

Consider Others as More Important Than Yourself

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of humility and considering others as more important than oneself, following the example of Jesus Christ.

Scripture: Luke 2:51, John 13:14, Ephesians 3:8, Philippians 2:3

Topics: "Humility", "Servanthood"

Description

Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of humility and considering others as more important than ourselves, drawing on Jesus' example of servanthood. He highlights how Jesus, despite being sinless and superior, willingly took on the role of a servant by washing His disciples' feet, demonstrating that true greatness comes from serving others. Poonen warns against the pride that leads us to feel superior based on education or social status, urging us to adopt Christ's mindset of humility. He illustrates that humility allows us to submit to others, regardless of their status, and reminds us that everything we have is a gift from God. Ultimately, the sermon calls for a radical shift in how we view ourselves and others, aligning our thoughts with Christ's humility.

Transcript

Jesus identified Himself totally with man. He was not ashamed to be a man. The Bible says He's not ashamed to call us His brothers. Sometimes we feel superior to other people. We feel we are more educated or we belong to a higher class of society. All this is because of the perverted pride that has infected us ever since Adam sinned. Jesus came to demonstrate that essentially all human beings are equal, irrespective of race, family, education, intelligence, culture, position in life, etc.. He came and became one with the least, and the lowest in the social level in His day, in Israel. He came beneath everybody, because that's the only way He could be the servant of everybody. You cannot be the servant of another if you're not willing to go beneath him. If you want to lift somebody up, you must go beneath him. That's how Jesus came.

The Holy Spirit has come to make our mind like Christ's mind, in other words, to make our way of thinking exactly like Christ. What are the thoughts you think about yourself when you're all by yourself? Do you think of yourself as a good-looking person perhaps, or very clever, or fortunate to be born in a rich family, or other such thoughts? Then you can see how much you think like Christ and how much you think like the

devil. If you're comparing yourself with others, and considering yourself superior, that's exactly the kind of thoughts that went through the mind of Lucifer who became the devil. The Bible says that we must regard others as more important than ourselves, Philippians 2:3, and Paul goes on to speak in that passage about Jesus Christ being our example. He once said in Ephesians 3:8, that he was the very least of all the saints. Paul was so gripped by the humility of Christ, that as he thought about himself, he saw himself as the absolute lowest among all the believers.

The Bible says in Philippians 2:3 to consider others as more important than yourself. Jesus always considered others as more important. That's why we see Him taking a bucket of water, and washing the disciples' feet at the Last Supper. That was the job done only by servants in those days. If you visited a wealthy home, the master of the home had slaves. A slave is someone who is bought, one who did not get any wages. Slaves were lower than servants. And when a guest came to visit a home, it was the slaves' duty to take a basin of water, remove the guests sandals, and wash the dust from their feet. Whenever there was a dinner, there would always be a basin of water near the door. When Jesus and the disciples came to this Last Supper, there was no host there, and they only had an empty room. But the basin of water was kept at the door as usual. Now the question arose, who was going to do the job of washing the people's feet? And each disciple must have thought, "Well, I'm not going to do that." Peter may have thought, "Well, I'm going to be the leader after Jesus goes away. How can I do such a thing?" And Matthew may have thought, "Well, I'm an educated accountant; I can't go washing the feet of these disciples." Each of the disciples may have thought of how they were superior to the others in some way, and therefore they couldn't possibly do a slave's job. It's better it's not done. Then Jesus took up that basin of water and began to wash their feet. Why? Because He said, "You are all more important than me" They were certainly not more spiritual than Him, and He didn't think so. Yet He treated them as more important. He genuinely considered Himself less important. It was not an act, merely put on to show that He was humble. There are people who act humble, who do things just to show that they are humble servants. That is hypocrisy. God hates it. Jesus was genuine. He truly took that place of being nothing before His Heavenly Father. And this is what humility really is: to take the place of being absolutely nothing before God. Lord, I am nothing. Everything that I am You have made me. Who made you intelligent? God did. There are so many children born into this world that are retarded. You could have been born like that. You could have been born with a defective brain, or a defective body, or some congenital disease, or polio like many other children born into this world, and what would you be then? It really is appropriate for us to be thoroughly humble when we think of our condition: Lord, what do I have which I have not received? Only a foolish man is proud.

It is written in Luke 2:51 that Jesus came to Nazareth, and continued in subjection to Joseph and Mary, and that continued for 30 years. Were Joseph and Mary perfect? Far from it. They were no better than any couple today. Think of an average Christian home today where husband and wife fight with each other at least once in a while. Joseph and Mary were like that. They were not perfect people who never sinned. There's nobody like that. They were sinners. They were imperfect. They did not know everything. And in their home lived Jesus who was sinless, perfect, and never did anything wrong. So who should submit to whom? One would think Joseph and Mary ought to submit to Jesus, right? We would think that the ones who are imperfect (that's Joseph and Mary) should submit to the One who's perfect (that's Jesus). But it wasn't like that. Jesus submitted to an imperfect foster father and mother. We know it's not easy for us to submit to those who are inferior to us. Can you submit to somebody who is inferior to you? But if you're genuinely humble you'll have no problem. You'd submit to anybody because you would realise you're nothing. Humility is the secret. We will have no problem with anyone when we're humble. Jesus was quite

happy to be a carpenter. When He went out to ministry, He never took any title. He never called Himself Reverend Jesus or any such thing. He never wanted a position or title or anything that would exalt Him above the common people whom He came to serve. He became like His brothers in all things. When they wanted to make Him a king, He ran away. He never did anything to get honor from men. If He healed a sick person, He'd tell that sick person not to tell anyone. Do you see His humility? He wanted all the glory to be given to the Father. He never wanted to draw anybody to Himself. His healings were not publicity stunts to draw attention to Himself. What a beautiful picture we have of what man is supposed to be!

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