

THE WAY UP IS DOWN

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Philippians 2:5-11

In the world, you have to do certain things in order to get ahead in life. You have to connect and network with people who can help get you to where you want to go. You have to have the right look and demeanor. You may even have to push others aside or step on them to make your way to the top. The rules in the Kingdom are different. The way you become great in the kingdom, is to be a servant.

The problem is, we want to excel in the kingdom of this world and not the Kingdom of God. The heart of every person you are trying to impress is in the hand of God. God can move you to the head of the line. He can hook you up though you don't have the right credentials and resume. He will set you up to be great. First, you must understand the principle, "the way up is down." This is not referring to a physical position. It is referring to an attitude that manifests itself physically. **Romans 12:3** It is referring to the state of your heart. **Philippians 2:3** The key word in this text is humility.

Humility, in the text, is not just thinking about others first, but not thinking about yourself at all. It is not about you. A humble person isn't prideful. How many times during the course of a conversation do you say, I? Is the conversation all about you? When in a conversation do ask a person how he/she is doing and take time to listen to the answer? Ask them about their desires, problems, and dreams. Ask them what they need from you. Are the decisions you make all about you or about how it will benefit others?

Humility is not about being someone else's doormat. You are not merely at their disposal. Some of us pursue relationships by giving in to whatever someone wants from us. That is not what Paul is talking about. Your attitude should be Christ like. Your attitude is your outlook. Your outlook becomes your outcome. **James 4:1-4** If you think about it, the last quarrel or argument you had was probably all about you and your desires.

Jesus was selfless. Christ had the right to be prideful. Jesus was the very essence of God. He was truly God and truly man. **John 5:18, John 10:33** He was only claiming to be who he was. People struggle to believe that God could take on mere flesh. Some say he was just a mortal man able to heal and cast out demons, but not God. Others say he was just a prophet. The Bible says that he is the exact representation of God's being. Jesus didn't need anything from anybody. However, he laid it aside. He didn't hold on to his title selfishly. We hold on to our titles and positions because without them we don't know who we are.

The reason why some of us run after money is because of what it buys, the position it puts us in, and the people who look at us and give us attention. Teddy Kennedy waited his turn to express his views in the Senate. By doing so, he did so much more for the poor. He spoke up for those without a voice. He put others' needs first. Jesus was selfless so much so that he made himself nothing. He emptied himself. He never lost his identity; he just gave up his stuff. He took on our flesh and experienced everything we experience in life. Jesus was God and he was human. He experienced our desires, needs, temptations, feelings, and emotions but he was sinless. Why would he give up everything for people who act as though they don't want him? We have a high priest that has been tempted in every way. He emptied himself so that he may serve others.

Jesus served. He wasn't selective about who he was going to serve. He served folks who talked about him. He served those who drove the nails through his hand. How are you supposed to serve those who turn their back on you? How are you supposed to serve people who mistreat you? How are you supposed to serve when you don't feel like it? What does feelings have to do with it?" It doesn't have anything to do with what you feel like; it's your attitude. Jesus served in the streets. It's easier to serve in the church than out in the streets. Whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant. Whoever wants to be a servant must be your slave. Being a servant is not so bad. Jesus served, then he had to sacrifice.

Jesus sacrificed. You must die to self. Is that what it means to be a Christian? Yes. He emptied himself, became a servant, and obeyed God unto death. That's not the end of his story. Now everybody has to acknowledge him. He was given a position at the right hand of God the Father. Everybody will confess that He is who He says He is. You should do it now rather than later. Perhaps we don't understand the power of serving, humility, and meekness. You don't have to take on everybody who says, "Shoot your best shot." Your best shot is to love them. God is preparing us to represent Him in the world.

Peace

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