

Introduction

Humility and resolve are seemingly contradictory. Becoming like Christ means embracing humility and focusing our resolve on the right things. Healthy community develops when people within embrace both of these traits.

Humility and Resolve in the Life of Christ

Andrew Murray's observes these statements indicating humility in Christ:

John 5:19 *the Son can do nothing by himself*

John 5:30 *By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.*

John 5:41 *"I do not accept praise from men,*

John 6:38 *I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.*

John 7:16 *"My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me.*

John 7:28 *I am not here on my own, but he who sent me is true.*

John 8:28 *I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me.*

John 8:42 *I have not come on my own; but he sent me.*

John 8:50 *I am not seeking glory for myself;*

John 14:10 *The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.*

John 14:24 *These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.*

Jesus Christ understood his place in relation to the Father. Murray writes, "*Christ was nothing, that God might be all. He resigned Himself with His will and His powers entirely for the Father to work in Him. Of His own power, His own will, and His own glory, of His whole mission with all His works and His teaching, He said, "It is not I; I am nothing; I have given myself to the Father to work. I am nothing, the Father is all."* (Humility, pp. 21-22)

AT THE SAME TIME Christ does not come to us as weak or spineless but with resolve.

He stood up to the Devil when being tempted

He stood up to the money changers profaning the temple

He was forthright and direct with Nicodemus, a Pharisee and member of ruling council

He stood up to his disciples when they said, "this is a hard teaching" and many turned back

He stood up to the Pharisees and the crowds who were about to stone a woman for adultery

He did not flee from the Garden as he awaited the soldiers in anguish knowing what was to come

He did not break before the soldiers who came to arrest him

He did not bend before Pilate who questioned him

He stood up under the weight of the Cross as he carried it out to Golgotha

JC conducted his life with unshakeable resolve. [example: Passion of the Christ]

Study of Fortune 500 companies concluded that the combination of humility and resolve is one of the most potent leadership forces.

Humility

Definition: Understanding our place. Andrew Murray, "*It is simply the sense of entire nothingness, which comes when we see how truly God is all, and in which we make way for God to be all.*" Andrew Murray calls Humility the "root of Christ-life." C.S. Lewis calls it the "centre" of Christian morals. He writes, "*pride is the greatest sin... it was through pride that the devil became the devil: Pride leads to every other vice: it is the complete anti-God state of mind.*" (Humility, p. 12, Mere Christianity, p. 122)

Greek world scorned humility as ours often does but Christians are to embrace humility.

Scriptures encourage us toward humility:

Titus 3:1 *Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, ... and to show true humility toward all men.*

James 3:13 *Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.*

Eph. 4:2 *Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.*

Matt. 18:4 *Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.*

Jesus, James and Peter say this exact thing

Matt. 23:12 *For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.*

James 4:10 *Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.*

1Pet. 5:6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.

Phil. 2:3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. [not on basis of social standing, skill, title but of who their Father is; why is a prince revered? Usually hasn't done anything special yet]

Col. 3:12 ¶ Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

How large does the call to "humility" loom on your radar screen?

Which of these passages speaks to you in a particularly powerful way?

What will be the Effects of Humility?

- Favor with God [Js 4:6 "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."
- Favor with people [Greek word is connected to the Gothic word meaning "friend"]
- Increased unity [Philippians]
- Reflect God's glory

From Dale Burke, Pastor of Fullerton EFC:

- Humility promotes objectivity [we're less inclined to twist results for our own purposes]
- Humility promotes teachability [if you think you know it all, there's no room for learning]
- Promotes Creativity, Flexibility, Increases excellence (not saying "we're good enough"), Balance
- Indications that we might need to grow in humility

How have you seen the above effects of humility at work in your life (positive or negative example)? Share with your group.

Indications that you might need to work on humility

You don't think you need to ("If you think you are not conceited, it means you are very conceited indeed." CS Lewis)

You haven't found yourself apologizing yet this week

Someone snubbed you and you are having trouble getting over it (Murray says relish these)

You are impatient with others, short-tempered

You sense people don't enjoy being around you

Your wife, husband, co-workers, brothers and sisters at church just doesn't seem good enough for you these days

You are envious of other's position ("*If I am a proud man, then, as long as there is one man in the whole world more powerful, or richer, or cleverer than I, he is my rival and my enemy.*" -Lewis)

Your joy is gone (pride makes us "restless and unhappy" -CS Lewis)

In what ways has God brought about growth in humility in your life?

The fact that even great spiritual leaders struggle in this area can be very comforting.

"I wish I had got a bit further with humility myself: if I had, I could probably tell you more about the relief, the comfort, of taking the fancy dress off-getting rid of the false self, with all its 'Look at me' and 'Aren't I a good boy?' and all its posing and posturing. To get even near it, even for a moment, is like a drink of cold water to a man in a desert." -CS Lewis

Resolve

What should be the focus of our resolve? Pride is strong resolve for self. Christians resolve centers around: The Faith. *1Cor. 16:13 ¶ Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith;*

Grace. *Gal. 5:1 ¶ It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.*

Unity in the community of faith. *Phil. 1:27 ¶ Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel*

In the Lord. *Phil. 4:1 ¶ Therefore, my brothers, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, that is how you should stand firm in the Lord, dear friends!*

Against Evil. *Eph. 6:13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.*

Against Ungodly behavior. In 1 Cor. Paul reminds how the Israelites fell into idolatry, sexual immorality and grumbling, then he admonishes them, *1Cor. 10:12 So, if you think you are standing firm, Be careful that you don't fall!*

Among these focal points for our resolve, which do you struggle with most? Why?

Discuss with the group the role personality and/or giftedness play in the degree of resolve we exhibited? Be sure to consider from the biblical perspective.

Stand Firm is term also used for "battle" contexts. This can be off-putting but it is necessary for proper balance:

- Humility without resolve=dormat
- Resolve without humility=tyrant
- Humility with Resolve=disciple, Christ-likeness

Example: Col. Chamberlain from the Civil War, battle of Gettysburg.

Final Application

"Humility" originally meant low lying

"Stand firm" can mean "stand up"

Taking Action

1. This week, when snubbed, embrace it, **lie low**, wait for Christ to lift you up.
2. This week, when what you hold dear is contradicted, **stand up**

Share prayer requests as they relate to humility and resolve. Change comes from on high! Pray for one another.