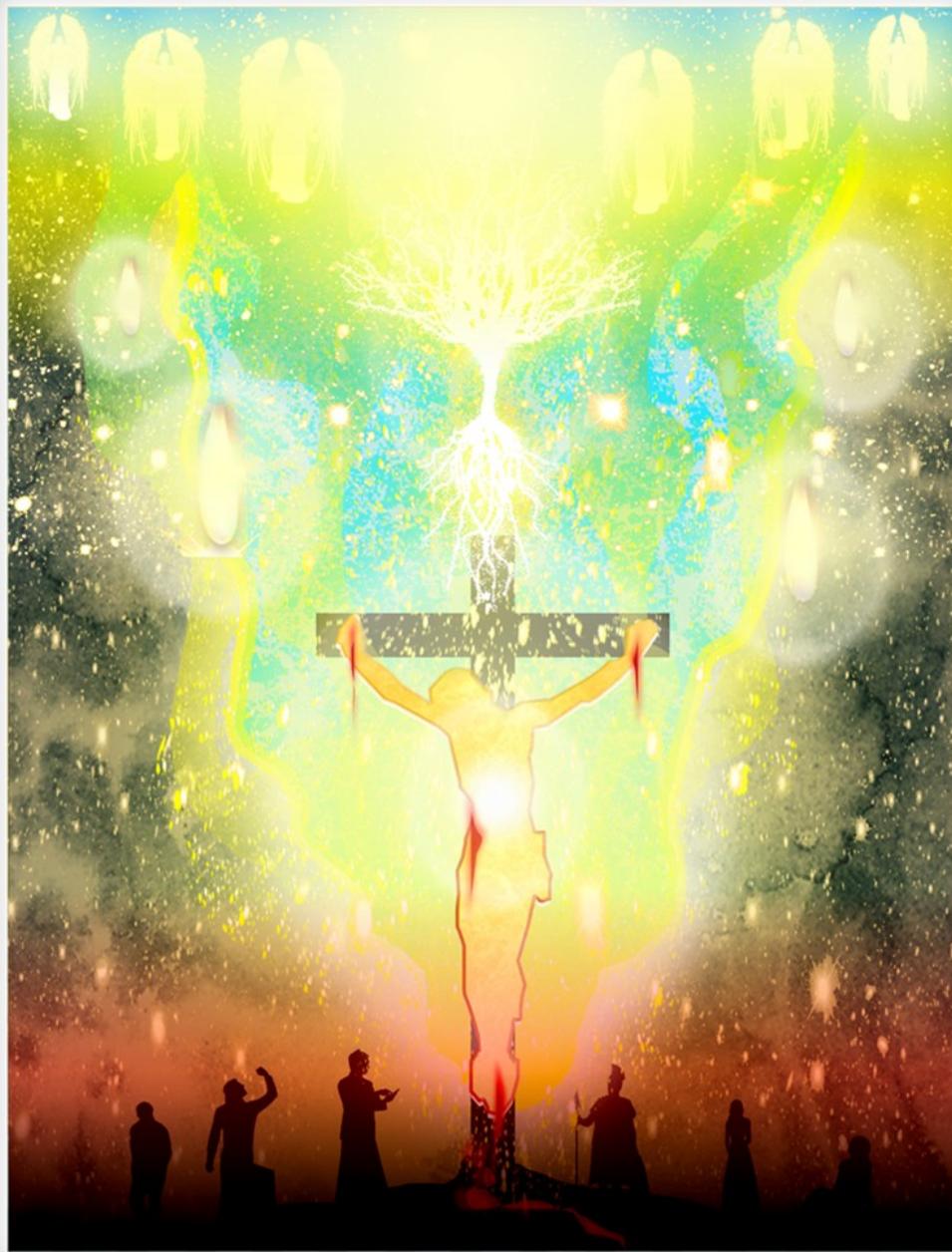


- Humility -

"Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." (Philippians 2:8)



Berean Lamp Ministries
For the Body of Christ

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The Berean Lamp Newsletter is a monthly publication of the Berean Lamp Ministry. Visit our website at www.bereanlamp.org. The Berean Lamp Ministry is a service of the Berean Christian Fellowship of Zimmerman, MN.

The Berean Lamp Ministry seeks to:

1. Encourage and strengthen the Body of Christ by providing the means for each of its members to share their spiritual gifts with one another, rooted in the Word of God, thereby growing into deeper union with one another and with Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-31).
2. Minister to non-believers; be a witness for Christ and a testimony to His Body in the world.

We would appreciate your help in contributing to the content and in spreading the work of this ministry. Thank you, and God bless.

- Pastor Scott Moller

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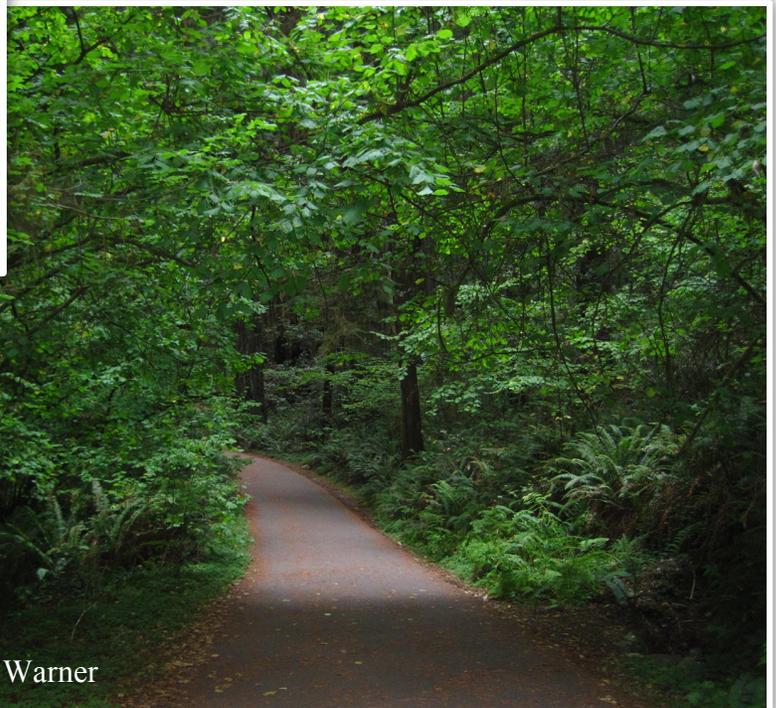
*"Before DESTRUCTION the heart of man is HAUGHTY, But humility goes BEFORE honor."
(Proverbs 18:12)*



By Patty Buswell



By Nathan Warner



By Natalie Warner

The Earth Is Not For Sale

By Nathan Warner

Inherit – to take or receive (property, a right, a title, etc.) by succession or will, as an heir. (Dictionary.com)

World leaders talk about the planet as if they have the right to rule it. Bankers and billionaires act like they can buy it. It seems the earth is up for grabs, and everyone wants a piece. Some people want more than just a piece.

Throughout history, mankind has taken what he wants through force. Sometimes, when he is more “benevolent,” he might try to buy it. One thing he does not do is inherit it. Everything man has belongs to God, and if anything, he is but an interim caretaker of it. Most are housebreakers, thieves, and usurpers inspired by Lucifer, who said in his heart, “*I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, And I will sit on the mount of assembly In the recesses of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High*” (Isaiah 14:13-14).

In the days of Noah, “*the earth was filled with violence*” (Genesis 6:11b). Inspired by the devil, people took what they wanted through force. In the Last Days, the earth will be filled with violence like this again with people taking what they want through violence with no regard for God’s Law of Justice. It will only grow until it can be said of man again that “*every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually*” (Genesis 6:5). In the world, people fight their way to the top and then spend their days trying to keep others from taking it from them. This is the world system, which imitates its ruler.

Lucifer (or satan) is the temporary “*god of this world*” (2 Corinthians 4:4). He is the “*ruler*” (John 12:31) of the world system with its glorious seats of power and its powerhouses of industry. He sits at the top of the colossal juggernaut he has inspired and makes people

fight over getting a piece of it. For this acquisition, he asks only for a full investment of your energy - the price of success is simply your soul. Now someone might ask, “*What does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?*” (Mark 8:36) Well, if you get the world now, you get everything you want NOW, even if you lose it later.

Remember Esau? Esau once had an incredibly difficult day hunting and came home famished. He saw that his brother, Jacob, had made some food, so he asked to have some. Jacob recognized his brother’s weakness and made a counteroffer. Esau could have the stew in exchange for his inheritance. “*Esau said, ‘Behold, I am about to die; so of what use then is the birthright to me?’*” (Genesis 25:32) He readily agreed to give away his inheritance in exchange for temporary satisfaction, despite the fact that the stew he desired would one day belong to him, along with everything his father had (including God’s promise to him). God was not pleased with Esau’s decision – it proved he had contempt for his inheritance since it wasn’t in his possession “now.” Esau’s behavior may seem pretty foolish in hindsight, but most people in the world are doing just this – they are giving up their possible inheritance in Jesus (forfeiting their souls) to gain short-term satisfaction in the flesh.

When people give up their souls for short-term satisfaction, they take on the morality of the world, which is “survival of the fittest.” The world’s gospel is “the strong survive.” Man commenced this system’s installation in the Garden of Eden when he decided he wanted to be like God and make his own rules. Man’s sin was disobedience, and his legacy was to make each generation keep their own knowledge on what is good and what is evil, regardless of what God says. The effects of sin grafted into the sinless natural order begetting pythons that squeeze dogs to death and cats that “play” with mice. We see the same cat-and-mouse games in the world system with men’s brutal wars, acquisitions, cold commerce, and trading “*bodies and souls of people*” (Revelation 18: 13b) – squeezing the life out of people. The world is a “dog-eat-dog”

place that pits brother against brother and calls evil good and good evil.

The devil tried to persuade Jesus that this system was worth keeping when he took Jesus *“to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; and he said to Him, ‘All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me’”* (Matthew 4:8-9a). He was offering Jesus the role of king over the world system if He would only acknowledge satan as king-maker. Satan knew that Jesus was the rightful heir to the throne of the Earth, but he was banking on a powerful question. What good is an inheritance if it hasn’t yet been discharged and you want it now? He was offering Jesus his illegitimate government, because it was expedient and “up and running.” In exchange, Jesus just had to surrender His “implausible” future with its unfulfilled inheritance. The devil was hoping Jesus would say with Esau, *“I am about to die; so of what use then is the birthright to me?”*

Unlike Esau, however, Jesus was without sin. Suffice it to say, He didn’t take up satan’s offer. He knew that the world system set up by the devil had an expiration date. He knew that the devil’s temptation of instant gratification was unauthorized and unsanctioned. Satan’s rule will come to an end, because he is an illegitimate fraudster sitting on his makeshift throne constructed on the pain and suffering of the billions he has enslaved through the fear of death (Hebrews 2:15). Jesus knew His Heavenly Father owned everything and that everything was going to be bestowed to Him. Jesus knew that He was the rightful King of all the Earth. He didn’t have to bow down to a usurper to receive His crown. He didn’t have to plot and plan how He was going to triumph. He didn’t have to play high stakes poker to win His earnings back. He didn’t have to charge His bank account or sell His soul to reach the throne. The throne was HIS since before the foundation of the world and will be for eternity. But at that moment, as He was weak in body and tempted before the splendor and glory of the world system, He was a lowly carpenter’s son, reviled and spit upon by His own

people (His subjects!), who ultimately brutally killed Him. He had made the world! The world was His, and yet it was being run by a fraud.

Despite this, He did not accuse the devil. He did not lay claim to Pilot’s throne. He did not brag about His rights to Herod. He did not browbeat Annas or Caiaphas. The whole world was His, yet His Father demanded that He endure a humiliating death on the Cross as a “heretic” and a “criminal” before His inheritance would be ready. Jesus endured it all because His Heavenly Father asked it of Him to offer salvation to all humanity and receive a people for His inheritance – us! He trusted His Father to give Him His inheritance, accepted His Father’s plan with all humility, and *“for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God”* (Hebrews 12:2b). Because of His patience, humility and obedience, Jesus has inherited the Earth and a people from His Heavenly Father for all eternity.

Jesus knew this before His death. In His Sermon on the Mount, He told the thousands around Him that *“blessed are the humble, for they shall inherit the earth”* (Matthew 5:5). Like Jesus, a follower of Jesus is to imitate his King. Jesus told us, *“If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself and **take up** his **cross** daily and follow Me”* (Luke 9:23). Believers are to be a humble people on the earth, *“for consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, so that no man may boast before God. But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, so that, just as it is written, ‘LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD’”* (1 Corinthians 1:26-31).

Just so, when Jesus came to Earth, He did

not boast in Himself, for He had “no stately form or majesty That we should look upon Him, Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him. He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem

Him. Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted” (Isaiah 53:2b-4), enduring “such hostility by sinners against Himself” (Hebrews 12:3a). Being made weak in body, Jesus boasted in His Father, and He waited for His inheritance, biding His time doing His Father’s will until it would be revealed. “For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:9-11).

As imitators of Jesus, are we going to conquer the Earth? Are we going to earn it or win it? No, we will inherit it. We don’t have to fight for the Earth, and we don’t have to plan or scheme. We don’t have to get into ships and sail out across the



By Lynn Warner

*“Do NOTHING from selfishness or EMPTY conceit, but with HUMILITY of mind regard one another as MORE important than yourselves.”
(Philippians 2:3)*



globe to plant our flags and claim our corner. We don't need to worry that it will be used up or forgotten, and we don't need to fear that our inheritance will be stolen from us. No one could earn the Earth through good works and humanitarian diligence. No one can wrestle it away from its proper owner, Jesus Christ – no one can conquer the Earth; it is God's footstool (Psalm 66:1). It is not for sale. It is not up for grabs. It is to be bequeathed to followers of Jesus Christ.

The Earth is already ours through the inheritance we have in Jesus that waits for us in eternity. Today, the world system that operates on the Earth is still ruled by the prince of this world, the god of the air. Like Jesus, we are tempted in its deserts, and we are hungry in

its wastelands. Let us not sell our birthright for some temporary satisfaction or instant gratification. Let us humbly follow Jesus by taking up our cross like Him. We are adopted into God's family. We are His adopted children *"and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him"* (Romans 8:17). While we are passing through the world, He is sanctifying us, preparing us as child heirs until we are ready to inherit our birthright—an eternal King and an everlasting Kingdom. Praise be to Jesus Christ! Amen.



*"Therefore, putting ASIDE all filthiness and all that REMAINS of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls."
(James 1:21)*

By Nathan Warner



Let This Mind Be in You

By Ginny Larsen

“Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.”

(1 Peter 4:1-2)

“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

(Philippians 2:3-8)

Christ on the cross (the apostle alludes to verse 18 of the preceding Chapter [1 Peter 3:18]) suffered in the flesh for us. He died in fact as regards His human life. We must arm ourselves with the same mind, and allow of no activity of life or passions according to the will of the old man, but suffer as to the flesh, never yielding to its will. Sin is the action in us of the will of the flesh, the will of the man as alive in this world. When this will acts, the principle of sin is there; for we ought to obey. The will of God ought to be the spring of our moral life; and so much the more, because now that we have the knowledge of good and evil — now that the will of the flesh, unsubject to God, is in us, we must either take the will of God as our only motive, or act according to the will of the flesh, for the latter is always present in us.

(John Darby’s Synopsis – 1 Peter 4)

What does it mean to have the mind of Christ? As Believers and followers of Christ, we want to know His mind, His heart, and His will if we truly love Him. We’ll see as we read of the mind of Christ in His Word that it was always a mind of humility. Even though He was deity, He took on the form of a servant and the weakness of human flesh. He was obedient even to the point of death.

We see that the mind of Christ always brings humility to us, in that it shows us His humility, and our own pride stands out as something so contrasted to His love and humility and grace that we are enabled to see it for what it is truly. Human pride is all a lie, and it comes from the very first lie that caused man to sin in the Garden of Eden. Man, created by God, believed a lie that he could become like God. Man, who came from dust, fashioned by God’s own hand with God’s own breath breathed into him to give him life, thought he could be self-sufficient and be like God, not needing God. He forgot God and thought he could determine his own life, forgetting that the source of his life and all things that he had to enjoy were from God. This is the ultimate pride, and it has been the battle of all mankind ever since to see it for what it is and to be saved from it. The only way is to humble ourselves before God and admit that we are nothing but dust and all-dependent on Him.

God’s truth always brings humility – the truth of Who God is, Who His Son is, and the truth of who we are. This truth will humble us and put us in our place. Truth in our inward being is truth that does not ever excuse the corruption of our fleshly mind. It doesn’t cover it up or give into it. Truth in our inward being causes us to see clearly what we are before a holy God. Truth and humility go together.

Love and humility go together. One cannot truly love another without humility in the heart. Note this is God’s love as defined in 1 Corinthians 13, which is practically synonymous with humility: *“Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the*

truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (1 Corinthians 13:4-7).

One can't be patient or kind to another if they think they are greater than or above another. To envy or boast says, “I deserve that, they don't!” or “I'm better than that person.” Everything that causes us to be lacking in love is a result of our lacking in humility. When we find ourselves here, we have forgotten what we have been saved from, or perhaps we never fully realized it in the first place. We haven't seen the potential of our own depravity and the extent of the grace of God toward us, undeserving as we are, that brought Him to the suffering and death of the cross for us.

Do we truly want the mind of Christ? Or do we want Him to agree with our own mind, desires, and even our arrogance. It's so easy to think when someone wrongs us that somehow

we are more important to God than they are. We may easily excuse the hurts we have caused others by our own insensitivity to them, our neglect of them, or misunderstandings, but yet we expect others to forgive us, and when hurt is done to us, we suddenly feel that we are so much more important. *“Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins” (1 Peter 4:8).*

Pride would have us expose the sins of others, making ourselves look better than them, if even in our own minds. Humility in us loves, forgives, and reaches out to others, considering them more important than ourselves, causing us to remember that our Lord shed His precious blood for them as well. Do we think God favors one brother over another? He shed His blood for each of us. Do we think somehow we are better than another?

We probably need to really see ourselves



*“GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.”
(James 4:6)*



in the light of God's Word rather than comparing ourselves to others, especially others we think we are better than.

The Lord brings many things into our lives to humble us and enable us to really see the pride and ugliness in our own hearts. But our normal reaction is to cover it up—to hide it, and we see our own pride raise its ugly head. We may even be surprised at our own reaction. We find ourselves defensive, and we find ourselves hurting someone with our words, putting them down in order to justify ourselves or in order to raise others' opinions of ourselves, thinking we are gaining more respect – respect that we deserve, of course! Sometimes it even comes in the form of asking prayer for another. In doing so, we expose their sin and cover our own, making ourselves look more spiritual. Our prideful flesh is so subtle! We can fool ourselves so easily.

If we truly want the humility of Christ, and we should if we want to receive anything from Him, then we need to learn to recognize the opportunities we have for being humbled and taking on the mind of Christ as a servant. God brings these opportunities to us every day. Perhaps someone may offend us, someone may say something about us behind our back, someone may lie about us, or an incident may happen that humiliates us. There are many humbling opportunities in life. Each time, we are tested in how we will respond. Our natural response is defensive. We will do all we can to “save face.” We'll do all we can to protect our self-esteem. But God calls us to esteem others as better than yourself: *“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others”* (Philippians 2:3-4).

Humility comes before love and makes love possible in our hearts through God's love dwelling there. We can receive nothing from God unless we receive it in humility. Humility always comes before grace, because God resists the proud and only gives His grace to the humble: *“Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject*

one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you” (1 Peter 5:5-7).

Even as we go through severe trials and testing in this world, it is all for the purpose of God, and it humbles us, showing us our dependence on Him, the weakness of our own flesh, and the vanity of our own thoughts and imaginations. When we go through testings and trials that cause us severe suffering, sometimes it seems as if there is no immediate escape. The trial may seem to go on forever with no end in sight. We are to humble ourselves under His mighty hand – that nail-scarred hand – and trust Him, trusting His love and His purpose in it. The chastisements of the Lord bring humility. So often we waste our trials and sufferings trying to fix things our own way. But if we humble ourselves under God's care through the trial and testing, He will guide us through it, and we will come out of it with the mind of Christ, choosing to suffer rather than to fail pleasing God. We are given grace for the trial and wisdom to understand His ways. He gives us more grace for whatever else our future holds. We are to cast the whole care of our lives onto Him. To not do so comes from pride and self-will, desiring to control our own lives, forgetting what we need to be saved from in this world. To cast our cares on Him says, “I am not God—You are—and You alone know my way, and I will trust in You—that You may be glorified in me through this trial.”

Do you want to really know how much pride is in you? Pay attention to how defensive you are, how easily you are hurt, and how you react to people who offend you. Each time you notice your pride rising up, thank God for showing it to you and ask Him for the humility of Christ, for He trusted Himself completely to His Father's faithfulness and said nothing in His defense even as He was mocked, spit on, and wrongly accused. Can we trust ourselves to our faithful Creator? Can

we love those who wrong us and forgive them? We can't in ourselves. We just can't. And we won't. But if we are His, He abides in us by His Spirit and calls us to "put on Christ" because the love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit He has given to us (Romans 5:5). To our minds, it makes no sense to love one who despises you, persecutes you, or wrongs you. To our minds, we should get even, defend ourselves, and put the offender in his or her place. But the mind of

Christ reminds us of His cross: the extent of His love for those who greatly offended Him, to the point of taking the sin of theirs that He despised onto Himself – taking the full penalty for it. How humbling that love is to us when we really see it! Father, may that love be ever before us, humbling us, enabling us to take up the mind of Christ, walking in humility before others and before You always. Amen.



By Lynn Warner

Fie on You, Oh Silly Heart!

By Natalie Warner

"But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus...."
(1 Corinthians 1:30a)

It is a cross between irony and hypocrisy for a debtor to call himself rich or a child to say he is independent. The debtor is, by his situation, owned by those he is in debt to. The child is under the care, supervision, and guidance of his parents. We boast that America is the richest nation - but in fact, we are one of the poorest. We are so in debt to other countries that it is by their patience (and overall God's mercy) that we still exist as a nation. We survive as long as those to whom we are indebted don't demand full payment. The child can only be independent when he is grown and out on his own. For now, at least, he is still under the authority of his parents. If they say he can do something, he can; if not, he would disobey if he chose to go against their wishes.

The U.S.'s boast about its economic stronghold is a laugh when you consider the bondage we're actually in, just like the child's boast that he can control his life on his own has no credibility to it. In the same way, we human beings - created, fallible, and slaves to sin (because of Adam) and only freed by the redemption of Christ - have nothing to boast for ourselves.

Charles Spurgeon once aptly said, "Oh! strange infatuation, that you, who have borrowed everything, should think of exalting yourself, a poor dependent pensioner upon the bounty of your Savior, one who has a life which dies without fresh streams of life from Jesus, and yet proud! Fie on you, oh silly heart." We are dependent, obligated, and completely helpless beings by ourselves. The only One who can give us life is the Author of Life and our Creator. If we as Christians have anything to boast about, it is the Lord our King and His work in us, for us, and around us:

"For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but

God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, so that no man may boast before God. But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, so that, just as it is written, 'LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD' " (1 Corinthians 1:26-31, bold emphasis added).

Recordings in the First Testament give us a wonderful example of someone whose pride was humbled and shown to be nothing before the Lord. King Nebuchadnezzar was given a dream from the Lord that foretold an event that happened twelve months later. At that time, he was *"walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon. The king reflected and said, 'Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?'* While the word was in the king's mouth, a voice came from heaven, saying, *'King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared: sovereignty has been removed from you, and you will be driven away from mankind, and your dwelling place will be with the beasts of the field. You will be given grass to eat like cattle, and seven periods of time will pass over you until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever He wishes' "* (Daniel 4:29b-32). Nebuchadnezzar did what many of us do: he gazed over on what he had achieved and marveled at his own greatness. He had indeed grown powerful - Daniel, while interpreting the king's dream a year earlier, had said, *"You have become great and grown strong, and your majesty has become great and reached to the sky and your dominion to the end of the earth"* (Daniel 4:22). However, whatever sovereignty he had had not been gained by his capabilities but because the Lord was gracious to give it to him. All sovereignty belongs to the Lord - we are nothing without Him to breathe life into us, to raise us from the clutches of death, and to free

us from sin's bondage. Whatever we have that is good is not of our own accord but because He has wished to bestow it upon us for His glory!

Because of Nebuchadnezzar's pride, the Lord humbled him as He had shown him in the dream, and *"immediately the word concerning Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled; and he was driven away from mankind and began eating grass like cattle, and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair had grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws"* (Daniel 4:33). God had ordained and enacted this plan to play out for His glory. According to Nebuchadnezzar, *"At the end of that period, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever..."* (Daniel 4:34a). After this, God blessed Nebuchadnezzar, and he was *"reestablished in my [Nebuchadnezzar's] sovereignty, and surpassing greatness was added to me"* (Daniel 4:36). The Lord humbled him in his pride and then exalted him (though he was still under the sovereignty of the Lord) in his humility for the sake of the name of the Lord. Indeed, *"GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE"* (James 4:6).

King Nebuchadnezzar had not gained his prowess by his own hands; rather, it was the Lord *allowing* and *giving* it to him that caused for his greatness. And as the Lord chose to give it, He also chose to take it away for a short time. We can boast in nothing that we ourselves have done. If we have done well in the sight of the Lord, it is because He ordained it in His sovereignty for one main reason: His glory. It is not our glory that we should be seeking to show to the world but the glory and majesty and praise of the One Who is the true King of Life.

Galatians 2:20 says, *"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me."* There is no room for pride in the life of a

Christian or even in the life of an unbeliever. Why? Because no one in the world, Believer or unbeliever, has done anything even remotely close to the greatest act of humility (and it's eternal, not a temporary act) that was and is displayed through the Son of God. The Lamb came as the most vulnerable person on the earth - a baby - raised in Nazareth, a place that was despised. In John 1:46, Nathanael said, *"Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?"* Isaiah 53:3 foretold the Christ would be *"despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him."*

Christ ministered in wisdom and grace. He rebuked in love and on a number of occasions told His disciples not to publicize His miracles. As 2 Corinthians 8:9 says, *"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich."* As He prayed to the Father, *"I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do"* (John 17:4), His sole purpose and desire was to obey and glorify the Father Who sent Him, and in this, the Son also was glorified. He died the most cruel death imaginable, and even in His final breath He asked not for retribution but forgiveness for those who had crucified Him.

We are nothing before Him; therefore, how can we boast in anything of ourselves? If we boast, it must be of the Lord and what He has done in us, since we as Believers have been crucified in Him. May the words of John the Baptist be a step-by-step reminder to us: *"He must increase, but I must decrease"* (John 3:30).

"Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride."

(Daniel 4:37)

The Mind of Christ

By Dana Dexter

Paul commanded the Philippians to complete his joy (Philippians 2:1-2). While this at first may appear to be a selfish demand, quite the opposite is true. Completing Paul's joy here leads to the death of selfish demands. It leads to healthy relationships and peace-filled local churches. It leads to pastors with a high quality of life. Best of all, it leads to an intimate knowledge of Jesus Christ and a fuller appreciation of what He has done for us. We have an opportunity before us to have our relationships transformed and our walk with our Lord made richer if we embrace what God is calling us to in Philippians 2:1-11. May He work through His Spirit towards that end as we walk through this text.

What would be Paul's joy? Quite simply that the Philippians would be of the same mind together. From what follows in verse 2, being of the same mind looks like having the same love, being in full accord (the word from the original Greek could also have been translated "united in spirit") and being of one mind. Thus, this kind of unity encompasses heart, mind, and spirit. This is a profound unity! And it should characterize our lives as the body of Christ.

Yet we can only live in this unity if God's graces from verse 1 are at work in us. Paul earlier makes the appeal that "*if there is any encouragement in Christ, comfort from love...participation in the Spirit...affection and sympathy,*" then the Philippians should "*complete my joy*" (2:1-2, ESV). A God-given love must precede and saturate this kind of unity. The kind of love described in verse 1 must empower the Philippians to live in the unity described in verse 2. While this gives a clearer picture of this kind of unity, it is still a bit abstract. What follows is a sharper image of this unity in more concrete terms.

Paul describes two contrasts in verses 3 and 4 to help us get a handle on this unified mind. First, it does not look like living day to day out

of a heart of rivalry and conceit. Those two concepts go well together because our conceit gives us a high view of ourselves which we treasure. Further, when we engage in rivalry, we are trying to prove to others that we are truly as great as we think we are. Make no mistake, this kind of motivation undermines love and unity. Paul earlier describes people who preach the gospel out of rivalry, seeking to afflict Paul even worse as he is in prison (1:15,17). By contrast, others are said to preach Christ out of love (1:16). Paul points out the opposing nature of these motives. So instead of acting out of rivalry and conceit, the Philippians are to humbly count others as more significant and thus more important than themselves.

The second contrast is in verse 4. Rather than living a life of "every man for himself!" the Philippians are to pay attention to the needs and interests of those around them. They are to care at least as much about the needs of others as they care about their own. They are to be their brother's keepers in a sense. This same mind then looks like seeing others as more important than ourselves and valuing the needs of others rather than merely our own. Where does this kind of others-oriented thinking come from? This is the very mind of Jesus Christ. He is the source of it, and He is the one Who makes it possible for us to live in it.

Paul says, "*Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus*" (2:5). Jesus is our perfect example of this mind; thus, He Himself is the clearest picture of it. He better than anyone else shows us how to count others' needs as higher than our own, and how to count others as more significant than ourselves. Jesus, although He was in the form of God, did not hold tightly to His divine privileges but instead came down and entered our fallen world. He became a man. What kind of a man would God Himself become? Surely He would be the most powerful, most praised, smartest, most handsome, and, in summary, the best of the best at everything and everybody everywhere would acknowledge it. Instead, God Himself took the form of a servant. The Greek word here for servant means

“slave.” This is the kind of man God would become (vv. 6-7). What an amazing event! God became a man! One Whose life purpose was appointed for service! Jesus considered our needs and our plight, and He acted on our behalf by coming down to inhabit our world as a human. And yet there is more.

Jesus not only considered our needs, but, perhaps more fundamentally, He came as a matter of obedience. Obedience to whom? He was obedient to His Father Who sent Him. The Father sent the Son on a very specific mission. It was a mission to bring God glory and redeem sinners. Paul states that Jesus, being found in human form, humbled Himself. What did that look like? That looked like being obedient to the Father even to the point of willingly embracing death. And this was no death by old age in a fallen world or even death by sudden accident or swift execution—but rather death by the most horrendous of means: a death by crucifixion. It was shameful, public torture that took an extended time. The depths of this agony are only exacerbated by the fact that Jesus also absorbed the wrath of the Father for sin (2 Corinthians 5:21; Matthew 27:45-46; Romans 3:21-26). The humility of Jesus, which enabled Him to obey the Father, transcends any example that we have ever witnessed. And it was *“for the joy that was set before Him that He endure the cross”* (Hebrews 12:2). This was an amazingly humble and willful laying down of His rights and privilege to bring God glory and to care for others. This is the same mind that we are to have, but it does not come natural to us.

Can we even begin to understand what this would have been like? If we as American-born citizens were wrongly deported to an impoverished country with no hope of return, we would acutely feel the injustice. Yet Jesus willingly immersed Himself in our broken world and condescended to our finite mode of life. At another level, we would be appalled and rightly incensed if a teenager would spit in our burger at a restaurant, but can we really grasp what it would have been like for the very Maker of this world to have had His face spit upon by His rebellious creatures? We get

glimpses of what it would be like, yet we will always have reason to stand amazed at what Jesus did on our behalf. And we should stand amazed! Further, what Jesus did both frees us and empowers us to live similarly. His redemption frees us from our slavery to self-service, and His Holy Spirit and example empower us to serve others in humility. And to God's praise, there is so much more that He planned for His Son.

Jesus humbled Himself further than anyone ever has, but God raised Him higher than any man could ever attain to. *“Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name”* (Philippians 2:9). God planned for Jesus to take the greatest humiliation ever endured as He bore the Father's wrath against sin, and then the Father planned for Jesus to be crowned with the greatest honor ever given. Jesus was given the name that surpasses every other name *“so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father”* (2:10-11). What would it be like for a president to receive a 100 percent approval rating? That sounds like a fairy tale. But Jesus will receive total praise and affirmation from all of His creation. Even the rebel's knee will bow on that day. The end result of all of this will be *“to the glory of God the Father.”* The humility and exaltation of Jesus led to the Father being glorified. Consequently He received the highest honor and glory. And in the midst of this, sinners are granted pardon and redemption, as Jesus considered their needs above His own.

This is the mind that we are called to have. It is a mind based in love and leading to unity. Rather than trampling on our brothers and sisters in Christ through rivalry and conceit, we are freed to lift them up and encourage them to use the gifts that God has given them for our good and His glory. We are freed to entrust ourselves to God and serve others in radical ways, knowing that even if we are not honored adequately by them, our good Father will exalt us in due time.



By Patty Buswell

This mind frees us to take our eyes off of ourselves and consider the lives of those around us rather than be endlessly self-absorbed in our own cares. This mind gives total praise and glory to whom it is due: to our amazing God! May our God grant us the grace to have this same mind within us as we interact with one another. Katie Barclay Wilkinson put it well:



By Nathan Warner

May the mind of Christ my Savior,
Dwell in me from day to day
By His power and love controlling,
All I do and say.
May the love of Jesus fill me,
As the waters fill the sea,
Him exalting, self abasing, this is victory.
May His beauty rest upon me,
As I seek the lost to win,
And may they forget the channel,
Seeing only Him.



By Patty Buswell

What Is Humility?

By Jesse Larsen

In my article titled “Delighting in the Lord,” I pointed out that reverence for God is not a matter of our own intellect but a matter of simple child-like humility and faith (see Matthew 18:2-4). Once we have such a simple reverence, it is not so much a matter of whether or not we should be proud, as if God has given us some rule to ruin our joy, but we then see that we really have nothing to be proud of in the first place. The apostle Paul made this point in the following verse: “*For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?*” (1 Corinthians 4:7)

I would now like to explain this in more detail. Rather than truly submitting to God in simple reverence of His awesome character, we can sometimes become too focused on *our* ability to surrender or on *our* lack of ability to surrender. In doing so, we have not fully grasped the fact that our state, or what is in our heart, is not the object of our faith but rather that we are to look to Jesus, “*the author and finisher of our faith*” (Hebrews 12:2).

If **God Himself** accomplishes our surrender, then we will realize that we have nothing to be proud of once we have truly surrendered. We then realize that to be proud is to be **blind**. And God does indeed accomplish our surrender: “*Of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God – and righteousness and sanctification and redemption – that, as it is written, ‘He who glories, let him glory in the Lord’*” (1 Corinthians 1:30-31).

Some people have implied that they are trying their best to live humbly, but the very fact that we would **strive** so hard to attain humility before such an **awesome, perfect, and holy God** only shows that we have not gotten an accurate view of His awesome character. If we got the view of God that Job and Isaiah did and thus an accurate view of ourselves, then we could not help but, in simple child-like faith

and humility, show reverence for the awesome character of God.

Just as pride becomes the very nature of the natural man, so humility becomes the nature of those whose surrender **God Himself** has accomplished. In this case, **Jesus Himself** has become our humility (I will explain more about that later in this article). On the other hand, if we are striving in the flesh to attain humility or if we insist on believing that self-esteem and humility are the same thing, then we may only continually find ourselves becoming proud of how “humble” we are. The truly humble soul will acknowledge that they have a need for continual humility as long as they are on this earth. We will always need continual humility until Jesus is fully revealed, and we “*see Him as He is*” (1 John 3:2).

For example, even the apostle Paul acknowledged that his thorn in the flesh was “*lest [he] should be exalted above measure*” (2 Corinthians 12:7). This apostle, who was full of such amazing love and godly wisdom still needed to be kept from being exalted above measure. Since that was the case with the great apostle Paul, we can be sure that it is also the case with us as long as we are on this earth. It is only when Jesus comes back to take us home that we will finally know, just as we also are known (see 1 Corinthians 13:12).

Some of the things which once seemed unfair and unclear to us will then be beautiful to us. I imagine that it will be embarrassing to find out about all of the blind spots that we had while we were on this earth, but at the same time, we will then see the beauty in what we once saw as unfair. The reason that I mentioned that is because we often view God as someone who wants to ruin our joy, but we have it backwards. For example, we may be afraid to lose the vain, temporary, worldly joy that we have in receiving honor from one another, but in doing so, we have not truly believed, in simple child-like faith, that there is a much greater joy in Christ. Andrew Murray put it this way: “Brethren! Nothing can cure you of the desire to receive honor from men, or of the sensitivity and pain and anger which come when it is not given, except giving your-

self to seek only the glory that comes from God. Let the glory of the **all-glorious God** be everything to you. You will be freed from the glory of men and of self, and be **content** and **glad** to be nothing. Out of this nothingness you will grow strong in faith, giving glory to God. You will find that the deeper you sink in humility before Him, the nearer He is to fulfill every desire of your faith” (Andrew Murray, *Humility*, page 72, bold emphasis added. This resource is available to read online for free).

Indeed, “*He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him*” (Psalm 145:19). And once again, this simple reverence is not a matter of our own intellect. That should be obvious by now. It is an acknowledgement of our own utter helplessness and unworthiness before a perfect, holy God – and such an acknowledgment will come from getting an accurate view of His awesome character.

For many of us, it often takes a deep burden and despair for us to get a more accurate view of God. For example, Paul stated that “*we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of our life. Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead*” (2 Corinthians 1:8-9).

This verse is not saying that God causes all of the suffering in the world, and I don’t believe that He does. In fact, the Bible even tells us that “*He does not afflict willingly*” (Lamentations 3:33). But, in a world full of suffering which has been brought on **by the vanity of sin**, a deep despair is sometimes what He needs to use in order to get our attention. This is sometimes what is needed for God to accomplish our surrender. It was not until I reached the point of utter despair and emptiness that God finally got my attention (see my testimony published in the April 2012 edition of the Berean Lamp Newsletter under the title *The Story of a New Creation*).

So what is humility? It is the very nature of Jesus Himself. As we cloth ourselves with humility, we are actually clothing ourselves with the very nature of Jesus Himself. Paul wrote, “*Let this mind be in you which was also in*

*Christ Jesus [who]...made Himself of **no reputation**, taking the form of a **bondservant**, and coming in the likeness of man*” (Philippians 2:5-7). When God accomplishes our surrender, the humble personality of Jesus then becomes our personality, and we then see things the same way that He sees them. This is what it means to have the mind of Christ.

Jesus Himself said, “*I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because **I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me***” (John 5:30). Just as Jesus was drawing on the power of the Father, so we must draw on His power. Just as Jesus could do nothing of Himself but drew His power from the Father, so we can do nothing of ourselves. This is why Jesus said, “*Without Me you can do nothing*” (John 15:5). When He said, “*Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls*” (Matthew 11:29), His desire was that we would be clothed with the same meekness, which is **His very nature**.

In order to understand this humility, we must understand that Jesus did not come to be served but to serve: “*Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your **servant**, even as the Son of Man came to serve*” (Matthew 20:27-28). It is this same mind which He hopes to give us (see Philippians 2:5 once again). Any other kind of “humility” is false humility.

Once we truly have this humility, our love for God and for our neighbor then compels us to seek only His will, just as Jesus (Who has then become our humility) did not seek His own will but the will of the Father. With the realization that God’s glory is the only glory that will truly profit mankind, we then seek only for Him to be glorified, knowing that if we exalt ourselves in any way, God is thereby dishonored, and our testimony of His grace may then be seen by the world as bogus.

If you have noticed that this humility is lacking in you, please don’t be discouraged. If this humility is indeed lacking in you, then I just ask you to draw on Jesus’ power right now, and He will freely give you the humility that you ask for. Remember, without Him you can do nothing.

Skillfully Arrogant? Or Graced with Humility?

By Lynn Warner

Humility is to respect, esteem, and love God and our brethren in Christ more than ourselves. In contrast, pride is to usurp God and take His place, making us His enemy. Satan is the Biblical example of God's enemy and our enemy. Since we are to know the weapons of our enemy, let's look at pride's arsenal of arrogance skills and contrast this arsenal with the God-given grace of humility.

The root meaning of pride is "to swell" or rise up. The root of pride is also used in a word meaning "to fret" or to be agitated. This agitation utilizes many sins to raise "self" and harm others because of our selfish and self-centered attitude. This agitation tends to spread by arousing pride in others, and strife takes root.

Pride discourages and undermines our foundation in Christ, Who was "full of grace and truth" and "of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace" (John 1:14a, 16). Because pride is on the heart's throne instead of God, it becomes an accuser and judge of others. By defining others as "guilty," pride acquires power. Pride likes to bring the feeling

of failure and guilt to others, so when we feel this from others, we must rest in God's provision: a relationship with Him through Jesus. Humility looks to God for help. We can ask God for help from His Word, His provision.

For example, we can read how Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness. God had just publicly announced at Jesus' baptism, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased" (Matthew 3:17b). Satan began all three of his attacks by attempting to inject doubt in His identity by saying, "If You are the Son of God..." (Matthew 4:3a). Second, he challenged Jesus to "prove it" by changing stone to bread or jumping off the pinnacle.



"LET HIM WHO
BOASTS,
BOAST IN THE
LORD."

(1 Corinthians 1:31)

By Nathan Warner

But Jesus went straight to the Word of God and God's provision for His life. He accepted His life and the suffering at the hand of man. Humility accepts the identity and the life God gives with gratitude.

Pride tempts us to doubt, but God's gift of the Holy Spirit instills our confidence in Him and His love and care for us. God does not withhold good things from His children but gives us what He determines we need. Pride has to be "right" and accuses us of being "wrong," and it makes us "prove" our identity and acceptance in the Beloved. Humility rests in God.

Pride also wants to keep us confused and unbalanced. Some of the weapons of confusion are domineering behaviors. To domineer means to "rush" or "push." When we encounter pride, we may feel constantly "off balance" or even fearful, but we don't know why. We often don't have the words to describe the strategies used against us. That's why it may help to study the lists of behaviors in the Bible and look up the definitions of all the words.* Also, we can ask God for discernment.

Pride excludes and rejects others. Abandonment is murder in the sense that it "kills" our existence. We are not "seen," "heard," or "felt." Companionship, presence, and compassion are withheld from us. But humility rests in the knowledge that God sees, hears, and acknowledges us. His presence is always with us.

Pride may be boastful and easily recognized, but it can also be hidden behind another arsenal of weapons. One way to see some of these strategies is by reading passages on the Pharisees. Jesus calls them "hypocrites" or actors, and He unmasked them. They used flattery, deception, and malicious "traps" to accuse Jesus. But Jesus did not step on their dance floor and play their game. He did not allow pride to rise up in Him. He remained in humility. He responded with truth about their methods and intent.

Finally, pride causes strife and stops the stream of the Holy Spirit. Some of these weapons are sarcasm, cynicism, scorn, disdain, contempt, intimidation, and "joking." Pride

loves to take the place of God, accusing and judging others. It also usurps the Holy Spirit's authority, trying to control others – their beliefs, feelings, and actions, often using Scripture passages. Other ways pride stops the stream of the Holy Spirit is through accusing, murmuring, complaining, and destroying another's credibility. But humility builds up through respect, esteem, and love. Humility accepts the life God has ordained for us and the suffering through which we learn obedience, with Jesus as our example.

In summary, pride plays "God" by defining everything and everyone according to its own wants and perceptions. Pride also plays "God" by usurping the role of the Holy Spirit. Pride accuses, judges, weakens, undermines, murmurs, complains, and teaches its own version of Scripture. Pride attempts to supplant God and have individuals worship a different "God," causing confusion. Pride's roots of "swelling," "fret," or agitation give us a clue to the types of attributes found in its arsenal of weapons. And the Biblical example of pride, Satan, gives us a clue to the attributes of our mortal enemy. Our enemy desires to arouse pride and strife in our own hearts against God and against others. But humility patiently submits everything to God and stands in the identity He has given us in Christ Jesus. Humility accepts what God has ordained for our provision, including suffering. Humility allows God to remove pride's sin of selfishness, self-centeredness, fretfulness, irritability, anger, and hatred of God. Humility is not rude and does not "rush" or push others but responds in the love described in 1 Corinthians 13. We can then obey Jesus' commands both to love God and to love one another. We can ask ourselves the question: Am I skillfully arrogant, or am I graced with humility?

*Romans 1:18-32; Galatians 5:16-21; and 2 Timothy 3 list ways pride may be revealed. Galatians 5 and 1 Corinthians 13 describe the fruit of the Spirit and ways love may be revealed.

May/June Newsletter Theme—CONTENTMENT

Submission Deadline: May 25

Publish Date: June 3

Contentment...

- requires you to trust God and hold to His promises
- recognizes God's sovereignty and omnipotence
- requires you to admit your fallibility
- endures patiently
- is sown from unbelief and pride
- is opposite of the fruit of the world's system
- forces us to realize His grace is sufficient
- can only happen through surrender and living out "not my will but Thine"



Verses on Contentment (from the NASB version)

2 Corinthians 12:8-10 – *“Concerning this [the thorn in the flesh] I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. And He has said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.’ Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.”*

Hebrews 13:5-6 – *“Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, ‘I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,’ so that we confidently say, ‘THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?’”*

Philippians 2:14-15 – *“Do all things without grumbling or disputing; so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world....”*

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 – *“Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”*

Ideas for Submissions

- Share a personal testimony of a time when you struggled with contentment.
- Contrast pride and contentment. How are they related?
- Use a concept found in nature for an object lesson on contentment. Take a picture to go along with it.
- Why is contentment against our nature? Write about the world’s definition of “contentment.” Is there one?
- Sketch a drawing representing contentment.
- Write about how rejoicing, thankfulness, and contentment are connected Scripturally.
- Photograph the early plantings coming up and the birds returning from the south. Write up a caption for your photo and find a Scripture to go with it!

Further Out—Jul/Aug 2014: RESURRECTION