humility
Strength for Life

*Down, but Not Out: How to Get Up When Life Knocks You Down*

*Humility: The Forgotten Virtue*
humility
the forgotten virtue

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with JOSHUA MACK

PUBLISHERS
Dedicated to the family of God that form
the congregation at
Grace Fellowship Church of the Lehigh Valley;

To Dan and Yvonne Retzlaf
and to my wife Carol,
who manifest a large amount of the virtue
described in this book.
Finally—a book that exposes the truth about pride and promotes what Cotton Mather called “the contrary grace,” namely, humility. How sorely this book is needed in a day when scores of people are drowning in their own forms of unbiblical self-esteem!

Wayne Mack defines pride and humility biblically. He shows us in a multitude of ways that God hates pride (Prov. 6:16–17). He hates the proud with His heart, curses them with His mouth, and punishes them with His hand (Ps. 119:21; Isa. 2:12; 23:9). Pride was God’s first enemy. It was the first sin in paradise and is the last we will shed in death. “Pride is the shirt of the soul, put on first and put off last,” wrote George Swinnock.

Mack shows us that as a sin, pride is unique. Most sins turn us away from God, but pride is a direct attack upon God. It lifts our hearts above Him and against Him. Pride seeks to dethrone God and enthrone itself.
Pride also seeks to dethrone my neighbor, we are told. It always puts self-idolatry above neighbor-service. At root, pride breaks both tables of the law and all Ten Commandments.

Pride is complex. “It takes many forms and shapes and encompasses the heart like the layers of an onion—when you pull off one layer, there is another underneath,” wrote Jonathan Edwards.3

Pride feeds off nearly anything: a fair measure of ability and wisdom, a single compliment, a season of remarkable prosperity, or a small accomplishment. “It is hard starving this sin, as there is nothing almost but it can live upon,” wrote Richard Mayo.4

Our forefathers did not consider themselves immune to this sin. “I know I am proud; and yet I do not know the half of that pride,” wrote Robert Murray M’Cheyne.5 Twenty years after his conversion, Jonathan Edwards groaned about the “bottomless, infinite depths of pride” left in his heart. And Martin Luther said, “I am more afraid of pope ‘self’ than of the pope in Rome and all his cardinals.”6

A godly person fights against pride, whereas a worldly person feeds pride. “Men frequently admire me, and I am pleased,” said Henry Martyn, adding, “but I abhor the pleasure I feel.”7 Cotton Mather confessed that when pride filled him with bitterness and confusion before the Lord, “I endeavoured to take a view of my pride as the very image of the Devil, contrary to the image and grace of Christ; as an offense against God, and grieving of His Spirit; as the most unreasonable folly and madness for one who had nothing singularly excellent and who had a nature so corrupt.”8 Thomas Shepard also fought pride. In his diary entry for November 10, 1642, Shep-
ard wrote, “I kept a private fast for light to see the full glory of the Gospel . . . and for the conquest of all my remaining pride of heart.”

How do we fight against pride? Do we understand how deeply rooted it is in us? Do we ever remonstrate ourselves like the Puritan Richard Mayo: “Should that man be proud that has sinned as thou hast sinned, and lived as thou hast lived, and wasted so much time, and abused so much mercy, and omitted so many duties, and neglected so great means?—that hath so grieved the Spirit of God, so violated the law of God, so dishonoured the name of God? Should that man be proud, who hath such a heart as thou hast?”

If we would kill worldly pride and live in godly humility, let us follow Mack’s advice to look at our Savior, whose life, Calvin said, “was naught but a series of sufferings.” Nowhere is humility so cultivated than at Gethsemane and Calvary. Confess with Joseph Hall:

Thy garden is the place,
Where pride cannot intrude;
For should it dare to enter there,
T’would soon be drowned in blood.

And sing with Isaac Watts:

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.
Here are some other ways to help you subdue pride and cultivate humility:

- Seek a deeper knowledge of God, His attributes, and His glory. Job and Isaiah teach us that nothing is so humbling as knowing God (Job 42; Isa. 6).
- Meditate much on the solemnity of death, the certainty of Judgment Day, and the vastness of eternity.
- View each day as an opportunity to forget yourself and serve others. The act of service is innately humbling.
- Read the biographies of great saints, such as George Whitefield’s Journals, The Life of David Brainerd, and Charles Spurgeon’s Early Years. As Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones says, “If that does not bring you to earth, then I pronounce that you are . . . beyond hope.”
- Remember daily that “pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall” (Prov. 16:18 KJV). Pray daily for humility.
- Read this book. Answer the study questions. Then read the book again. If you take it seriously, and the Spirit blesses it to your heart, you will grow spiritually. The essence of that growth will be John the Baptist’s confession, which I believe is the essence of all genuine sanctification: “He [Christ] must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:30).

—Joel R. Beeke
Charles Spurgeon said, “That demon of pride was born with us, and it will not die one hour before us. It is so woven into the very warp and woof of our nature, that till we are wrapped in our winding-sheets we shall never hear the last of it.”¹ In essence, pride is the first sin to rear its head when we’re born and the last to go when we die. Pride is a serious problem for us throughout our lives. In similar fashion, C. S. Lewis evidences his conviction about the seriousness of pride in this way. In his book *Mere Christianity*, Lewis asserts that pride is “the essential vice, the utmost evil,” and that it is the “one vice of which no man in the world is free, and of which hardly any people . . . ever imagine they are guilty themselves.”² Chrysostom, an early church leader, joined his voice to these perspectives when he said that pride is the mother of all evils.³

No one who knows the Bible and is a careful observer of human beings will dispute that pride is and always has been a gigantic problem in the world. Nor can anyone dispute that
pride causes serious problems and that its counterpart, humility, is a valuable, yet rare, quality in human beings and their relationships. Pride is endemic and natural for all of us who live this side of Genesis 3. True humility is exceptional and unnatural for all of us who live this side of heaven.

This book was written in an attempt to understand pride and humility from a biblical perspective and to help us diminish the destructive pride factor and to increase the true humility factor in our lives. To do this, I have used a four-D approach. First, based on the conviction that we can’t put something off or put something on unless we know what that something is, I begin this book by giving a biblical definition of what pride and humility are. Then I discuss how pride and humility display themselves. And finally, I explain how true humility can be developed and destructive pride can be diminished in our lives.

God, says the Scripture, is opposed to proud people and gracious to humble people (James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5). For this reason and many more that are explained in this book, every Christian should be vitally concerned about the subject under consideration. In His Word, we are told that the Lord Jesus Christ, the very Son of God manifest in the flesh, was meek and lowly (Matt. 11:28–30; Phil. 2:5–8). In His Word, God has told us that He wants all of us who have been redeemed through the obedience and sacrifice of Christ to be conformed to His image (Rom. 8:29–30; Phil. 2:5). Part of being conformed to His image involves putting off pride and putting on humility. My prayer is that God will use the material found in this volume to accomplish His purpose of our becoming more like the meek and lowly Jesus, our great Redeemer and
Lord and Example. Please join with me in praying that God will use this book to further that purpose in your life and mine.

Many people have been involved in helping me bring this book to fruition. To them I owe a great debt of gratitude. Without their help, in the midst of a very busy schedule, this book would have never come into existence. As you read the book, you may find some mistakes, in that I haven’t been inspired as the biblical writers were. You may also find that the style is not as scintillating as you might like. Please blame me for any negative thing about the book and give these dear people who helped me the credit for any of the positives. They have been of immense help in birthing this book.

Who are these people? In a sense, all the people of Grace Fellowship Church of the Lehigh Valley of Pennsylvania helped me to develop this book, in that the material presented in it was first presented to them in our training-hour classes. They listened and responded to the material; it is my hope that they grew in their Christian lives through it.

More specifically, Janet Dudek, who has helped me with several other books, was initially responsible for typing and editing the contents. She spent many hours at this task. Her skill in helping me condense and phrase the material and her dedication, hard work, and support were invaluable. Her husband, Jeff, an English teacher, looked over her shoulder (and, figuratively speaking, mine as well) and gave valuable critique of grammar and style. Dr. Joel Beeke, a gifted and busy pastor, seminar professor, and church leader, graciously agreed to write a foreword to the book. As you read it, I think you’ll realize why I’m so thankful to him for taking the time to read
the book and write the foreword. His words set a wonderful tone for the rest of the book.

My wife, Carol, did her usual thing—reading the manuscripts and making comments on better ways of stating the information.

As you read this book, you will also become aware of other people who gave me an immense amount of help in writing it. Thomas Watson, John Bunyan, Jonathan Edwards, and Charles Spurgeon have provided valuable insights on the subject being discussed in this book through their written materials. Because you will find quotes from these men throughout this book, I would be remiss not to acknowledge the assistance I have received from them.

Thanks to all these people, but especially thanks to God for His goodness and for His giving me something to write about. I pray that this book will be mightily used to bring glory to our triune God and great blessing to His people, for whom Christ died and rose again.
The Importance of Humility

In John Bunyan’s insightful book *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, an allegory is used to teach great truth about the Christian faith and life. Bunyan’s main character is called Christian, and this person goes on a long journey, beginning with salvation and ending in glory. At one point in the story, Christian is preparing to leave the Palace Beautiful, which represents the church, and descend into the valley of humiliation. Several friends will accompany him.

Now it seemed to him that it was time to go and they agreed.

“But first,” they said, “let us take you to the Armory again.”

When they got there, they equipped Christian from head to foot with all he would need in case he
were attacked on the way. He then walked with his friends to the gate and there he asked Watchful, the gatekeeper, if he had seen any pilgrims pass by.

“Yes,” Watchful answered.

“Please tell me, was it someone you knew?” asked Christian.

“I asked his name,” said Watchful, “and he told me it was Faithful.”

“Oh I know him,” said Christian. “He is from my home town—a close neighbor. How far ahead do you think he is?”

“By this time, he should be down the hill.”

“Well, kind sir, may the Lord be with you and bless you greatly for all the kindness you have shown me.”

As he resumed his journey, Discretion, Piety, Charity and Prudence decided to accompany him to the foot of the hill. So they went out together reviewing some of their previous conversations until they reached the place where the hill began to descend.

Then Christian said, “It was difficult coming up the hill, and as far as I can see, going down looks treacherous.”

“Yes, it is,” said Prudence. “It is a very difficult thing for a man to go down into the valley of humiliation and not slip on the way. That is why we want to accompany you down the hill.” So he began to make his way down very carefully, but even then he lost his footing once or twice.

Then I saw in my dream that when they reached the bottom of the Hill, Christian’s dear companions
gave him a Loaf of Bread, a Bottle of Wine, and a Cluster of Raisins. And he went on his way.¹

What did Bunyan intend by the “valley of humiliation”? Why would Christian, fresh from becoming a member of the church, need to go there? Why do all believers find themselves, from time to time, in this same valley? What do we need to learn there? For the next several chapters, we are going to answer these and many other questions relating to the subject of humility.

The Valley of Humiliation: Biblical Examples

The valley of humiliation represents the humbling experiences that God brings into our lives to destroy the sin of pride and to help us develop godly humility. Humbling experiences are common for us as believers today, just as they have been for all other believers throughout history. The Bible records many of these experiences for us.

In Genesis 12 we read about Abraham’s humiliation before Pharaoh when he lied about Sarah’s being his wife. For some time, Abraham enjoyed the hospitality of Pharaoh during a time of famine in the region, but Abraham and his household were eventually thrown out of the land because of this deception.

Joseph endured many years of humiliation before God placed him in the high position of prime minister of Egypt. First, he was abused and sold into slavery by his own brothers.
Later, he was falsely accused of taking advantage of Potiphar’s wife and spent two years in prison (Gen. 39–40).

Moses, who led the Israelites out of Egypt, was misunderstood and humiliated by his own brother and sister when they accused him of not sharing leadership over the people (Num. 12). In fact, God had commanded Moses to be their sole leader at that time. And many times during their exodus and wandering through the wilderness, the people of Israel complained against Moses even though they were responsible for their own situation. In fact, the Israelites spent forty years in the valley of humiliation—the wilderness—as God prepared them for the promised land. Other Old Testament examples include Eli, David, Elijah, Jeremiah, Hosea, and many others.

In the New Testament, we read about the humiliation of the apostles, including Peter, John, and Paul. These men spent time in prison for false crimes, they were beaten and threatened, and some were eventually killed. In 2 Corinthians, Paul wrote about a particular trial of humiliation that he dealt with constantly: “Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself!” (12:7). If such a man as Paul needed to learn humility, we may be sure that we do as well.

**The Importance of Humility in the Christian Life**

On one occasion, someone approached Augustine and asked, “What is the most important quality in the Christian
life?” Augustine responded, “Humility.” The person then asked, “What is the second most important quality in the Christian life?” Again Augustine responded, “Humility.” This same person asked a third time, “What is the third most important quality in the Christian life?” Augustine repeated, “Humility.”

We may judge from this exchange that Augustine deemed humility to be a tremendously important part of the Christian life. Whether or not the quality of humility—or any other particular Christian life quality—should be ranked higher than any other may be debated, but God’s Word makes it very clear that humility is extremely important for believers.

We know this for several reasons. First, we know that humility is tremendously important because the Bible frequently commands us to be humble. First Peter 5:5–6 admonishes “all of you [to] clothe yourselves with humility toward one another. . . . Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time.” Notice that this is written as a command, not a suggestion. To fail to humble oneself is to disobey God, and such disobedience is sin.

In Ephesians 4:1–2, the apostle Paul wrote, “Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness. . . .” Again, we are commanded in James 4:10, “Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.”

Our Lord Jesus Christ called us to humility in Matthew 23:10–12: “Do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, that is, Christ. But the greatest among you shall be your servant. Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever
humbles himself shall be exalted.” The fact that these and many other Scriptures command us to be humble indicates that humility is extremely important.

Second, we know that humility is very important because the Bible frequently warns us to rid ourselves of pride and warns us of its serious consequences. Proverbs 16:5 says, “Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord; assuredly, he will not be unpunished.” According to Proverbs 18:12, “Before destruction the heart of man is haughty. . . .” Isaiah 5:15 declares, “So the common man will be humbled and the man of importance abased, the eyes of the proud also will be abased.” Pride is a serious sin that God does not tolerate, and the Bible makes it very clear that pride has no place in the Christian life.

Third, we know that humility is important because God promises to bless those who are humble in heart. James 4:6 says, “God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” Proverbs 15:33 teaches, “The fear of the Lord is the instruction for wisdom, and before honor comes humility.” Proverbs 22:4 promises, “The reward of humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, honor, and life.” And Isaiah contains a wonderful promise to humble people: “For thus says the high and exalted One who lives forever, whose name is Holy, ‘I dwell on a high and holy place, and also with the contrite and lowly of spirit in order to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite’” (Isa. 57:15).

A common adage proclaims: “God helps those who help themselves.” In fact, nothing could be more diametrically opposed to the truth of the Word of God than that. Scripture teaches that God helps those who come to Him for help and
who depend on Him alone for all that they need. Indeed, God delights in blessing the humble person.

Jesus taught this principle to His disciples on several occasions. At the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount, He said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:3). Later, when the disciples were arguing about which of them was the greatest, Jesus called a child over to Himself and said to them, “Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 18:4).

While a humble person may not experience blessing as this world defines blessing, God promises that the humble in heart will know His blessing. As believers, we know that this blessing is of far greater worth than anything and everything in this physical world. Humility is indeed a very important quality in the Christian life.

**God’s Purpose in the Valley of Humiliation**

Why does God take His people into the valley of humiliation? First, the fact that Scripture teaches the tremendous importance of humility implies that God highly values humility and despises pride. The many promises that God makes in the Scripture to bless those who are humble and to destroy those who are proud confirm this.

Second, God takes believers into the valley of humiliation because we are so prone to pride and so averse to humility. Humility is not something that we are born with. We are born proud, and because of our sinful hearts, we do not naturally
seek after God. Psalm 10:4 teaches, “The wicked, in the haughtiness of his countenance, does not seek Him. All his thoughts are, ‘There is no God.’ ” Apart from the grace of God in our lives, we all naturally tend to ignore God and exalt ourselves.

Thankfully, we have a God who is too merciful and gracious to let us go on in our pride. He knows that we all struggle with this sin to some degree—some of us more than others—and He wants to deliver us from our sinful pride. We all desperately need to learn how to turn away from pride and how to embrace humility, and so He uses the trials of the valley of humiliation to do this.

Third, God allows us to undergo humbling circumstances because He wants to test and increase our faith. First Peter 1:6–7 says, “In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, so that the proof of your faith . . . may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” Our faith is made stronger only as it is exercised and tested.

Fourth, God leads us into the valley of humiliation because He wants to use the trials in our lives to produce in us a quality of endurance so that we may become “perfect and complete, lacking in nothing” (James 1:2–4). And finally, according to 2 Corinthians 12:7–10, God brings humiliating circumstances into our lives because they teach us to depend more on His all-sufficient grace. As Paul noted, “Therefore I am well content with weaknesses . . . for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.”

As painful and discouraging as the valley of humiliation may be, if we set our minds on the good that God is doing there and understand His purposes, we can maintain our joy.
This is what James was talking about when he wrote, “Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance” (James 1:2–3). Ultimately, as we grow in humility, we are becoming more and more like our Lord Jesus Christ, and that is a great privilege!

**AN IMPORTANT CAUTION**

In the rest of this chapter and for the next several chapters on this subject, we will consider three important aspects of humility: its definition, its display, and its development. Before we continue, however, it is of utmost importance that we remind ourselves to be careful not to make this study of pride and humility merely a matter of head knowledge. Rather, we must constantly and honestly examine ourselves for the presence of pride in our hearts so that we can repent of it. At the same time, we should be looking for ways to put humility into practice every day. Above all, we should be seeking the Lord’s help in prayer for the desire and determination to diligently work on this area of our Christian life.

**HUMILITY DEFINED**

In order to define humility, we will start by looking at the definition of humility’s opposite: pride. What is pride? Pride consists in attributing to ourselves and demanding for ourselves the honor, privileges, prerogatives, rights, and power that are due to God alone. Thus, it is the very root and essence
of sin because pride, at its core, is idolatry of self. A proud person has put himself or herself in God’s place.

Humility, then, consists in an attitude wherein we recognize our own insignificance and unworthiness before God and attribute to Him the supreme honor, praise, prerogatives, rights, privileges, worship, devotion, authority, submission, and obedience that He alone deserves. It also involves a natural, habitual tendency to think and behave in a manner that appropriately expresses this attitude. In other words, the attitude of humility is always seen in humble actions. It means having a servant’s mind-set and always putting self last.

Now that we have generally defined humility, let us consider each aspect of this definition so that we can more fully understand this important quality. The more we understand in detail what true humility is, the better we will understand our own deficiency and great need of more of it in our lives.

First, a truly humble person has an abiding sense of his natural insignificance, as compared to God. Abraham exhibited this attitude when he said, “‘Now behold, I have ventured to speak to the Lord, although I am but dust and ashes’” (Gen. 18:27). Abraham was deeply aware of the incredible insignificance of his knowledge and understanding compared to the wisdom of God. Job also showed this aspect of humility when, after being thoroughly tested by God, he said, “‘Behold, I am insignificant; what can I reply to You? I lay my hand on my mouth’” (Job 40:4). Job finally came to the place of recognizing God’s infinite natural superiority to man.

Humble people have a great sense of their ignorance, their weakness, and their unimportance. They know that if “the nations are like a drop from a bucket” in God’s eyes (Isa. 26:1). 

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40:15), then they are far, far less than that. They recognize the insufficiency of their own power. They understand that only God is omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent, all-wise, full of grace and truth and righteousness. They realize that they are totally dependent on God for everything: wisdom, health, safety, and even the ability to obey. In fact, it is only by God's grace that we can even do anything that pleases Him.

Still further, humble people are deeply aware of their lack of greatness and lack of right to exercise authority over anyone. On the other hand, they are acutely aware of God's greatness and God's supreme right to rule over all. This means that truly humble people put themselves entirely under God's authority. Whatever God says to do or not do, they obey completely and without question because they recognize the Creator–creature distinction. God is the Creator, and we are His creatures.

Second, a truly humble person has an abiding sense of his moral insignificance and sinfulness, as compared to God. Isaiah demonstrated this sense when he said, “Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips” (Isa. 6:5). The publican, in Luke 18:13, showed this aspect of humility as well when he stood at a distance from the altar, refused to look up to heaven, beat his chest, and said, “God, be merciful to me, the sinner!”

To put it another way, a truly humble person has an accurate sense of his unworthiness before God. In Genesis 32:10, Jacob expressed this humility of spirit when he said, “I am unworthy of all the lovingkindness and of all the faithfulness which You have shown to Your servant. . . .” David also acknowledged his unworthiness when he asked, “Who am
I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that You have brought me this far? ’ ” (2 Sam. 7:18).

Indeed, truly humble people read a passage such as Romans 3:10–18 and think to themselves, “This is me! This is my heart that is being described”:

As it is written,
“There is none righteous, not even one;
There is none who understands,
There is none who seeks for God;
All have turned aside, together they have become useless;
There is none who does good,
There is not even one.”
“Their throat is an open grave,
With their tongues they keep deceiving,”
“The poison of asps is under their lips”;
“Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness”;
“Their feet are swift to shed blood,
Destruction and misery are in their paths,
And the path of peace they have not known.”
“There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

Third, a person who is truly humble has a theocentric mindset. A person who thinks theocentrically puts God at the center of everything. God is his Master. This is in contrast to the proud person, who has an anthropocentric mind-set, in which man is at the center of everything. To be more exact, self is at the center of everything in the mind of the proud person. He is his own master, and everyone and everything else exists to please him and to serve his needs. As a result, he takes the throne
in his own heart and, in reality, worships himself. Not only that, but he demands that everyone else worship him as well.

The humble person, on the other hand, has a servant’s mind-set. He desires to worship, love, and serve God at all times, and he demonstrates this mind-set daily by loving and serving other people. He would much rather deny himself than exalt himself or be exalted by others. He has the mind of Christ, who said that “the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:28).

Fourth, a person who is truly humble attributes to God supreme honor, praise, rights, and privileges. God alone is worshiped and exalted, as Jesus said in Matthew 4:10: “‘For it is written, “You shall worship the LORD your God, and serve Him only.”’” A humble person is devoted to God in a way that he is devoted to no one else in his life. He acknowledges God as his supreme authority in all matters of life. What God says is what he does.

The humble man also recognizes that everything good that he has comes from the hand of God. He knows that God is the source of all things, the means of all things, and the goal of all things. He says with Paul, “For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen” (Rom. 11:36). He realizes that it is his great privilege to live his life for the glory of God in everything that he does because He alone is worthy.

**Personal Evaluation**

If we truly desire to grow in this quality of humility, we must be willing to take the time to honestly examine and eval-
uate ourselves in terms of this definition. Is our heart over-whelmed by the truth of our natural insignificance before the Almighty God? Are we painfully aware of our sinfulness and unworthiness before a Holy God? Is God the constant center around which our thoughts, desires, words, and actions revolve? Do we give Him alone our worship, praise, devotion, and obedience?

An honest appraisal of our hearts will no doubt reveal that we fall far short in all of these ways. None of us is truly humble as we ought to be and truly void of pride. Because I agree that pride is the first sin to rear its head when we’re born and the last to go when we die, and because humility is such an important, but forgotten and neglected virtue, I encourage you to seriously and expectantly devour and apply the material in this book. In *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, John Bunyan was on target biblically when he indicated that the valley of humiliation is a valley that every Christian will encounter and needs to encounter as he journeys through the wilderness of this world toward heaven. Praise God that He loves us so much that He is willing to humiliate us in order to rid us of our awful pride!

**APPLICATION / DISCUSSION EXERCISES**

1. What biblical reasons are there for believing that humility is an important aspect of the Christian life?

2. How is humility defined in this chapter?

3. How does this chapter describe a truly humble person?
4. Are you a person who has a self-centered outlook on life? How frequently do you think of yourself as a person whom others should serve, respect, and please?
   [ ] often    [ ] sometimes    [ ] seldom    [ ] never [ ]

5. When other people do not respect or please you, how frequently do you criticize, judge, or punish them for not treating you as you “deserve” to be treated?
   [ ] often    [ ] sometimes    [ ] seldom    [ ] never [ ]

6. How frequently do you have a God-centered outlook on life?
   [ ] often    [ ] sometimes    [ ] seldom    [ ] never [ ]

7. How frequently do you think about how you can serve, please, and encourage other people?
   [ ] often    [ ] sometimes    [ ] seldom    [ ] never [ ]

8. How frequently do you deny your desires, pleasures, or needs for the sake of others?
   [ ] often    [ ] sometimes    [ ] seldom    [ ] never [ ]

9. List some illustrations of times when you have served, sought to please, and encouraged people without having any thought of getting anything in return.