

## 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 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.