



Small Groups

Small Group Discussion Guide

Simple Christmas

Part 2: A Humble Stable

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We are all born with a desire to be heard and to tell our own story. We like to be liked. We want to be noticed and be recognized for what we've done. While there is value in sharing our experiences, we all have a tendency to embellish and make ourselves look better than we are. We are also too quick to take credit for God's hand of blessing in our lives. In a society brimming with so many easy ways for us to create our own story and share it to the world, have you ever wondered if we've gone too far? What is the story God wants to tell through us? What part does humility play in that story?

In the Christmas story, we find the example of humility in the lives of Mary, Joseph and Jesus.

hu·mil·i·ty | \hyü-'mi-lə-tē, yü-\

Definition of *humility* - freedom from pride or arrogance: the quality or state of being humble

Opening Question: Tell the group about a time when you witnessed true humility.

- I. *We should live with the same humility with which Christ was born.
To do that, we must be willing...*

A. To submit ourselves to others - even when they don't deserve it

Shortly after he took over the presidency of Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, Booker T. Washington, the renowned black educator, was walking in an exclusive section of town when he was stopped by a wealthy white woman. Not knowing the famous Mr. Washington by sight, she asked if he would like to earn a few dollars by chopping wood for her. Because he had no pressing business at the moment, Professor Washington smiled, rolled up his sleeves, and proceeded to do the humble chore she had requested. When he was finished, he carried the logs into the house and stacked them by the fireplace. A little girl recognized him and later revealed his identity to the lady. The next morning the embarrassed woman went to see Mr. Washington in his office at the Institute and apologized profusely. "It's perfectly all right, Madam," he replied. "Occasionally I enjoy a little manual labor. Besides, it's always a delight to do something for a friend."

Ephesians 5:21 "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ."

Proverbs 11:2 "When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom."

Matt. 23:12 "For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

1. **Humility is a choice. Share a time when you decided to humble yourself with someone who didn't deserve it. Was it difficult? What effect did this have on you? On them?**

B. To live in obscurity and to be willing to be misunderstood by others.

During the Civil War, someone reported to Abraham Lincoln that Edwin Stanton, one of the President's cabinet members, had referred to him as a fool. Mr. Lincoln replied, "Well, I must check into that, for I have found that he is usually correct in his judgments."

Jesus was the poster-child for being born into obscurity. He did not come with pomp and circumstance. He was born to a poor, ordinary couple in a stinky stable. Mary and Joseph were also likely misunderstood by many people. Engaged, but not married. She is pregnant, but a virgin...really? How did they keep their perspective? Mary and Joseph remembered the words the angels had spoken and trusted in God's plan for their lives. They had to keep their eyes focused on what others could not see. We must do the same.

Philippians 2:5-7 "In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness."

"Humility is not thinking less of yourself, it's thinking of yourself less." (C. S. Lewis)

2. **On a scale of 1-5 (1 being least and 5 being most), how important is it for you to be seen and acknowledged for something you have done. Why might this be?**
3. **Humility requires perspective. How does focusing on Jesus' humility help us develop an accurate perspective about God, ourselves and others?**

C. To be surrounded by people who can't advance our cause

Jesus was visited by shepherds, not the kind of people who could advance his mission. But God used the faithful shepherds to celebrate the birth of His son. As Jesus grew older, he never saw anybody in His path as an obstacle. He saw everyone and everything as an opportunity to share His love.

Romans 8:31 "What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?"

1 Peter 5:6-7 "So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time he will lift you up in honor. Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you."

4. **Humility requires perseverance. Share some ways that you have seen others in your group continue to love, even when they have been marginalized by others.**
5. **Humility requires faith. Do you get frustrated when life's circumstances don't line up with what you want? Share a time when you have seen God work when you trusted Him instead of complaining or trying to control the circumstances?**
6. **Pray together and ask Jesus to show you how you can be more humble like Him. Ask God to give you opportunities to focus on others and to grow in humility.**