Strengthening Your Spiritual Discipline

There are two ways to enter meekness: humble ourselves or be led through the wilderness. Either path is designed to ultimately lead to a condition of our hearts that will allow us to hear God.

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Most of us have gone through times when life's circumstances humbled us. When faced with a difficult situation, we may be humbled, but like a cork in water, we rise back up to the surface, our pride returning when the issue resolves. God doesn't want our lives filled with pride that dissipates during intermittent periods of shame due to external circumstances or even sometimes painful experiences. He wants us to be humble by choice, humble because we want to be like Jesus.

Foundations of Humility

In the kingdom, there are no great men or women of God, just humble people whom God has chosen to use greatly. How do we know when we are humble? When God speaks, we tremble. God is looking for men and women who tremble at His word. Such people will find the Spirit of God resting on them; they will become a dwelling place for the Almighty.

The divine pursuit begins with the humbling of self. Fleshly desires, soulish fears and human ambitions try to rule us. Thus, when true meekness emerges in our hearts, it silences the clamor of our fleshly minds. The voice of our fears and

inadequacies becomes a whisper. To humble our earthly perspectives and opinions, we must relegate them to a lower priority; they become mere background noise as our focus turns increasingly toward God. No pretense prevails; we come humbling ourselves. We bow on our faces before the holy gaze of God. And in His light, we finally perceive the darkness of our souls.

Thus humility, at its root, starts with honesty. The humbled heart is truly and deeply acquainted with its need, and in the beginning the awareness of one's need becomes the voice of prayer. This confession, "I have sinned," puts us on the side of God concerning it. We agree with our Father that our behavior is wrong. Thus, the process of healing begins during this moment of self-discovery. We are working with God to defeat sin in our lives, and in this process of humbling ourselves the Lord grants us peace, covering and transforming grace.

Yet with humility we not only acknowledge our need but also take full responsibility for it. We offer no defense to God for our fallen condition. We've come not to explain ourselves but to be cleansed.

The Word says, "Humble yourselves." This means we are choosing it rather than God doing it for us. Jesus said, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavily burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me. For I am meek and lowly in heart," (Matt. 11:28–29, MEV). If we want to know the essence of Jesus, we must recognize that He is meek and lowly of heart. He identifies with the lowly. Jesus Christ is humble by choice, by nature. If we will be shaped and conformed to His image, then we too must choose the way of humility and meekness.

The Pattern of Meekness

In this process of spiritual training, God desires to create

within us the necessary attitudes that will shape us and condition us to experience the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ in our lives. As we become humble of heart, this step will qualify and prepare us to reach a purity of heart that enables us to see God, have fellowship with Him and interact spiritually with Him. Then, when He speaks, we will be ready to change.

God explained this process to the children of Israel in Deuteronomy 8:2–3, when He described the wilderness season. The purpose of the wilderness is not merely to adjust us to living in a place of oppression and scarcity; the purpose of the wilderness is to teach us that man does not live by bread alone. In other words, we don't live by our own efforts; the people of God live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

This stage of development of humility and meekness in us is not to make us timid or fearful—it is to give us a humble spirit that can hear the voice of God and follow His leading. The sign of true humility is obedience, trying to live out every utterance, every whisper that comes from God's heart.

The successive stages of spiritual training—recognizing our need, coming through godly sorrow to deep repentance—bring us to true humility of heart and hearing the voice of God speaking to us. The process of God humbling us in the wilderness enables us to hear His voice and be genuinely led by Him.

The Voice of the Holy Spirit

God speaks to His followers through the Holy Spirit, and our ability to hear His voice is evidence of our humility. Don't miss that important truth: our humility is measured by our capacity to hear His voice. And the way to hear God's voice, the process of coming into that, is acknowledging our need, repenting and becoming pure in heart. As you continue to

embrace that cleansing process, you will become more and more sensitive to the voice of the Holy Spirit.

True humility brings joy when we listen to His voice. His voice may not be audible. The fruit of meekness and humility allows a greater ability to hear the Spirit speaking. Jesus told His followers, “My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me,” (John 10:27, NIV). In Psalm 95:7–8 (NIV), David warned the people, “Today, if only you would hear his voice, ‘Do not harden your hearts as you did…in the wilderness.’” He is speaking the same words to us: “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts,” (Heb. 4:7, NIV). A person characterized by humility hears and responds to the voice of the Holy Spirit.

The opposite is also true: if we don’t hear the voice of God, it is evidence that we have not embraced the changes God called us into. Eventually we become hypocrites or phony Christians. If we’re not changing and going on in the things of God, then we’re living with two faces. God wants us to have one face—the face of Christ. He wants us to have one heart—the heart of Christ. He doesn’t want us to have duplicity. He wants us to have sincerity of heart, which is one focus, one heart.

Until you give yourself over to God’s process of change, you will continue to live in a cave of darkness on mountains meant for the presence of God that have been inhabited by the enemy. God wants you to live a life of humility. You might pray, “O Lord, humble me”—and He can arrange that—but you must choose an attitude of humility through which He can work.

The humility of heart that you choose now will awaken a hunger and thirst for the righteousness of Christ to be evident within you. Today, choose the humble path.

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