

The Challenge of Humility: Is Humility a Key to Wisdom?

"I face a lot of issues every single day. Stuff at church goes in one ear and out the other. How in the world can I 'sanctify everyday circumstances'? I'm torn between the demands of the my job, my work, my family, people all over, ...and my faith. How can I handle it all? How can I stay the right size?"

A Confident Faith: Isaiah 50: 4c-9a

1. To what degree does a simple and confident faith play a role in your life?
2. How much do you rely on God to help you in your daily life? Is the Lord God your help?
3. What does it mean to you to "set [your] face like flint"? Do you do this?

Getting the Message: Mark 9:50-57

1. As with so much of Jesus' ministry, the disciples, at the beginning of this passage, hear a clear and direct message from Jesus and miss it – or don't get it. Think about and discuss what kinds of messages from Jesus you miss, don't get, or choose not to pay attention to.
2. Jesus tells the apostles who are arguing about which of them is the greatest, "If anyone wishes to be first, he shall be the last of all and the servant of all." How do you make sense of this statement in terms of your life: especially in your job, in your family, and in your relationships with others?
3. How well do you put your arms around children, that is, around the least among us?

Woe to the Rich: James 5:1-6

1. To what degree does the reading speak to you or repel you? Do you take James' reproach of the rich seriously? Is Jesus with the poor more than the rich, in your mind? To what degree do James's angry words apply to the world today?
2. Is James talking to you? Are you the "rich"? Or rather in what ways are you the "rich"? Is it important to become less "rich," either monetarily or otherwise in order to be a follower of Christ?
3. Is there a place for humility in your life – for simplicity or poverty of any kind?

Saved by Humility: Hebrews 2:9-11

1. What does it mean to you that God made himself "lower than angels" for us? Do you think of Jesus as humble or lowly? What difference does Jesus' lowly human condition make in your life?
2. Are you ever ashamed to call Jesus your brother? What people in your life or distant from you are you sometimes "ashamed" to call brother?
3. Have you, personally, ever been saved or redeemed through suffering? Can you think of examples of such redemptive suffering in your life?

True Wealth: Wisdom 7:7-11

1. Think about how you pray. Do you pray for the spirit of wisdom to come to you? What does this kind of prayer for the spirit of wisdom mean?
2. What role do power and control ("scepter and throne") play in your life? Do they keep you from finding wisdom?
3. What is humility? Is there wisdom in humility for you? Does this wisdom mean opting for something intangible, non-material, "beyond health and comeliness," beyond wealth?

True Greatness: Mark 10:35-45

1. What does Jesus mean by his idea that "whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant" and "whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all"? Does this idea apply to your life?
2. Where is the Kingdom of God? In what way does being a "great one" keep you from the Kingdom? Or does it? Should it?
3. James and John ask of Jesus what they want of Him. What do you want from your messiah? How does he serve you? How do you serve him? Are you a servant?