

"Better to be of a Humble Spirit"

"God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble" (James 4:6).

"Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall. Better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud" (Prov. 16:18-19).

A person does not have to be proud, boastful or arrogant to be great, as is believed by so many today. Moses was truly a great man, and at the same time, "very meek, above all the men which lived upon the face of the earth" (Num. 12:3). King Saul was told by Samuel that "When you were little in your own eyes, were you not head of the tribes of Israel?" (1 Sam. 15:23). But with the passing of time, Saul became "big" in his own eyes and, because of his proud, sinful actions, the Lord rejected him as king (1 Sam. 15:23).

David, a man after God's own heart, was humble. His humility is evident by some of his statements found in the Psalms. He said, "My soul shall make its boast in the Lord; The humble shall hear of it and be glad" (Psa. 34:2). He also stated that "The sacrifices of God are of a broken spirit, A broken and contrite heart -- These, O God, You will not despise" (Psa. 51:17).

The Apostle Paul, from the world's viewpoint, had every reason to be proud. He was highly educated, having been "brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the strictness of our father's law" (Acts 22:3). He had the honor and privilege of being a Roman citizen (Acts 22:25-29). Paul told the Philippians, "If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless" (Phil. 3:4-6). Yet, Paul was a man of humility. Concerning the facts just stated, he went on to say, "But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ" (Phil. 4:7). In fact, he later called these things "rubbish" (v. 8). As an apostle, he spoke of himself as "the least of all the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God" (1 Cor. 15:9). He also spoke of himself as the chief of sinners (1 Tim. 1:15).

All through the scriptures, we can observe that God used the ones of a "humble spirit" for His service. If we are going to be truly great in the service to the Lord today, then we too must be humble. Jesus said, "but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant" (Matt. 20:26). James tells us to "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, And He will lift you up" (Jas. 4:10).

The person of a "humble spirit" realizes that he is nothing without God. He is genuinely happy to obey all of God's commands and to receive His rich blessings. He is like an empty vessel which only God can fill. Paul said, "For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith (Rom. 12:3). May we always remember that "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble" (Jas. 4:6).

- by R.J. Evans

Doing God's Will

How do we make sure that we are among the few who are saved and not among the many who are lost (Matthew 7:13-14)? Jesus says in Matthew 7:21-23, "Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, and cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name? And then will I declare to them, I never knew you, depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness". If we believe and call Jesus, "Lord, Lord", we are still lost if we have not done God's will.

On Judgment Day many will be pleading with Jesus, calling him Lord, Lord, and reminding him of the many wonderful works that they had done in His name, but He will say unto them, "I never knew you, depart from Me you who practice lawlessness". Why? Why? They had not done the will of the Father in heaven. The worst thing that will ever be said to an individual is when the Lord on Judgment Day says to the majority of people, "Depart from Me, I never knew you". There will be no appeal to this decision. We have to get it right the first time.

These people in the above scripture seemed to be honest, but they were honestly mistaken as the majority of people are today. Apparently they were good people, because they had "done many wonderful works". But they had not done the will of the Father, which is in heaven. No single condition, that God imposes, can be ignored. God has no non-essential commands. When we fail to obey a command of God, we have just broken it. We must obey God by doing what God says to do, when God says to do it, how God says to do it, and for the reason God says to do it. Nothing is more important than pleasing God by doing His will so that we can go to Heaven. God's will is found right in our Bibles.

- by Ron Boatwright

The Mormons & "Two Sticks"

In studies with Mormons they will sometimes suggest a text from Ezekiel 37:16,17 as support for the Book of Mormon. The passage reads as follows: "Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions: and join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand." The Mormons explain the passage thus: "Is not the Bible the stick of Judah? Then the Book of Mormon must be the stick of Ephraim."¹ The idea is that sticks were used to roll up parchment scrolls. Two sticks then, according to their interpretation, must represent two separate books - the Bible and the Book of Mormon - which would ultimately be shown as a unified revelation from God.

The Mormons are simply wrong about this text. Ezekiel was *NOT* making any kind of prediction about separate written revelations from God. The context shows that he was speaking of a reuniting of a remnant of Judah and Israel. These were the two sticks that would become one. He proceeds to show that the accomplishment of this would be through the spiritual blessings granted by God in Christ Jesus. Observe: (Ezekiel 37:18-26) "And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not show us what thou meanest by these? Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand ... And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all ... I will save them out of all their dwelling places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God ... Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will . . . set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore."

The Mormons are clearly guilty of perverting the Scriptures when they attempt to use this text to support their corrupt doctrine.

¹ Talmage, James E. *The Articles of Faith*
- by Greg Gwin