

GROWING DOWNWARD

HUMILITY & WHY YOU NEED IT

Proverbs 3:34

QUESTIONS FOR FAMILY WORSHIP

1. Why is it unhelpful to define humility as “dependence upon God” or “considering others as more important than oneself”?
2. How is humility related to fear toward God and love toward others? How do we see this in Job’s life?
3. How do James 4:6 and 1 Peter 5:5 apply our text to the church?
4. What are some subtle ways the pride of the scorner can manifest itself in even the most mature of believers?
5. Is it true that pride is the number one enemy of our souls at every stage of the game? Why, or why not?

QUESTIONS FOR PRIVATE REFLECTION

1. How do I view God? (i.e., do I fear Him?)
2. How do I view myself? (i.e., am I lowly in spirit?)
3. How do I view others? (i.e., do I love my fellowman tangibly and from the heart?)

GROWING DOWNWARD

LIKENESS & LOWLINESS

Genesis 1:26-31

QUESTIONS FOR FAMILY WORSHIP

1. Why must we begin with creation instead of the fall when pursuing humility?
2. In what ways are we dependent upon God? What are some ways we often live as if we are not dependent upon Him?
3. Where does our culture tell us to look for our identity and purpose? Why is it wrong to pursue our identity in ourselves or some other created person or thing?
4. How does fellowship with God lead to humility? How does humility lead to fellowship with God?
5. How does Christ in His incarnation show forth perfect lowliness of spirit?

QUESTIONS FOR PRIVATE REFLECTION

1. What are some things I boast in as if I have not received them from God (see 1 Cor. 4:7)?
2. Who or what defines me?
3. Do I merely know about God, or do I really know God?
4. Do I hunger after deeper fellowship with God? What does this say about my humility or lack thereof?

GROWING DOWNWARD

DEPENDENCE DAY

Genesis 2:1-3

QUESTIONS FOR FAMILY WORSHIP

1. How does our creation in the image of God relate to keeping the Sabbath?
2. Did God rest because He was worn out after creating the world? What does it mean for God to rest?
3. How did Jesus enter into rest after He finished His work of salvation? How does this relate to the Sabbath day changing to the first day of the week?
4. How is keeping the Sabbath an act of faith?
5. Why should the Sabbath be our favorite day of the week?

QUESTIONS FOR PRIVATE REFLECTION

1. Do I plan my week with the recognition that God is the Definer and Lord of my schedule (i.e., my time is not my own)?
2. Am I living in denial of my weakness and finitude? What does my lifestyle (hours spent working, hours spent sleeping, Sabbath observance) reveal about my soul?
3. Does keeping the Sabbath seem to me to be an inefficient use of time?
4. Do I delight in the Lord's Day because of the privilege of getting to seek God in a concentrated manner?

GROWING DOWNWARD

COVENANTAL HUMILITY

Genesis 2:4-17

QUESTIONS FOR FAMILY WORSHIP

- 1.What is a covenant? Did God enter into a covenant with Adam in the garden? Why, or why not?
- 2.What does it mean for God to condescend to us? Why must He do so if we would know and enjoy Him?
- 3.What is God's purpose in giving Adam a seemingly random command concerning the tree? How does it highlight His absolute authority?
- 4.What is the secular view of authority? How should Christians respond?
- 5.How do God's curse and blessing in the covenant promote humility?

QUESTIONS FOR PRIVATE REFLECTION

- 1.Do I marvel over the fact that God would come so low to reveal and relate Himself to me?
- 2.Do I view my relationship with God as one in which both parties (God and me) are on equal footing?
- 3.Has secularism's enthronement of "the subjective self" influenced my own understanding of morality? What does my lifestyle say about who or what my ultimate authority is?
- 4.Am I trembling at God's threats and rejoicing in His promises?

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THE DEATH OF HUMILITY

Genesis 3:1-13

QUESTIONS FOR FAMILY WORSHIP

1. Who is Satan? How did he fall?
2. What does Satan want Adam and Eve to believe about God? Why do wrong views of God lead to wrong views of ourselves?
3. How would you define pride?
4. Did the fall happen when Adam and Eve ate of the fruit, or before? Explain your answer.
5. How does Jesus respond to Satan when tempted? How did he show true creaturely humility?

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

1. Do I sometimes view God's law as unnecessarily restrictive? What does that say about my view of God?
2. What practical step could I take to reform my view of God and cultivate the fear of the Lord that leads to humility?
3. Think of a specific sin struggle in your life. How exactly is pride the cause of it?
4. Does an awareness of my sin drive me to hide from God? Or does it drive me to Christ?

GROWING DOWNWARD

UNDONE BEFORE THE HOLY ONE

Isaiah 6:1-7

QUESTIONS FOR FAMILY WORSHIP

- 1.What were the two truths John Newton remembered at the end of his life?
- 2.What language does Isaiah use to express the kingly greatness of God?
- 3.What is God's holiness? Why do the angels repeat the word holy three times in their praise?
- 4.What happens to Isaiah when he sees God's majesty and holiness? What should happen to us?
- 5.How does God cleanse Isaiah from his sin? How does this point us to Jesus?

QUESTIONS FOR PRIVATE REFLECTION

- 1.Do I tend to idolize popular celebrities and leaders? If so, what does this say about my knowledge of God's majesty?
- 2.Do I treat sin in my own life or in the church lightly? If so, what does this say about my knowledge of God's holiness?
- 3.Am I increasingly experiencing what Isaiah did, being undone before God? Is my knowledge of sin driving me to God's provision at the altar?

GROWING DOWNWARD

THE INSANITY OF SIN

Romans 1:18-32

QUESTIONS FOR FAMILY WORSHIP

1. What does Paul tell us about the knowledge of God in creation? In our sin, what do we do with that knowledge?
2. Van Til spoke of us in our sin as a little girl sitting on her father's lap who slaps her father across the face. What does this illustration teach us about our sin and unbelief?
3. What is God's wrath? How does He reveal it in the world?
4. Does this text apply to covenant children? What is the potential danger of growing up in a Christian home when it comes to knowing our sinfulness?
5. How do vv. 16-17 relate to our passage in vv. 18-32? How is Paul using our sinfulness to teach us about the gospel?

QUESTIONS FOR PRIVATE REFLECTION

1. What is one of my dominant sin struggles? How is that particular sin rooting in a prideful denial of God, His worship, His design, or His judgment?
2. Do I tend to be overly self-confident and prone to works-righteousness? If so, what does this reveal about my sense of my own sinfulness?
3. Does conviction of sin drive me out of myself to the righteousness of Christ in the gospel?

GROWING DOWNWARD

GRACE! GRACE! IT'S ALL OF GRACE!

Genesis 3:14-24

QUESTIONS FOR FAMILY WORSHIP

- 1.What is meant by the Latin term Sola Gratia? How does our creatureliness and corruption teach us that salvation must be by God's grace alone?
- 2.What does it mean to initiate something? How does God show in this story that He is the One who initiates our salvation?
- 3.Why is it good news that God is bringing about continual enmity or warfare between the serpent's children and Eve's children? Can you give an example of this enmity playing itself out in the Bible?
- 4.Who is the son of Eve that God promised would come to crush the serpent's head? How did He defeat Satan?
- 5.Why did God clothe Adam and Eve? What was he saying to them and us by this act?

QUESTIONS FOR PRIVATE REFLECTION

- 1.Am I a proud Calvinist or a proud Orthodox Presbyterian? How ought the doctrines of grace to produce a deeper humility in me?
- 2.Has the knowledge of my own creatureliness and corruption led me to see my absolute dependence upon God's grace if ever I would be saved?
- 3.Am I a spiritual descendent of Eve? Does my life evidence that I have been delivered from the serpent's household?

GROWING DOWNWARD

CHRIST MY GLORY, CHRIST MY ALL!

1 Corinthians 1:26-31

QUESTIONS FOR FAMILY WORSHIP

- 1.What is the sin in the Corinthian church that Paul is here addressing? How was it rooted in pride?
- 2.How has the church today exalted in men? Is our own church susceptible to this?
- 3.What is effectual calling? What two realities does Paul want Christians to remember about their calling?
- 4.What does it mean to boast? Is there any reason for us to boast in ourselves or our leaders? Why, or why not?
- 5.Who is the One in whom all the blessings of salvation are found? What are some of those blessings that Paul talks about here?

QUESTIONS FOR PRIVATE REFLECTION

- 1.Have I succumbed to the celebrity culture? Do I exalt myself or my leaders or my spiritual heroes or my denomination in a way that makes me feel superior to other Christians?
- 2.Have I heard and responded to the gospel call in faith? If so, who/what was I when God called me?
- 3.Did God save me because of anything impressive in me? Is there any grounds for boasting in myself or my leaders?
- 4.Is Jesus everything to me? Or do I still want glory for myself?

GROWING DOWNWARD

HUMBLE NEW YEAR'S RESOLVE

2 Thessalonians 1:11-12

QUESTIONS FOR FAMILY WORSHIP

- 1.What is a resolution? Should Christians make them? Why, or why not?
- 2.Is it okay to make resolutions regarding physical things or only spiritual things?
- 3.How does Christ's return change the way we resolve?
- 4.What is the good that we are to resolve after? Who gets to define goodness?
- 5.Why must we be prayerful in our resolutions? What does a lack of prayer say about our hearts?
- 6.What is an area where we could grow in goodness (i.e. love toward God and people) as a family in this new year?

QUESTIONS FOR PRIVATE REFLECTION

- 1.What resolutions would promote within me a watchfulness and readiness for Christ's return?
- 2.If God has summarized the good in His law, where am I particularly deficient in goodness?
- 3.What does my devotion to prayer reveal about my dependence upon God? Do I ask others to pray for God to work these good things out in my life?
- 4.What is the end or aim of my resolutions? Is it conformity to Christ's image and the glorification of His name?

GROWING DOWNWARD

THE BLESSING OF INDWELLING SIN

Romans 7:14-25

QUESTIONS FOR FAMILY WORSHIP

- 1.What is indwelling sin? Where does it dwell?
- 2.What do we mean when we say that indwelling sin is a blessing? Is the sin itself a blessing, or what God produces through it?
- 3.Can you explain the difference between being in the flesh and being of the flesh? Is it possible for Christians to be fleshly? If so, in what way?
- 4.What is the reason we often don't see our sin like Paul does here? Where are we failing to look and place our delight?
- 5.What is the hope that Christians have in their present fight against sin? Why does indwelling sin make us long for the world to come?

QUESTIONS FOR PRIVATE REFLECTION

- 1.Is my self-perception brought about by comparing myself to others or by comparing myself to God and His law?
- 2.Do I delight in the law of God? And is my remaining corruption fostering low views of my person, performance, and present?
- 3.Is the sin in my members causing me to earnestly desire the resurrection? If not, what does this reveal about me?

GROWING DOWNWARD

WEAKNESS IS THE WAY

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

QUESTIONS FOR FAMILY WORSHIP

- 1.Does suffering lead automatically to humility? How does suffering have the potential to actually harden our hearts in pride?
- 2.Who was the one that inflicted Paul with this thorn?
- 3.What reason does Paul give for this thorn being given to him in v. 7? What does it mean to be conceited? How does spiritual and physical prosperity tempt us to be conceited?
- 4.How did God answer Paul's prayer to be delivered from His thorn? What did He give Paul that was even better than deliverance from his suffering?
- 5.Why is discontentment prideful? What are we saying about God and ourselves when we are discontent?

QUESTIONS FOR PRIVATE REFLECTION

- 1.Does my view of weakness resemble that of the world or that of the gospel? Do I view suffering as an obstacle in the way or as the way of Christian fruitfulness?
- 2.How does prosperity specifically tempt me to pride? What would become of my heart if God were to give me unabated ease, comfort, and prosperity in this life?
- 3.Am I content in whatever circumstance I find myself? What does my discontentment reveal about my heart? What is it that enabled Paul to be content in great suffering?

GROWING DOWNWARD

HUMBLE PERSEVERANCE

Romans 11:17-24

QUESTIONS FOR FAMILY WORSHIP

- 1.What is apostasy? Can a Christian fall away from the faith? Why, or why not?
- 2.What are the two attributes (i.e., characteristics or qualities) of God that Paul calls us to look to here?
- 3.What is God's kindness? And how do we continue in it?
- 4.What is God's severity? Why should we tremble before it?
- 5.What does Paul's use of the olive tree teach us about the relationship between Israel and the church? Does God have two different peoples or one?

QUESTIONS FOR PRIVATE REFLECTION

- 1.Does my belief in God's preservation lead me to underestimate my need to persevere? Or do I focus on my perseverance to the exclusion of God's preservation?
- 2.Do I eye both the kindness and severity of God? Which do I tend to lose sight of more easily?
- 3.Do God's warnings in Scripture apply to me? How do they serve to keep me in the faith?

GROWING DOWNWARD

LOVE'S LIFEBLOOD

Philippians 2:1-11

QUESTIONS FOR FAMILY WORSHIP

1. How would you define Christian love? Why is Paul calling us to love here?
2. Is it possible to truly love people when we are living in pride? Why, or why not?
3. How does humility (i.e., the lowly spirit produced by knowing God) lead to a life of sacrificial love toward others?
4. Why does Paul point us to Christ here? How was Christ humble? And what do we learn from Him about our own humility?
5. How did God reward Christ for His humble, sacrificial, loving obedience? Why ought this to encourage us to love selflessly and sacrificially?
6. What is one way we could grow in love as a family?

QUESTIONS FOR PRIVATE REFLECTION

1. Have I “Christianized” my pride? In my interactions with others in the church and in the exercise of my gifts, am I driven by self-oriented ambition or others-oriented ambition?
2. What is one way I could consider a fellow believer as more important than myself in this coming week?
3. Am I seeking to love by my own strength? Or am I looking to Christ and loving others from out of my communion with Him?

GROWING DOWNWARD

THE GODWARD CHURCH

Romans 12:1-8

QUESTIONS FOR FAMILY WORSHIP

1. Do you agree with Pastor Nick's point that vv. 1-2 are directed, not at mere individuals, but the corporate church? Why, or why not? How does the individualism of our culture affect how we think of Christianity?
2. How does humility lead us to give ourselves to God in loving worship?
3. How does Paul say we are transformed? What is the primary instrument God uses to transform us?
4. Why is it prideful to use gifts that God has not given you? Why is it prideful to fail to use your gifts to serve God's church?
5. What is one way our church reflects the picture of a humble church given here? One way our church is falling short?

QUESTIONS FOR PRIVATE REFLECTION

1. Is there any area of my life I am not willing to give over to God? What practical step could I take to become more entirely devoted to Him?
2. Do I esteem God's word and see it as more vital than my daily meat and drink? How does that manifest itself in my reading of Scripture and my listening of sermons?
3. Do I think of myself soberly? What gifts has God given me? Am I using them in the service of the local congregation I am a part of? And am I using them in love?

GROWING DOWNWARD

GOSPEL HUMILITY AMIDST GOSPEL HOSTILITY

1 Peter 3:8-17

QUESTIONS FOR FAMILY WORSHIP

1. Peter begins his letter by calling us “elect exiles” (1:1). What do these two words mean? What do they teach Christians about how they should expect the world to treat them?
2. A humble church is a loving church. Where exactly is that love to be directed?
3. Why does Paul point us to the future blessing that awaits those who follow Christ (vv. 9, 14)? How is this blessing rooted in the gospel, and how does it free us to love our enemies?
4. Why do we fear people? What alone can deliver us from the fear of man?
5. What does Peter teach us about evangelism here? How does humility lead to opportunities to share the gospel with people?

QUESTIONS FOR PRIVATE REFLECTION

1. Do I believe I am entitled to the world’s acceptance and tolerance? If so, where does this sense of entitlement come from?
2. Do I fear other people? Have I missed an open door for the gospel recently because I was afraid of what the person might say, think, or do? How can I intentionally fight against such man-fearing?
3. What is one practical thing I could do to seek to be a more faithful and joyful witness for Christ?

GROWING DOWNWARD

LESSONS FROM A CEMETERY

Psalm 90

QUESTIONS FOR FAMILY WORSHIP

- 1.What does it mean for God to be eternal? How does seeing God's eternity lead us to think about our own death?
- 2.Why does everybody die? What does the grave teach us about our sin and God's wrath?
- 3.What does it mean "to number our days" (v. 12)? How does this lead to wisdom?
- 4.Pastor Nick mentioned the funeral industry, but can you think of other ways our culture (and we as part of that culture) seeks to avoid the reality of death? Why are we scared to admit death is a normal part of our existence?
- 5.How does Psalm 90 point us to Jesus?

QUESTIONS FOR PRIVATE REFLECTION

- 1.Do I consider it pessimistic and depressing to think of myself as a grave-bound mortal? Do I tend to avoid pondering my own death? Or is God teaching me to number my days?
- 2.Where do I seek my joy? How might a greater consciousness of my own death increase my joy in God?
- 3.Am I desirous of eternal fruit to be born through my creaturely labors? Or does my vision for my work never reach beyond the here-and-now?

GROWING DOWNWARD

JUDGMENT DAY REALISM

Isaiah 2:6-22

QUESTIONS FOR FAMILY WORSHIP

1. What does Isaiah tell us about the spiritual condition of Judah (see vv. 6-9)?

Where they humble or proud?

2. Pastor Nick said that God was Judah's hobby but not their holy king. What does that mean? Is it possible for people in the church today to approach God in a similar way?

3. What does Isaiah tell us about the coming day of judgment?

4. Why is he pointing Judah (and us) to this future judgment?

5. What does he command us to at the end? How should the reality of future judgment change the way we live now?

QUESTIONS FOR PRIVATE REFLECTION

1. Do I tend to think of eschatology (i.e., the doctrine of the last things) as impractical and irrelevant? Does judgment day loom large on the horizon of my present life? Why, or why not?

2. What would it be like to stand before God on judgment day without the Mediator? Am I trusting in Him now and calling others to do the same so as to avoid this terrifying fate?

3. Is God my hobby, or my holy King?

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PRIDE'S FINAL DESTINATION

Luke 16:19-31

QUESTIONS FOR FAMILY WORSHIP

1. Is hell a real place?
2. Why did the rich man go to hell? What was the problem with his heart? How did he show himself to be proud?
3. Read Proverbs 3:34. How do the realities set forth in Jesus' parable fulfill this proverb?
4. Why does our sin deserve eternal punishment?
5. Why does our final destination depend upon our response to the Bible now? How should this change the way we treat our Bible reading, family worship, and public worship?

QUESTIONS FOR PRIVATE REFLECTION

1. Do I tremble at the warning Jesus is setting before me in this parable?
2. Is the Bible truly sufficient for me? Have I truly heard the word with spiritual ears, and am I receiving and resting upon the Christ of Scripture alone for my salvation?
3. How does this parable encourage me to share the gospel with others? Should the doctrine of hell motivate me to share Christ with the lost? Or is this an improper motive?

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THE HOPE OF THE HUMBLE

Revelation 22:1-5

QUESTIONS FOR FAMILY WORSHIP

- 1.What is biblical hope? How does humility lead to it and pride keep us from it?
- 2.How does John's vision point us back to the original garden and the first Adam?
- 3.In what ways do the inhabitants of the new earth show that they are perfectly humble?
- 4.How can John say the saints will reign when God alone is the One who reigns?
- 5.Why is hope so important to the Christian life?

QUESTIONS FOR PRIVATE REFLECTION

- 1.Have I grown in humility since we started this sermon series? Has God's word over these months transformed me so that I am more fit for the new earth?
- 2.Is my heart strongly desirous of the realities set forth in this God-centered vision? Or does the idea of worshiping God perpetually seem rather hum-drum?
- 3.What does future hope say to my present struggle with sin and suffering? How does God intend to encourage me with hope?

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BEHOLD THE LOWLY CHRIST!

Philippians 2:5-11

QUESTIONS FOR FAMILY WORSHIP

1. When Lloyd-Jones was asked how one could become humble, how did he respond?
2. What does it mean for Christ to empty Himself? Does He become less than God? What did Pastor Nick mean when he said this emptying was by way of addition, not subtraction?
3. Can God be humble? Why, or why not? If not, what word could we use to explain the Son coming down to us to take on human flesh?
4. How did Christ show perfect creaturely humility in His life and death?
5. What was God's reward for Christ's humble, loving obedience? Why should this encourage us to pursue humility in Christ now?

QUESTIONS FOR PRIVATE REFLECTION

1. Since this sermon series began in September 2020 have I grown downward in humility, upward in the fear of God, and outward in love?
2. What are some of the big takeaways that I have gleaned from this sermon series?
3. How can I continue to cultivate the downward disposition of a Godward self-perception? How can I encourage others in the church to grow in the same?