

Hills Part 5: The Humility Hill

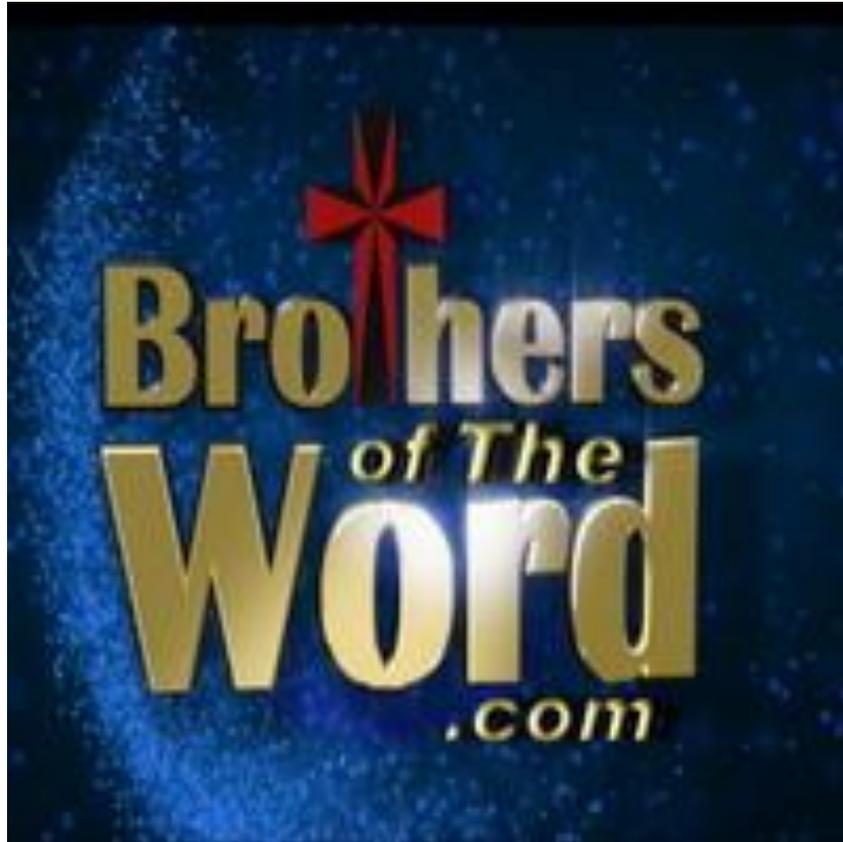
Sermon Title: **Hills Part 5: The Humility Hill**

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Speaker: **Nathaniel Bronner**

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Nathaniel Bronner: Sometimes we have to fall down the mountain to realize whose mountain we're on.

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(Music Playing: 00:00:24 - 00:00:52)

And now for 5678 "Hills Part 5: The Humility Hill"

Nathaniel Bronner: Welcome to Brothers of the Word, because brother, you need the word.

And today, I am in the midst of a series simply called "Hills" H-I-L-L-S. Throughout life we have hills that we have to climb and tackle. Part 1 dealt with "God's View of Time, Distance and Magnitude" that if you shrunk the earth down to the size of a billiard or pool ball, it would fit in the hand of God and it is as smooth as a ball bearing. So, our hills are not hills to God. Hills Part 2, "How Hills are Made." Hills are not accidental; hills are necessary. Hills Part 3, "Jesus Taught Most of His Major Messages on Hills" or mountains. Hills Part 4, "The Unforgiving Hill." If you don't forgive others, God won't forgive you. And today, Part 5 of Hills, "The Humility Hill."

The Humility Hill. Trying to be humble is another one of those big hills that all of us face. And when we make no errors or mistakes, we become self-righteous and judgmental. And sometimes God will use our hills. He'll use our stumbles. He'll use our errors to bring us to the point where at least we can relate to other folk because when you don't have any errors, you sometimes wonder, "How come these folks are making these errors?"

I remember a case of a young fellow who was talking about marriage and before he got married, he said he could not understand why so many people divorced. And then, when he got married, he said he could not understand how so many folks stay together. So, the thing is, if you haven't made some mess-ups and if you haven't gone up some hills yourself, it's why Jesus even had to come in the flesh, so he could understand something that's

different when you walk in another man shoes. It's different when you experience it yourself. Things change when you see it from another perspective.

My wife and I were out yesterday and we pulled on the parking of the grocery store and right beside us was a little bitty two-seater convertible. There was a couple in it and it was an old couple. When the man got out of the convertible, the convertible was sitting really low on the ground. He was an older man. When he got out, he got out and he could barely get out. When he got out, he walked over and he had to just do his leg like this. And then his wife on the other end, she got out of the car. She had to hold on to the door and pull out.

My wife and I, we were just looking at the couple. But you see, as I get older in age, I can relate. And it used to be when you got up, you didn't even think about getting up ever. You could get up off of the floor, you could bounce, and there was no issue about anything. But when you get a little age on you, sometimes you have to be really careful how you get up, how fast you get up, you have to make sure that you don't twist a certain way when you get up because stuff pop, snap, and then you have to stretch stuff. It just makes a difference.

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So, when I saw the older couple as in the man who has some age and I could understand, I could emphasize, I could relate. And sometimes you have to have some hills in your life, so that you can relate to others and it keeps you from being so judgmental and self-righteous because you have gone through some stuff, because you have fallen down, because you have dealt with some of the stuff and the mess in life. You have dealt with some of those same hills. Now, hills will cause you to fall. There's no question about it.

I took a member up Stone Mountain. It's been perhaps a couple of years ago, but God -- "Just take him up Stone Mountain." So, we went up Stone Mountain. When we got to the top of Stone Mountain, he told me, he said, "Pastor, this is the first time I have truly ever completed anything." And I beat him to the top of the hill. I was able to work straight up the hill. I had to stop and rest about three or four times. I felt pretty good. I'm in pretty good shape. He was half my age and I was up that much faster.

We got ready to come down and it started raining. For those of you who have gone to Stone Mountain, it's the largest exposed piece of granite on the face of the earth. When granite gets wet it's like glass, it's slippery. And I knew it was slippery. So, coming down, I am super careful and it was raining, light mist and this granite was slick. I failed. My feet came out from under me. But all of us have been in martial arts for a good while, so, when I fall from my old judo training, I still catch myself. So, I caught myself on my hand, but it jammed my wrist. It hurt my wrist.

Now, younger, it wouldn't have bothered my wrist. But it hurt my wrist. And the thing about it is this, and this is a brother point: You can't be proud falling. See, I was kind of puffed up going up, but coming down, you can't be proud falling. See, that was God's rain and I was careful because I knew the granite was slick, but I just couldn't help it and my feet went off from under me and I failed. There are some things in life, even when you see it, even when you know it, there some things in life you are just going to fall, and you can't be proud fallen. Yet, there are times when God will have to call you to stumble and fall just to make you humble because you've gotten puffed up in pride and he has to cause you stumble for a purpose and it simply makes a difference in helping to bring your pride under control.

Hill actually phonetically is three different words. It's the hill that we're talking about, the H-I-L-L. Heal, meaning to make something well, H-E-A-L. The other heel is H-E-E-L which is of course the rear lower part of the foot, but it is also a command that a master gives his dog. There are five basic obedient commands for dogs, come, sit, stay, down and heel. I want you to play the video. This is just a video of a dog learning to heel.

Female:

Heeling is not a kind of nature of a dog's behavior. Unlike, walking, it doesn't give a dog the possibility to look around exploring the surroundings. While heeling, a dog's attention must be completely concentrated upon his handler, his movements dictated by the terms of the handler's left leg. When performing this command, your dog should be on your left side, his head or shoulders parallel to your leg. He should keep in pace with you when you walk, run or change direction and should sit every time you stop.

Nathaniel:

So, that's basically what it means for a dog to heel. It means for the dog to walk on the master's left side. It means for the dog to keep pace with the master and it means for the dog to keep his eyes on the master. We need to heel. We need to walk with God.

00:10:00

We don't need to try to walk ahead of God, we don't need to try to walk behind God, and we need to keep our eyes on God. But like dogs, heeling is the most difficult of the commands for the dog to follow because the dog wants to go off on his own. Dogs don't want to walk beside the master. Dogs want to run to see what's over this way. Dogs want to run to see what's over that way. Dogs get tired sometime. Dogs just want to sit down. Dogs don't want to follow the master. Heeling is a difficult command for so many of us to follow, but if we would learn to heel, so many of our things in life would be healed. And because we cannot keep our eyes on God, and it's not easy to keep your eyes on God. It's not. That's why I had to go through some things to understand the spiritual walk is just not that easy.

The disciples had all kinds of problems with it. It's just not that easy. And God always says, he says, "Don't you tell people anything to do, that you can't do." It's hard to keep your eyes on God because you know there's a lot of other stuff in the world to put your eyes on. There's a lot of stuff that distracts you to try to stay in the path and in the direction that God wants you to go. It's just not easy, but we need to learn how to heel. And you see, when you keep your eyes on God, he takes your eyes off of you. And if you just keep your eyes on "This is what God wants me to do, I want to follow God's plan for my life, I want to know what God has for me." And when we can get that, we turn around the D-O-G into G-O-D and we change some things in our world simply because we learned to heel.

The Humility Hill is just not easy. Alex Haley, who is the author of the television series and the book "Roots." He has pitcher in his office. The pitcher is a turtle sitting on top of a fence pole. The pitcher is there to remind him of a lesson he said that he learned long time ago. The lesson is simply this: If you see a turtle on a fence post, you know the turtle had some help getting there. And when we understand that this is not us that has taken us to a certain position, we're like a turtle on a fence post, we had some help getting there. When we understand that we've had

help, it helps to keep us humble when we realize that it's just not all us. And sometimes we could look at our successes and we can say to ourselves, "Lord, look what all I've done. Look what all I've accomplished." But when you really go to analyzing that thing, you are a turtle on a fence post. You got some help getting where you are. God, himself, has often reached down and pulled you out of some situations, has placed a hedge around you, has given you some ideas, has pulled you through when we realize we have not done this thing alone.

Now, there is part for you to do, but you can't save yourself, bottom line. Even when you do all your best, you still can't save yourself. You are a turtle on a fence post. You need some help. So, when we understand this, it helps to keep us humble.

Dale Moody said this. He says, "Be humble or you'll stumble." Be humble or you'll stumble. The Bible says, "Pride precedes a fall." Winston Churchill, who was the Prime Minister of England at the time is perhaps one of the greatest world leaders ever in history. Winston Churchill was a great orator, a great speaker and someone asked him and said, "Doesn't it thrill you to know that every time you make a speech, the whole hall is just packed to overflowing?" He said, "Doesn't that make you feel good, doesn't that make you feel joyous and doesn't that make you proud just to know that every time a great orator such as you speak, the place is just packed?" And Winston Churchill told him this. He said, "What I always remember is this." He said, "There would be twice as many people coming to see me if I were being hanged. There would be twice as many folks coming to see me if I were being hanged."

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As much as you do, as great as you are, folk will talk much more about your boobos than they will your successes. Just make one big public boobo. Just make one. You can do a hundred great things, just do one big public boobo, it'll be all over Facebook, folk who are twitting every way wants to remember that and understood that, and it helped to keep him humble.

The Greek word used in the New Testament for humble is "tapeinos," and it means to make low. The word "tapeinos" no literally means to level a mountain or hill. Biblical humility means of being of low estate. It means seeing others is higher

than our self. Humble people are those who have no hills sticking up. They're not filed up with hot air, of arrogance and pride. Jesus even told the Jews in Luke 14:7 that when invited to a special dinner, they should assume that they should take the seats that are the least important. Sit in the back, sit the lower portion. Don't try to sit up front and be a big shot. See, because those who exalt themselves will be brought low.

But humility to level a mountain is difficult and the word literally means to level a mountain or hill. That's why Jesus, if you got faith as a grain of a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, "Be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea." Sometimes that mountain is pride because that's what the word means; humility, it means to move a mountain. And Lord, have mercy if I don't struggle with pride. I'm just honest about my stuff. God, he told me that direct, he said, "Yeah, you're going to have power to raise the dead, but that's not your problem. Your problem is going to be dealing with the pride that goes with it."

How of us struggle with pride? I mean, even in ministry, Lord, have mercy, we preach a good sermon, and "Oh, did you know I had towed that one up. I towed that one up." All of us struggle with pride. The disciples, they all struggled with pride. Moving that mountain, that tapeinos, to level that hill. The Humility Hill is no joke, but pride precedes the fall and when God named the seven things that were abominations to him, the first one in the list was a proud look. And we struggle so much with that hill of trying to be humble.

And see, it really has nothing to do with our self-image and how we view our selves. It's how we view our selves in relation to God and man. It's easy to be humble before God. It's easy because we see how great God is. It's hard to be humble before man.

I man six feet, three-and-a-half inches tall. I'm taller than the 98% of man. So, if I go anywhere and just stand up, I can virtually look over the heads of just about everybody. I'm taller than 98% of man. I earn more money than 99% of all Americans. So, if you compare yourself to men, it's not difficult to get blown up. It's easy. And don't be looking at the pastor, "Pastor, you want to be ashamed of yourself?" Get real, people! There's flesh and all of us deal with it. That's why it's the Humility Hill and if God grants you just a measure more than your brother or your sister, you

start getting puffed up and you started getting proud and you set yourself up for a fall.

God has granted us everything that we have. Yes, we play a part in it. And sometimes there's a difference between humility and low self-esteem. Let me kind of tell you what the difference is because not many people truly understand the difference. Humility is a by-product of grace. You understand that everything you who have been granted has been granted by God. "But I worked hard for this." Yeah, but you had opportunities. You had things. You had abilities that were innate within. You had doors open. "Yeah, but you don't understand how smart I am." Well, how come your smarter than the next fellow? So many of these things, they were innate or favor or grace even though we may have worked hard.

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Humility is rooted in understanding grace. Pride and an inferiority complex are based on works. We often will have an inferiority complex because "I just haven't accomplished enough as the other fellow, I haven't done as much," while our pride is based in "I've done more." So, inferiority complex as in pride, they're based in works, but true humility is based on our understanding of grace that it is God that has granted me this.

And God has had to deal with me in so many ways with those hills. And when God has to change some things in your world to make you humble, it's like what happened with King Nebuchadnezzar. He went out and he looked over Babylon and he said, "Look at all of what my majesty and my royalty and my power has done." And then the word of the Prophet came and it wasn't long before Nebuchadnezzar was out in the street with the hair of a dog and the claws of an eagle scratching. And it was then that Nebuchadnezzar realized it was God who granted me all of this.

Sometimes we have to fall down the mountain to realize whose mountain we're on. That's why God can't let us be perfect. Because if he let us be perfect, we would be, oh, my goodness, we'd be so full of ourselves. That's why he has to send us through some things. Paul says, "His thorn in the flesh," was because he had great revelations and he knew God placed the thorn in his flesh to keep his pride in control, because Paul wrote most of the New

Testament. Nobody else was as prolific as he was. No one else was as great as Paul. So, God gave him a thorn in the flesh, and Paul asked God three times to take it away. God said, “No, no, you need this thorn. You need this thorn so I can bust your balloon.” Some of us need thorns to bust our balloon to keep us humble. And people, when you keep your feet planted firmly on the ground, you can’t fall very far. If your feet are firmly planted on the ground, you can’t fall very far.

Let me tell you what the psychologists say. They say that all psychological hurt and pain roots from ego. So, the more you can reduce your pride and the more humble you become, the more resisted you become to being hurt, the more resistant you become to psychological pain. Because now, you have given it all to God and you’ve recognized everything is from God. God, this is you, you gave it, you take it away. This is you. It makes a difference when you say, “It is me.” So, if it’s you, your subject to hurt and pain. If it’s God, then God is guiding.

The Humility Mountain is no easy mountain and that’s why Jesus says, “Those among you who would be great must be the servant of all.” But we want to be masters, not servants. Jesus says, “You got to get out and wash the feet,” and see that the older you get, the more careful you have to be getting down, and then, the more careful you have to be getting up. Now, I can get down and up really easy, but I had an issue with this knee not long ago. So, I understand when I hear somebody else do like this and they say, “Aw.” I’ll understand it. And sometimes God has to send you through some things, so you’ll understand some things.

When I first went in ministry, I remember God telling me, he said, “I got to send you through some things so you can relate to the people.” I didn’t like the sound of that. I don’t want to go through any mess so I can relate to people. I just don’t want to go through that. He said, “I’ve got to send you through some things so you can relate to the people. I’ve got to take you down low so that you can understand some stuff.” And sometimes we need to get down low and we need to bow our heads and we just need to say, “Oh, Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.”

Pride is a real (00:24:32). And see, people, this is the issue with pride. In order for God to truly bless us, he has to be able to trust us with the stuff, and some people God cannot give because he knows he’s going to mess him up. He knows it’ll blow him up,

they're going to get puffed up and it destroys their spirit. So, in order for God to be able to give us some things, he's got to be able to trust us that we can handle it without getting blown up in pride.

00:25:09

I want you to turn the person next to you and ask them the question, how much can God trust you with before it blows you up?

Now, you know that sounds a little silly, but that's a real deep question. How much can God trust you with before it blows you up? And I understand even now why God had let my hair grow on my face and not dye my hair because I just look a whole lot old. I look about 25 years old, it's good for my pride. I had my haircut down a little smooth, shaven and folks thought I'm 30 years old. I thought they were messing with me (00:25:50). It was messing with me, but I was looking good. I mean, it was messing with me. Now, people ask me, "You need a senior discount?" It changes stuff. It changes stuff. So, it makes a difference. Some of us God can't even trust when you're looking good it just blows you up, and it does.

So, how much can God trust you with before it blows you up? And this is sometimes the limit of what God can do for us without it beginning to adversely affect us and destroy us. Amen. We thank you for joining us today at Brothers of the Word because brother, you need the word.

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