

Low Self-Esteem Could Be Derailing Your Humility

What do you think of when you hear the words “be humble”? I’ve noticed that humility has gotten twisted in most of today’s Christian circles into an excuse to be religious and self-deprecating. I’m sure you’ve seen this happen in church: someone speaks on stage and you tell them they did an amazing job. They respond with, “Oh, that’s not me! That’s God. All the glory to Him.” While I see that the intention behind this attitude is humility, it’s actually missing the point. So why do we feel the pressure in many Christian circles to remove ourselves from the picture to the point of becoming invisible?

Some common characteristics of Christian culture I’ve noticed lately is a “going low” to the point that you completely run yourself into the ground, a serving heart that always takes care of others and never takes care of itself, a false humility that breeds self-centered insecurity and overall lack of confidence or living an abundant life with God! These are the side effects of a culture that misunderstands humility and sacrifices self-love in the name of being Christ-like. It’s got to stop/

You Can’t Love Others Without First Loving Yourself

Jesus said, “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt. 19:19). It is surprising how much of an impact those two little letters, *a-s*, can have on a person’s life. Your neighbors, coworkers, spouse, kids and friends are all being dramatically affected by this two-letter word. In fact, I propose that this tiny word is in charge of your finances, rules your emotional state and dictates how you relate to God.

“What?” you protest. “That’s ridiculous!”

Let me explain: The word *as* means “the same.” In other words, love your neighbor the same way (or to the same level) as you love yourself. Since love looks like something, your behavior toward your neighbor is a reflection of how you feel about yourself. Another way to say it is that the best thing you can do for the people around you is to love yourself.

The great apostle Paul echoes these sentiments when he says, “Husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church” (Eph. 5:28–29). There is that tiny word “*as*” again, but this time instead of helping a neighbor, it is saving a marriage. This two-letter word demands an answer to a profound question: How do you feel about you?

Humility Is Not Feeling Bad About Yourself

You may have been taught that humility requires you to feel bad about yourself, or at least not to feel good about who you are. Nothing could be further from the truth. Humility does not dictate how you feel about yourself, but it does determine how you express your self-love to those around you. It is humility that requires the love you have for yourself to benefit those around you.

For example, when people are telling a story about something they have accomplished, and you have a better story, it is humility that whispers, “Let them have the best story of the day; give them the spotlight.” It is self-love that makes it easy to give others the stage because your soul is not starving for affection or clamoring for attention. Extending God’s love to ourselves first lays a foundation for us to radically love those around us. On the other hand, when we starve our souls of love, we have no source to draw from to truly love others.

Low Self-Esteem Derails Humility

True humility is actually derailed by self-hatred and undermined by low self-esteem. This is because humility is not thinking less of yourself; it is just thinking of yourself less. On the other hand, all self-demeaning thoughts center your attention on your sense of lack, drawing away your affection for God and others.

Humility means you are teachable, influenceable, correctable and vulnerable. Humility can learn from the least, is moved by a child, embraces a rebuke and lives in authenticity. Humility lets others take a bow while you take a seat. It is honor in action and love authenticated. True humility means that you recognize your need without condemning your soul.

Humility and Self-Love Go Hand in Hand

Hopefully, by now you are convinced that loving yourself is the key to a prosperous soul, which is the foundation for becoming wealthy and healthy in every area of your life. But how do you practice humility? It all starts with going on a journey of receiving God's love for yourself and learning to become friends with your own soul. It may not be an overnight fix, but every step of the journey is an invitation to know God more and accept the beautiful way He created you. In a Christian culture that spurns "denying yourself" into "denying every valid need, especially for love," it's so important that you take the time to do the hard work on this. In the end, you'll find yourself thriving and loving the people around you better than you knew was possible.

So my challenge to you today is to take self-care seriously. How do you plan to shift the paradigm from self-deprecation to true humility, rooted in receiving God's love for you? Tell me your thoughts in the comments below! {eoa}

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