

Living Graciously Through Humility

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C. Elijah Bronner: Everything we are and all that we have, and everything we can do, it comes from God.

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(Music Playing)

And now for 7794, Living Graciously Through Humility: Part 2.

C. Elijah Bronner: Thank you for joining Brothers of the Word, because brother you need the word. We welcome all of you joining us on brothersoftheword.com. Those of you joining us live on television or streaming us on Facebook Live, we welcome you to today's service, always a wonderful delight and joy to have to tune in and join us.

I would like to share just a little humor. A pastor skipped church one Sunday morning to play golf and he told his assistant he wasn't feeling well, and he drove to another city where no one would know him. He teed off on the first hole and suddenly the wind picked up his ball and carried it an extra hundred yards and it blew right into the hole for a 420-yard hole in one. An angel looked at God and said, "Why did you do that?" God smiled and said, "Who's he going to tell?"

Well, we are sharing something we begin last time entitled "Living Graciously Through Humility." And we shared a scripture over in the Book of James. You can flip over to the Book of James if you have your Bibles.

The Book of James, Chapter 4, we shared Verse 6 and Verse 10 and it reads there, "But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."

And also, we shared a verse over in 1st Peter, Chapter 5, Verse 5 and 6 says, "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.” Or, He will give you a life of significance at the right time.

Man, praise God. How many of you rather have God to exalt you than you trying to exalt yourself? I love that. There is something about humility where God promotes, where God exalts you, where God raises you up and He does that.

The way to go up in God’s side is to go down. You go down, God will take you up. There are some things in the Kingdom of God, they work inversely. So, the way up is down. You go down and God will take you up. And so, I just love that. I just love the fact that He gives grace to the humble. God, He adds to your life, He gives you something when you have a humble heart, when you have a meekness.

The Bible says that we should receive the word in the spirit of meekness. That’s humility. We receive the engrafted word so that it can work effectually in our lives and it can be of use in a value in our lives. It takes humility to even receive God’s words. So, I want to thank all of you all for just having a heart of humility to be able to receive God’s word and to say, “Lord, I want to change.” Or, “Lord, I want to grow.” Or, “Lord, I want to be a better Christian. I want to be a better son or a daughter. I want to represent your Kingdom.” And that’s a hall of humanity because I want to commend all of you all for just receiving the word with meekness and humility and allowing it to work in be effectual in your lives. But He gives grace to the humble.

We define grace as favor, acceptance, a kindness granted, a benefit, gratitude, a favor done without expectation of return.

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It refers to the absolute freeness of the loving kindness of God to men finding His only motive in the bounty and free heartedness of the giver. It’s unearned or unmerited favor. And so, this is God’s grace that He gives to the humble. He adds grace to the humble.

And because God asks all these things to the humble, we are able to live graciously through humility. It’s through our humility that we receive grace which in turn we’re able to live graciously with

others because God gives grace to the humble. And so, we live graciously because He has given us grace. And so, just as we said that God gives us grace, all of these things in the definition I just gave you, God gives all of that to us in grace and we're able to give all those things to others because we live graciously with others because of the grace we have received through humility.

So, God gives the grace. We take the grace that God gives us and we live extending that grace to others. Isn't that a wonderful system? So, God gives us a grace. And so, the reason we can live graciously is because God has graced us. God has graced us. I can treat you favorably because God has given favor. And so, I can treat you favorably because I'm living out of the very supply that He has added to my own life. Praise God. So, we're able to live graciously.

Humility is powerful. Everybody say that, "Humility is powerful." It is powerful. Saint Augustine said this. He said, "It was pride that changed angels into devils. It is humility that makes men as angels." Because it's humility that will exalt you, it's humility that will bless you.

Remember, we read the rewards of the humility last time out of the Book of Proverbs and says that humility adds life, riches, and honor to your life, so humility pays, humility pays rich dividends. It pays rich dividends into our lives.

Now, we define humility as to lower oneself, it means to abase pushing yourself down to earth, it's total absence of arrogance, pride or conceit, total absence of faultiness, self-exaltation is a modest of oneself. I'm trying to put on airs or you're not trying to impress anybody. You're not trying to put on.

I remember one great pastor. He said one of the ways he keeps himself humble, he say he keeps a picture in his office and this picture is a picture of a woman and she was at a very regal affair, very celebrated affair and she had on all of her regal dress and all of her regal jewels and she was just so airy and she was drinking her punch even with her pinky poked out, she was so regal and just such a picture of royalty. But he said at the bottom of the picture it showed her feet and her slip had slipped down and it was covering her shoes and she was unaware. He said he keeps that picture in his office just to remind him to never think more of yourself than you should.

So, it's not putting on any airs. It's just being yourself. You have to be comfortable being yourself, being who got not trying to impress anybody. We can get so puffed up. Man, you get a new outfit and you just wear it and you have a different glad in your walk when you're wearing a new outfit. You know yourself(ph). You just know it. You get your hair done and you get nobody tell you anything. You get a new car or a new job or a new house, man, you're just beside yourself.

So, we all are susceptible to pride in life, we're all susceptible to it. But God resists the proud. And how many of you (00:09:11) God fighting against you? He resists the proud, He opposes the proud, He resists it. So, we don't want God resisting us, so I would rather be in a position to receive His grace. He gives grace to the humble. And so, there is something about humility.

Jesus talked the great deal about humility Himself. He talked. So, I'm not surprised to hear the Apostle James and the Apostle Peter talking about humility because they walked with the greatest illustration of humility, Christ Jesus Himself. This was God Himself who was born in a manger. God Himself just walking around like an everyday guy. This is God Himself sitting with sinners. God Himself walking with prostitute. God Himself who came to the lowly of the lowest and this is God Himself, so He illustrated the humility.

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But Jesus told His disciples about humility. Every once in a while, they would get decide themselves and ask who is the greatest among us and Jesus will say, "Look, unless you humble yourself as this little child, none of you are going to have any part of the Kingdom of Heaven." You can't even get into the Kingdom of Heaven without humility because it takes humility to even admit that you're a sinner and you need help, that you need saving.

It takes humility to say, "Father, I need your righteousness. Mine is no good." That takes humility to fall on your knees and say, "God, I want to turn my life over to you." That's humility. Jesus gave the illustration of that when the Pharisee beat on his chest and He said, "Father, I thank you that I fast twice a week and I think you that I pray often, and I thank you that I helped the

poor.” No, He was in his own self-righteous. But then, they are the sinner that just beaten on His chest and say, “Father, have mercy on me, a sinner.” Jesus said, “That man is justified. That man to receive the grace of God.” So, humility is powerful. It opens up the grace of God to pour in our lives, it opens up God to work on our behalf and God is able to do some great things in our lives when we have a correct heart attitude, when we walk humbly with God. So, we live graciously through humility.

Remember what we said, Proverbs 15, 33, “Before honour is humility.” I love this verse. This is actually one of the verses that Jesus said and this is in the message Bible. I believe it says, “If you puff yourself up, you'll get the wind knocked out of you. But if you're content to simply be yourself, your life will count for plenty.”

And so, that's all. We just have to remember to stay rooted in ground and keep our feet on the ground and realizes by the grace of God, that we are who we are, we have what we have, and we can do what we can do. That's the grace of God. That's humility. And so, we want to live our lives with this gracious humility.

We said that the true hard and essence of humility is recognizing that everything we are and all that we have and every we can do, it comes from God. Those are His gracious gifts to us. Humility recognizes us how inadequate we are by ourselves, yet how valuable we are because of Him, because of His love towards us that makes so valuable. And humility always exalts God, it always exalts God. Humility always exalts God. It always brings glory to God. It always thinks of others.

You noticed in the life of the Apostle Paul, he said, “I could be a fool and brag on myself.” And he tease the people a little bit. He said, “Now, I couldn't be a fool and brag on myself. You all do know that I am a Pharisee. You all do know that I am an Israelite. You all do know that I'm concerning the law. I was blameless.”

Paul (00:13:08), “If I wanted to brag, I could.” But he said, “I wouldn't be a fool and bragging because He's all of that stuff. I counted His dung that I might gain Christ. I want to gain Christ. I counted all of that is nothing. I want that self-righteous stuff that I have done is nothing. I rather have and be able to give glory to God for His grace in my life. It's the grace of God in my life that I'm able to do anything.”

And so, he realized that. And so, he was very careful that it was the grace of God. In fact, he realized that there were some things in his life that God actually stirred up against him in order to keep him humble. He recognized that fact. He said because of the abundance of revelations that he was receiving, Paul wrote two-thirds of the New Testament. Nobody understood the mystery of Christ Jesus but the Apostle Paul. He unlocked the mystery of all the ages of who and what we are and Christ Jesus. Nobody had done that even the disciples didn't fully know who and what it happened to us because of Jesus going to the (00:14:17). Paul unlocked that mystery. And he revealed it and so he has such abundant revelation and he said, "God has given me a tone(ph) and a flesh so that I wouldn't get beyond myself because all of these great revelations.

So, Paul understood the challenges that were start up against and that kept him humble. It kept him depending on God. It kept him praying. He had to pray because hard things were coming against him. But all of that was done in order to keep him rooted and grounded and keep him humble.

And so, he recognized and he got to the point where he was actually happy. He said, "Now, I glory in my affirmatives because I rather -- the power of God is made perfect in my weakness."

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So he said, "If I was in my own strength, then I wouldn't need the power of God. I wouldn't depend on and look forward on any of that." But he said, "Now, so much stuff coming against me. Man, I need the power of God." And so, he got to the point where he said, "I rather be weak so that the power of Christ will rest on me." His strength is made perfect in our weakness. That's a heart of humility. So, he understood where his grace came from and what enabled him to do what he did in life.

I like something that Corrie ten Boom said. She was recounting an account. She says, "When I saw Sadhu Singh in Europe, he had completed a tour around the world. People asked him, 'Doesn't do harm you getting so much honor?' And Sadhu's answer was, 'No.' He said the donkey went into Jerusalem and they put garments on the ground before him. He was not proud. He knew it was done to honor him but for Jesus who was sitting

on his back. So, when people honor me, I know it is not me but the Lord who does the job.”

That’s a great way to think of it when you are doing things that it is not for you. You represent Christ Jesus and you give Him honor, you give Him glory and all that you do because it’s Him, He’s the one that deserves the glory. He’s the one who deserves the praise.

I brought a video. Avy(ph), if you can roll the first video. This is the video of Stephen Curry, one of NBA’s brightest stars but he talks a little bit about the glory he gives to God.

Stephen Curry: I can’t say enough how important my faith is to how I play the game and who I am. There are priorities in life. And now you see your faith is first and foremost. How we did in school growing up was important. If we didn’t handle that business, then there are no privileges. I remember sitting down my first middle school game because I had my stuff at home. That’s a pretty embarrassing moment if you go to your first middle school game and yet tell your teammate, “Fellas, I can’t play tonight. I didn’t do the dishes at home.”

Just that lesson taught me, there’s more than life than basketball. I do a little sign on the court every time I make a shot. I make a good pass and I pound my chest and point to the sky symbolizes that I have a heart for God, something with my mom and I came up with -- in college and I do it every time when I step on floor as a reminder of who I’m playing for. And people should know who I represent and why I am who I am and that’s because of my Lord and savior, so I can’t say that enough.

I was always the smallest kid on my team. When it comes with basketball, I was always the smallest kid on my team. I had a terrible ugly catapult shot from -- until I was 14 because I wasn’t strong enough to shoot over my head and I had to reconstruct that over at summer and it was the worst three months of my life.

You think there were no hurdles or obstacles that I had to overcome, but even I got the high school, I wasn’t ranked. I wasn’t ranked, I wasn’t highly taught as a high school prospect. I had no buddy really running knocking on my door saying “Please, please, please come play for our school”, until Coach McKillop called.

Everything happens for a reason and there's a story to everything. And if you take time and realize what your dream is and what you really want in life no matter what it is, whether sports, whether it's in other fields, you got to realize that there's always work to do and you want to be the hardest working person in whatever you do and you put yourself in position to be successful. And you have to have a passion about what you do and basketball was mine and that's what scared me to this point.

A part of that is having the wheel to succeed. Knowing that you put the work in and have the confidence to let it show. What I tell people is, "Just be the best version of yourself in anything that you do." You don't have to live anybody else's story. Sometimes people make a scene like you have to have certain prerequisites or crazy life story in order to be successful in this world, but the truth is, you really don't.

I doesn't matter where you come from, what you have or don't have, what you lack, what you have too much of, but all you need to have is faith in God and undying passion for what you do and what you choose to do in this life, and a relentless drive and the will to do whatever it takes to be successful and whatever you put your mind to. Make sure you live in the moment and work your butt off every single day. And I hope I inspire people all around the world to just be themselves, be humble and be grateful for the all blessings in your life.

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C. Elijah Bronner: Praise God. What a great example. Stephen Curry is regarded possibly as the greatest shooter of all time. We're living in this moment right now and there's no accident. He's already won three rings and God has really promoted them and exalted his life. But you see who he gives the glory to. And so, he's a sterling example and I just admire him for the stance that he takes for his faith and the glory that he brings to God. I know Suzane(ph) would enjoy that. Suzane has already -- she put a Golden State banner in my office. I was actually pulling against Golden State because I'm a LeBron James fan, but Suzane beat me. She won the bet.

So, I'm just humbly taking the -- I'm humbly taking defeat. But I really do admire Stephen Curry's faith and he's stance even one

at Philippians 4:13 put on a tennis shoe and that's why he's with under armor. So, he's just a great, great guy and I just love his statement of faith and the way that he brings God glory in what he does.

So, I wanted to share just a few things that produces humility in your life. Prayer produces humility. Prayer produces humility because when we pray, we thank to God, Father, we honor you. We speak of His greatness. We speak of how much we need Him. We speak of His grace in our life. So, prayer produces humility.

Gratitude produces humility. Humility is very quick to thank others. Humility is very quick to thank God. In fact, I brought a little video about gratitude. Avy, if you can roll the second video. This is Steve Harvey.

Steve Harvey: Someone wants me to come out of standup retired.

Male: Hey, Steve, Bruce and Cheech, when the comedy club StarDome in Birmingham, Alabama. You remember 1989? We gave you your first headline in gig. I'll never forget the one joke that you did at our club. You took in to the Apollo. It took you to the top. You remember that joke, Steve? It was Mike Tyson hitting Mitch Green in the eye. They did an interview with Mitch Green. Steve, look at me. You remember this? I'll tell you what happened. That was the funniest joke ever. We love you, brother.

Steve Harvey: First, comedy club that ever allowed me to headline at a comedy club. Nobody else never let me headline. They wouldn't hire me because there was a first guy. Him and his wife, believed in me. They have the best comedy club in the country, the StarDome in Birmingham and that's Bruce and Cheech Ayers. I love you all and I really appreciate that, man.

Male: Happy birthday, buddy.

Female: Happy birthday.

C. Elijah Bronner: Praise God. So, gratitude produces humility. Gratitude produces humility. Gratitude makes you realize that everything we have comes from God in one way or another. Everything we have, everything we are, it all comes from God. So, gratitude when you realize how blessed your life is, you just sit down and began to count your blessings and you're grateful for things in your life,

just the little things, it produces humility. So, gratitude produces humility.

Then, number three, service. Service produces humility. 1st Peter 5:5 said, "Be clothed with humility." And literally that is translated as "apron yourselves". So, put on a servants garb and you begin to serve. You begin to serve. So, humility always serve. Say that with me, "Humility always serve." Humility always serve. So, if you want to walk in humility, always find yourself serving.

When I arrived here this evening in the parking lot, I was greeted by Mr. Farley. He was taking the garbage out and many people see him up here singing with the man, but they may not see him taking out the trash. Humility always serves.

And then, the fourth thing, brokenness, we talked about that last time. Brokenness produces humility. Sometimes, you have to fall flat on your face so that you realize you're not a hotshot after all. And so, sometimes God allow embarrassing things to happen just to deflate your ego and bring you back down and you realize, "I'm not all of that after all. I'm a man that's living by the grace of God and I need to realize that."

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So, brokenness produces humility. Brokenness is good for us.

I'm going to give these final few things that humility does in our lives. It helps us to admit mistakes to say that I was wrong. It takes humility to forgive. It takes humility to think of others. Listen to the scripture, Philippians 2, Verse 3 and 4 says, "Don't be selfish, don't try to impress others, be humble. Thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interest, but take an interest in others as well."

So, humility always thinks of others. Humility is always teachable. No matter how good you are, you can always learn more. Humility helps us to be teachable and you can learn from anyone. There's something to gain from everyone, so you can learn from anyone. There was a football coach. He would drive five hours to go to the football practice of another coach. And the football coach that he was driving five hours to go sit in was actually inferior to him. He had less wins than he had, but he

said he would always learn at least one thing that this coach did differently than he did and he added it to his repertoire. It helped him. Even though he didn't have as many wins, he found something distinguishing and something beneficial that he can incorporate into this organization into his coaching skills that made him a better coach. So, humility keeps us teachable. You can always learn something no matter how good you are. Humility helps us to remain teachable. Praise God.

Well, we're going to stop right there. I'm out of time. I had poured some things that Mother Teresa said because she's probably the - - in modern time, she's the best picture of humility in service and I had poured about 10 things that she said how to create and cultivate humility. I don't know. I might continue. I don't know. I'll have to see how humble I feel. I'm out of time. Those of you who are watching us by television, I want you to go to brothersoftheword.com. You can listen to this series. It is entirely absolutely free of charge, Living Graciously Through Humility: Parts 1 and 2. You can also email them to a friend. Thank you so much for joining us today at Brothers of the Word, because brother you need the word.

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