

This Seemingly Spiritual Habit Is Actually False Humility in Disguise

Note: This is Part 1 of a two-part series.

Humility is the highway for spiritual growth, but too many counterfeits are in action. In fact, there is a false humility on the loose that is giving people the wrong model of what it looks like to walk in true humility.

Real humility is not something you can fabricate. It only comes through an authentic process with God. When you carry it, the humble heart shines through because of the journey you have been on.

Sometimes we see so few examples of true humility we don't know what it looks like when it manifests. Because of this, most people think that rejecting and hating on themselves with contempt is a spiritual attribute.

We often think the more someone demeans themselves, the humbler they are. This is a false humility.

Self-rejection has nothing to do with humility. And it will work overtime to remain hidden, using religious practices or Scriptures out of context to keep from exposing the fact that millions are believing its lies.

We Often Spiritualize Things to Cover Up How We Don't Like Ourselves

Growing up, the common phrases to spiritualize this dysfunction was, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30) as a way to never truly accept encouragement from others. "It wasn't me; it was the Lord" is another classic way to deflect genuine relational connection from others.

I took the bait for years. When people encouraged me, I deflected it back, thinking I was being humble. I never saw that I was uncomfortable with loving interaction because I didn't like myself. When I knelt before God, the more I painfully held myself in contempt, the more I thought it would get God's attention. I actually thought beating myself up was a great spiritual exercise.

Courage to See the Cover-Up

Can we have enough courage to admit what we often call humility is really a work of self-hate and self-rejection?

Of course, bringing up this issue can cause a lot of kickback because of what it confronts in people's hearts. It takes a true humble heart to discern self-rejection, because if someone else tries to point it out, it often does not go very well. Defense mechanisms will kick up like crazy.

We all have experiences of being around people who were genuinely filled with pride and arrogance. We then sought to avoid being prideful at all costs, but it often landed in a pit of self-rejection.

When you don't like yourself, you can be drawn to people who beat themselves up while calling it humility. Dogging on who you are is not humility, but a counterfeit.

Clichés That Cover Up Our Brokenness

False humility does not want others to see that we truly do not like ourselves, so we become trained to clothe our self-hatred in a fabrication. In church settings, these fabrications can come out in people in the form of scriptural sayings that, when used out of context, become clichés.

What we really mean is "I can't handle a compliment. I don't feel comfortable receiving your love, so I will deflect it back, but try to sound spiritual." I love a well-known

pastor's response to someone who said to him, "It wasn't me; it was the Lord..." His reply, "Well ... it wasn't that good!"

We say things like "He must increase, but I must decrease" and "I need to kill my flesh," yet they too often become statements of hate and contempt against ourselves. In the process of hating our battles, we have turned against ourselves, too.

True Humility Carries Confidence

David was outraged at how Goliath was bullying the people and dishonoring his God. His brothers, who lacked confidence, were backing down in fear. Their cowardice was confronted by David's confidence.

Yet David's brothers considered their posture as healthy and David's confidence as arrogance. His behind-the-scenes process with God produced true humility. But when people saw him, they considered his confidence as pride.

Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spoke to the men. And Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, "Why have you come down here? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your pride and the evil of your heart. For you have come down that you might see the battle'"(1 Sam. 17:28).

Did you catch that? People with insecurity see true people of humility as being full of pride.

People of real humility have a lot of confidence in who God is inside them. They have submitted to His leadership and steward the confidence they have gained through personal process. They don't hate who they are but say "yes and amen" to who God made them to be. They are grateful that God operates within them and they don't need to flaunt anything to get validation.

But when the time arises, those who are humble will

confidently address the issues at hand.

The brothers accuse David of being filled with pride and wickedness, when really he was being confident in the Lord. His confidence and faith in God were confronting their lack of confidence and self-rejecting thoughts.

They just wanted to throw in the towel and take defeat. Because of David's confidence in God and who God made him to be, he stepped up to the challenge and forever became known as a giant-killer.

I Am Wonderfully Made

David also carried a dynamic revelation of appreciating who God made him to be as a wonderful creation. One day, as David is penning one of the most brilliant psalms of all time, he takes notice of himself and gains a greater revelation of God's greatness!

Wait—Can you imagine that? David was getting an appreciation of God's character by getting a look at himself in the mirror? He wrote:

"I will praise you, for You made me with fear and wonder; marvelous are Your works, and You know me completely" (Ps. 139:14).

He says "I will praise You." Why? Because I am made with fear and wonder, to the point that it causes me to fall into deep reverence for who You are, God! Stop and catch this. David understood God better and gained a greater appreciation of the Creator by looking at his own reflection.

We were made in the image of God. So when we look at our reflection, God intends that we admire His power and creativity as our Creator.

When was the last time you got a deeper glimpse of God by looking at your reflection? For most it seems impossible,

because we have been conditioned by self-rejection and never fully accept ourselves. We don't know how to celebrate our lives because we were never celebrated. People didn't give compliments because they were afraid we would become arrogant.

Self-rejection has not even allowed us to consider what great things we can learn about God by looking at His wonderful creation—us. Oh yes, we can open our science book and go, “What a great God,” but when it comes to actually appreciating our own created bodies, we squirm and change the subject. Breaking out of self-rejection involves appreciating, accepting and affirming who we are as God's wonderful creation. {eoa}

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