

Why Authentic Humility Is a Godly Trait

We live in a world where the measure of a man is upside down, and most men and women have it backwards. The traits of a real man are no longer on display but are instead replaced with fakes that are masquerading all around our TVs and magazines and are infiltrating our lives.

If we're honest with ourselves, we all know it's a lie—except for maybe those still living in high school.

The concept of how to become a better man isn't hip or cool. But it should be. The "alpha male" is a poor representation of what "alpha" in manliness should really be. Our generation of men, and perhaps the one before mine, got it wrong. One of our female readers recently shared, "The GentleMan is always the Alpha." Unfortunately, this isn't always the case, but it should be.

False Humility Is the Masquerader

When a man is full of himself, it's because he thinks only of himself. He is prideful. He might pretend to be a man of character, but he only acts when it's to his gain. If there's nothing in it for him or is a danger to him, he is nowhere to be seen. He'll conveniently excuse himself or have an excuse for his disappearance. He's irresponsible. This is not the trait of authentic humility that a real man possesses. This man is a coward.

I'm sure you've heard the old idiom "Pride comes before a fall" and maybe the Proverb that inspired it—"Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall" (16:18). And it doesn't always have to happen immediately. It usual strikes when you least expect it.

Authentic Humility—A Trait of a Real Man

When a man of character adds humility to his arsenal, he no longer thinks of himself first. He's confident in his abilities and uses them for others. He isn't self-promoting but is selfless. He thinks *team* first and *I* last. He's responsible.

He will be there to help, but you might not always see him. Humility can be easily passed on by. And if you believe the lie that the masquerader is humble, then you definitely won't be able to identify authentic humility.

"True humility is not thinking less of yourself; it is thinking of yourself less." —C.S. Lewis

The definition of humility isn't that you're walked all over and don't know how to be assertive. Humility is wrongly associated with weakness, being soft and afraid. But real humility is a strength and takes authentic confidence. Be careful not to mistake confidence with arrogance, for these two are not the same.

The opposite of humility is arrogance, conceit and self-importance.

The Wrong Choice

Be quick-witted, and you'll sound sharp. Have that body gracing the cover of *Men's Health*. Be a sports jock and drive a Mustang (or truck, if you're from the South). Be the center of attention. Talk over others or "flex" your muscles. All of this is an image that men are trying to attain. With all their focus on this, they forget about the traits of a real man.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not saying fitness, a beautiful lady in your life and a car (or truck) is wrong. But when we expect these to define our manliness, then it's wrong. Material possessions are not manly traits but do help display what

traits we possess or lack.

The Right Choice

A man with humility:

- Knows his abilities and thinks no less or more of them than they really are
- Is honest with himself
- Knows his strengths and weaknesses
- Is self-aware
- Is confident and remains modest
- Will ask for help when required
- Lifts others up and makes others stronger
- Shares the praise with those around him
- Does not seek to be praised or self-glorified
- Does not question his manliness; he has confidence in who he is and doesn't have to put others down to believe in himself
- Is always learning, because he knows he has much to learn
- Honors God and others

Here's a great excerpt from the *Art of Manliness*:

"It seems as you study the men in history we consider great or heroic, their life is often characterized not by how high they attempted to maneuver themselves in respect to other men, but rather how low. In the incredible movie *Gladiator*, we see this displayed in convincing fashion. The coward son of Marcus Aurelius fought to mask his insecurities through swagger and a mad dash for power.

"In contrast, the hero Maximus, the epitome of manhood, consistently chooses restraint and humility. He took care of the men around him, teaching them how to fight in the arena, and not for a second deeming himself more valuable or worthy. The result? His men adored him and many gave their lives for him. The great power of Maximus was in his humility."

My inspiration behind writing this article was a recreational volleyball game I once witnessed. It wasn't a competitive league or intense match; it was just a game amongst friends. There were many guys and girls playing, but it was two individuals who stood out to me. One appeared to be the alpha male, or sports jock (they usually stand out immediately), and the other actually didn't even stand out to me until after his team lost.

(Note: No one playing seemed to know the right volleyball rules.)

The alpha male was louder and made his presence known. If he said so, grabbing the net, palming the ball and such were OK. He wasn't a volleyball player, but others still listened to his lead even when he was wrong. He complained about others' mistakes and invaded their playing space if he thought he could do better.

The indicators of false humility here are that his presence was only known when it benefited him. He appeared to be a leader, but only when to his gain. And when he led, it didn't strengthen others or include them into the team. They won the first game, and he took the credit. They lost their second game, and he blamed others while taking the loss hard because part of his image, his manliness, was lost on the court.

I noticed the other guy as he walked off the court after his team's loss. I asked him if he'd played before, and he said he plays beach volleyball all the time. I asked him why he didn't make a bigger deal about the rules, and he replied with something along the lines of "Everybody is having fun, so it's no big deal." In my mind, I was thinking, "No big deal!"

If you win, you stay on the court. If you lose, you walk. For him, he wanted to have fun with his friends and enjoy some team sports. It wasn't a match of male dominance and stroking egos. He encouraged his friends to play even when they had no

business being on the court. He demonstrated right technique and threw encouraging words around. He led by demonstration and let others learn through their own trial and error. He supported teamwork and fun.

Where are the real men? What happened to manliness? Humility and desires to become a better man are being drowned out and stamped over by the glory and fame of men like Iron Man and self-seeking egos.

I prefer Batman—his famous quote about everyone having potential to be a hero:

Jim Gordon: I never cared who you were ...

Batman: And you were right.

Jim Gordon: ... but shouldn't the people know the hero who saved them?

Batman: A hero can be anyone. Even a man doing something as simple and reassuring as putting a coat around a young boy's shoulders to let him know that the world hadn't ended.

If you look closely, there are humble men all around you that you will notice. You might not see them at first if authentic humility is a foreign concept to you. But as you grow and learn, it won't be that hard to spot, and you will also start developing some humility.

I came across a tweet from one of our followers on Twitter that I'm going to leave you with. In these three sentences are some powerful words:

- Talent is God given. Be humble.
- Fame is man given. Be grateful
- Conceit is self given. Be careful.

—John Wooden, Legendary basketball coach

Please share your thoughts and opinions in the comments below.
We'd love to hear from you.