, I'm going to try to make people glad in God. That's why I'm here.

I'm going to go to Spain, make pagans glad in Jesus. So missionaries do that. You do that.

You do it in your home. Putting so much substance underneath joy, you cannot be shaken. So we believe that's right at the heart of Christian education.

Workers for your joy, for the progress and joy of your faith. Now, two more questions. Serious joy, cultural conflict, Christian humility.

So we have those two pieces to put in the puzzle here. Where does this lead? Cultural conflict. What are you talking about? How does an education that takes you deep into the word of God, comes out with this massive reality called serious joy? And now you're going to have us think about cultural conflict.

Why? What do you mean? Serious joy, like we've just seen in the New Testament, sets the soul free from dependence upon cultural kudos and cultural conformity. Sets you free. In other words, when your joy comes from God, through Christ, and is absolutely unshakable, through grief, affliction, weakness, poverty, shame, dishonor, persecution, loss, the culture loses its power to control you.

You are a free person. If you take a stand that the culture hates, or speak a word that the culture condemns, and they shame you, they persecute you, they plunder you, they cancel you, your joy remains unshaken, and you're free. You're not controlled.

You're not controlled. Free! When your citizenship is in heaven, and all your inheritance is in heaven, and all your joy is coming from Christ in heaven, you're a free person on planet earth, and very subversive. I want free people.

If your joy comes from the world, with its benefits, its comforts, its praises, you're like a leaf in the wind. Yours is not a serious joy. It's a secondhand joy.

You're not free. You're jerked around by the newscast every day, by a phone call, by a critical email, by a word from a friend. Your emotions are jerked every which way, because you're just a leaf in the wind, all your joy attached to that person, that person, their approval, that money, that house, that comfort, that car, those jewels, that inheritance, that wife, that three month old child.

Your joy is all bound right here, and anything that happens here, you're done for. You're not a free person at all. That's just not the way Christianity is.

Serious joy sets people free, and makes them the most secure and subversive people when it comes to cultural control. It's always been true. It's been true for 2,000 years.

There's nothing new about this at all. Serious joy in Christ through pain has always been radically liberating from cultural control. So in getting joy from heaven, Christians become free on earth.

It's always been true. The new thing today is that social media has created an intensification of the old fashioned cultural control tactics. The tactics aren't new.

The emotional dynamics of control and shaming aren't new. The media are new. And ubiquitous and powerful.

It can be ganged up on by 10,000 people overnight. So it's called in our culture, you all know this I suppose, it's called call out culture, outrage culture, cancel culture, coddled culture. That last phrase comes from a book called *The Coddling of the American Mind* by Jonathan Haidt.

And here's a sentence that I found very illuminating. He said, this culture today that young people have been growing up in for maybe 20 years teaches people to see words as violence and to interpret ideas and speakers like me as safe versus dangerous, safe or dangerous, rather than true versus false. So, if you take your stand and you speak your truth, you may be subject to call out or outrage or being canceled or accusation that you've not sufficiently coddled the people that need to be coddled.

Serious joy is a great liberator from this culture as it has been for every culture. Let me give you an illustration from the New Testament. Could give you ones today, but let's look at an authoritative one.

An illustration from the New Testament of the call out culture, the outrage culture, the canceling culture, the shaming culture, because it's right there in Acts chapter 5. The Jewish Sanhedrin is trying to silence, silence. You claim that Jesus is the Christ, we want you silenced. So they, what do they do? I'll read it to you.

This is verses 40 and 41 of Acts 5. They beat them, they beat them, and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus and let them go. And listen to this. How are you going to do on this? They left the presence of the council rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.

That's serious joy setting them free. Because what did they do the next day? I love radical Christians. They did not cease teaching and preaching that Jesus is the Christ.

Free, free, free. How? They went out rejoicing that they were shamed. Come on. Come on.

We're not going to play games like this. We're not going to say, Oh, they shamed me. Oh, they shamed me.

I'm going to sue them. Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait. Come on, Christians.

We're not playing this cultural game. We are free people. We're not controlled by shaming.

We're not controlled by being called out. We're not controlled by being canceled. Cancel me.

Make my day. Jesus has an open door. No cancellation.

No condemnation. Come on. We're not going to be copycats of this culture.

So which brings us to our last question. Christian humility. Because John Piper was just screaming.

If you take your stand against the culture. If you let words come out of your mouth in a blog or in a sermon or in a conversation at work. Let words come out of your mouth that the culture has considered that's canceled.

Then you will be accused of arrogance and other bad names. But I'm most concerned about arrogance because God hates arrogance. God hates pride.

He hates it more than adultery. And the question is, will the accusation of pride tomorrow say, or let's say Monday at work, you have just spoken an opinion and they bristle. You say, you believe that? Yeah, I do.

Why? I believe God taught that in his word. What if the next sentence is, who are you to speak for God? That's the most arrogant sentence I've ever heard come out of a human mouth. Now what? Now what? That's where we're going to end is trying to come to terms with that.

It's not new that the world has hijacked the word arrogance and equated it with conviction. It's not new that the world has hijacked the word humility and equated it with uncertainty. The reason I say it's not new is because G.K. Chesterton wrote this in 1908.

We suffer today, what we suffer from today is humility in the wrong place. Modesty has moved from the organ of ambition and modesty has settled on the organ of conviction where it was never meant to be. A man was meant to be doubtful about himself and undoubting about the truth.

This has been exactly reversed. Nowadays, 1908, nowadays, the part of a man that a man does assert is exactly the part he ought not to assert himself. And the part that he doubts is exactly the part he ought not to doubt the divine reason or truth.

We are on the road to producing a race of men too mentally modest to believe in the multiplication table. So if humility is not the abandonment of conviction and humility is not the embrace of uncertainty, what is it? We're called in the New Testament to have confidence. Confidence that is so strong that if you are beaten with rods or whips and then released, you rejoice.

That much confidence. They rejoice that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. So I'm going to tell you five things that Christian humility is and then will be done.

Number one, humility, Christian humility begins with a sense of subordination to God in Christ. Matthew 10, 24. A disciple is not above his teacher nor a slave above his master.

He's under subordination. That's where humility starts. I am not God.

It's a great sentence. I have tried for about a year to get on my knees once a day for 30 seconds and say I am not God. You hear me Lord? I'm totally okay with that.

You are not. I'm going to live that way with my wife and everybody else. 1 Peter 5. Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God.

So we need to feel this, not just know this, we need to feel this. God is above. I am beneath.

I'm not worthy to tie His shoes. The distance between me and God is infinite. His greatness, power, wisdom, justice, truth, holiness, mercy, grace are as high above me as the heavens are above the earth.

So I'm not God. Point number one, humility begins with a sense of sub-subordination. I'm going down.

He must increase. I must decrease. Every day I'm low, He's high.

If you don't start there, humility will become a virtue in which you can boast. Number two, humility does not feel a right to better treatment than Jesus got. This is probably the hardest, most radical, most necessary to hear in our day.

Humility does not feel a right, an entitlement, for better treatment than Jesus got. Matthew 10, 25. If they called the master of the house Beelzebul, the devil.

They called Jesus the devil, which he did. How much more will they malign those of his household? If you haven't been called the devil, something's wrong. It sounds like that anyway.

If they call the master of the house the devil, how much more will they malign the members of his household? So humility does not produce a life based on perceived rights and a sense of entitlement. You move through life with, I've got my rights, I've got my rights, I've got my rights. I've got entitlement, I've got entitlement.

That's not a humble mind. Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example that you can follow. While suffering, he uttered no threats, but handed over to him who judges justly.

That's 1 Peter 2, 21-23. Much of John Piper's anger, and I think that's my most hair-trigger likely sin. I'm not, my marriage to Noel, which we celebrated 50 years of last December, has not been threatened by adultery or pornography.

That has not been my battle front. Anger has. I'm an angry man.

You can hear it probably in my voice, right? I get loud quick, I get tipped at the culture. I'm just wired to be upset with stupidity and falsehood and Christ dishonoring things. Now, so I'm probably crossing that line between, you know, what do we call it, righteous anger and unrighteous anger.

I'm probably crossing that line every day. Thank God for the gospel, right? So, these texts mean much to me. I mean, they're after me.

They're after me all the time. Christ gave you an example. No deceit was found in his mouth.

He committed no sin. When he suffered, he did not threaten. When he was reviled, he didn't return evil for evil, but he kept handing over to him who judges justly.

Go follow him. George Otis said, and boy, when I heard it, this is about 1985 I heard this. George Otis said, Jesus never promised his disciples a fair fight.

I thought, that is so right. And how many of you get bent out of shape when you're in the fight, and you're like, that wasn't fair. I didn't say that.

You said I didn't say that. They lied about Jesus all the time. That's how you get killed.

He said he was going to tear down the temple, raise it up in three days, kill him. And they did. So, probably you will die from slander.

Some of you, slander. They said lots of true things about me, and I get to die a glorious romantic life on the mission field. No, they're going to lie about you.

And you'll die because they said false things about you, and it won't be glorious. It'll be Jesus-like. So, I just plead with you, that if you want to be humble like Jesus, who didn't count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, then you can't walk through life with a sense of entitlement and rights, as if you should be treated better than Jesus.

Who do you think you are? Number three, humility asserts truth, not to bolster the ego with control, or with triumphs in debate, but humility asserts the truth as an honor to Christ, and as love to others. There is a difference between trying to win an argument, and trying to love people with truth. First Corinthians 13, 6, Love rejoices in the truth.

If truth is an instrument of salvation, which it is, according to 2 Thessalonians 2, 10, they perish because they did not receive a love of the truth, so as to be saved. If truth is an instrument of salvation, then we love people by speaking the truth, about salvation. If truth is an instrument of sanctification, which it is, sanctify them in the truth, your word is truth, then we'll speak that truth as a Christ exalting expression of love.

If the truth is an instrument of liberation and joy, which it is, you'll know the truth, and the truth will set you free, then we will speak the truth in the service of Christ exalting love and freedom. No matter what anybody says, because we've seen in the Bible, that's what truth does, it sets people free, and if they don't want to hear you say it, we're still going to love them with it. So speaking the truth, that others need to hear, whether they want to or not, is an honor to Christ and love to them.

Number four, two more, humility knows and feels, that it's dependent for everything, on grace, on dependent on, for knowing, dependent for believing, dependent for acting, dependent for breathing,

everything. Matthew 16, 17, Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, flesh and blood hasn't revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. The basic knowledge that Peter had, that Jesus was the Christ, was a gift of God.

Ephesians 2, 8, By grace are you saved, through faith, it's not your own doing, this is a gift of God, not of works, so that nobody will boast. Your faith, if you're a believer, was a gift, God gave it to you. Philippians 2, 12, Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for God is the one who is at work in you, to will and to do his good pleasure, so all of our growth in grace, all of our meager successes in holiness, are a gift of God working in us, and the simplest plans, I'll be home by ten, Hilton, four minutes away, I told him, I'll hang out for an hour, let's get there by ten, you think I'm going to get there by ten? I could be dead by ten, that's a quotation from the Bible, James 4, 15, You ought to say, if the Lord wills, we will live, and do this or that, like get to the Hilton by ten, if the Lord wills, Piper will be in his bedroom at ten, ready for an early flight tomorrow morning, and if he doesn't, you won't get there by ten, God is God, humble yourself under his mighty hand, you planner of your evening, and say, if the Lord wills, I will get to the Hilton by ten, and feel it and love it, I don't run my life, God is God, who do we think we are, thinking we can get here or there, and do this or that, and breathe, I only sleep on my left side, I do not know why I can't sleep on my right side, and I can't sleep on my back, but my left side, like a little baby, like this, and regularly, I drop my hand down, and take my pulse, you know why I do that, I really do that, it's funny, because when I feel that, I think, any one of us could be the last, I have zero control, over that little, none, what a good thought to go to bed on, just to settle it, you talk to Jesus, you just say to Jesus, now Jesus, I'm not in control of this, you are, I have no idea, whether this is my night, frankly, I would love to die in my sleep, but not to tell you what to do, what I mainly want to do right now, in the last two minutes, before I go to sleep, is to make sure it's good between us, I love you, I trust you, I'm a sinner, you're my only hope, if this heart stops at 3 a.m., and I'm asleep, I'll be with you, thank you for the gospel, thank you for the blood, that's a great way to go to sleep, you ought to do that regularly, you know, don't be legalistic about it, okay, so the fourth, and I'm almost done, the fourth trait of humility, is that humility knows and feels, that we are dependent on grace, for all knowing, believing, acting, breathing, you walk through life, and you just know, he's God, I'm not, and everything I receive is a gift, lastly, humility knows and feels, that it is fallible, and so, considers criticism, and learns from it, and also knows, that God has made provision, for unshakable human conviction, and that he calls us to persuade others, you hear the kind of paradox, right, 1st Corinthians 13, 12, now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face, now I know in part, but then I will know fully, just as I have been fully known, that's a humble posture, I'm not infallible, I don't know everything, there's much I need to learn, if I'm not infallible, and you have a beef with me, it would be wise for me, to just hear you out, I might reject everything you say, but maybe not, because you might see, something I don't see, it's good to be married, by the way, it's really good to be married, my wife has spared me, many imbecilities, stupid things that I shouldn't say, Proverbs 12, 15, a wise man is he who listens to counsel, so we're not God, we're sinners, we're finite, we're culturally conditioned, and therefore we're fallible, and therefore, James says, we make many mistakes with our mouths, James 3, remember, we make many mistakes, if a man makes no mistakes with his mouth, he's got his whole body, he's a perfect man, which is not true for anybody, except Jesus, so we must remain teachable, where would you go for a verse on teachability, a humble person is a teachable person, like if you come up here afterwards, and you take my hand and say, I think the way you handled James 4, 15, is not right, my response to that, should not be to bristle, I'm a preacher, who do you think you are, that would be an absolutely insane, arrogant, stupid, imbecilic, thing to say to you, I would say, I hope, what did I get wrong, and you would open your Bible and say, but what about this word, and I would say, I hadn't thought of that, which happens pretty often, somebody asks me, have you thought of this, and I say, never thought of that, here's the verse I would go to, James 3, 17, the

wisdom that is from above, is first pure, peaceable, open to reason, the wisdom from above, pure, peaceable, come, let us reason together, I don't know everything, you don't know everything, tell me where you think I made a mistake, I'll tell you why I don't think it was a mistake, can't we try to persuade each other, the good old fashioned way, not calling out and tweeting, so, humility knows, that God has made provision, for unshakable human conviction as well, listen, 2 Corinthians 5, 11, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men, can't be wobbly on that, how are you going to persuade men, or Titus 2, 15, speak and exhort and reprove, with all authority, let no one disregard you, wow, wow, so, you can't seek to persuade anyone humbly, if you have no convictions, you can't speak humbly with authority, if you have no convictions, now, we're almost done, if somebody comes to you and they say, relativism, is really the humble posture, you can't really know what the truth is, and your truth and my truth might both be right, and we just can't know, and your truth and my truth are equally good, we just need to go our own way, a lot of people say, that's a really humble posture, it's not, you know why it's not a humble posture, because, if there are no objective truths, that you can know, then you're free to be your own God, which is very attractive to fallen human beings, like me, I would like being God, except that I love God, but if I didn't know God, I think there's nothing I'd rather be than God, like tell you all what to do, you know, how to serve me, make me happy, so if there are no objective truths, that I have to submit to, as realities outside myself, I'm God, do what I want to do, a judge and jury in every controversy, me, it looks like a humble posture, it's not a humble posture, it's cloaking pride, I will do my own thing, thank you very much, and you better stay out of my face, because my truth is my truth, and it's as good as your truth, that's not a humble posture, humility submits to objective reality, that's a pulpit, I'm not going to smash my head against it, and think it's a cloud, it's a pulpit, it's made out of wood, I think, wood, very hard, I would hurt myself, I submit to that reality, it's out there, I can't do anything about it, I'm not God, and I submit to reality and truth, that's the humble posture, I'm God, I can get through that, so humility knows that his grasp of reality is fallible, on the one hand, and that there is such a thing as objective truth, and that by God's grace, he has made a way for us to see the truth, submit to it, and proclaim it, and stake our lives on it, now at the bottom of these five traits, is this conviction, humility senses that humility, humility senses that humility, is a gift beyond our reach, if humility is the product of reaching, I will boast that I have reached it, humility is the self forgetful gift, that receives all things as a gift, or as Paul said, it's a fruit of the Holy Spirit, a fruit of the gospel, knowing and feeling that I'm a desperate sinner, and that Christ is a great savior, an undeserved savior, or one could say, Christian humility is the greatest, or Christian humility in the greatest cultural conflicts, is the fruit of serious joy, joy in the immeasurable, unshakable, undeserved riches of Christ, so here's my closing exhortation to all of us, one, submit to Christ as supreme, two, don't expect to be treated better than Jesus, three, tell the truth in love for Christ's sake, four, receive all of life as grace, five, be teachable, but not wishy-washy, be done with all boasting in men, for all things are yours, and your Christ's, and Christ is God's, so stand firm in serious joy, let's pray, Father in heaven, I pray now, that you would take whatever I have said that's true, and by your spirit, seal it, to every mind and heart in this room, if I have said anything amiss, that's where we need canceling, you do the canceling, and I pray that you would unite us, in the kind of serious joy, that comes from Christian education, that leads us into liberty, in our interactions with the culture, rather than control, and makes us humble, I pray this in Jesus name,

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