

The Way Up Is Down
By Rick Ezell

“Likewise, you younger men, be subject to the elders. And all of you clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that He may exalt you in due time” (1 Peter 5:5-6 HCSB).

In a collection of children’s letters to God, Wayne, age eleven, wrote: “Dear God, my dad thinks he is you. Please straighten him out.” We all need straightening out—for our own good, especially when it comes to humility.

While the world calls for upward mobility, the Bible speaks of downward mobility. The world says one ascends into greatness. In contrast, the Bible reveals that one descends into greatness. As odd as it may sound the way up is down.

Peter communicates that descending movement in the word *humility*, a word that comes from humus or soil. Let’s be clear about what humility doesn’t mean. A humble person does not have self-hatred or a lack of self-confidence. Neither do they become the proverbial doormat, allowing everyone they encounter to walk all over them. Nor do they look down on themselves or their abilities. Furthermore, it is not a call to mediocrity and a substandard quality of life.

Humility is thinking true and realistic thoughts about God and ourselves. It is the habitual quality whereby we live in the truth: that we are created and not the Creator; that God is God and we are not. We, therefore, reflect the dignity and grace of God by understanding our proper role. Just as God humbled himself and became a man so should we humble ourselves.

Humility is perhaps the most counter cultural virtue in all of scripture, especially for people grasping for the top. So, instead of promoting yourself, advancing your cause, or pushing your agenda even at the expense of others, humble yourself before God and others.

The path to greatness flows downward through humility.

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