

Humility—A Study in the Life of Moses

Purpose: To create in the students the desire to apply principles for living a humble life to their lives.

Objectives: By the end of the lesson the students will:

1. Be able to explain the principles for living a humble life.
2. Be willing to apply the principles to their lives.

Key Verse: Numbers 12:3

(An option to consider in teaching this session is to watch the video of Nancy Leigh DeMoss' called "Brokenness, the Heart God Revives." Watch about 25 minutes. Those who may want to watch/listen to the rest could do so at a later time. Hand out copies of the last page of the notes – which was taken from Nancy's talk. Then close in prayer. The book and video are available by logging on to: www.campuscrusade.org)

I. Introduction

We all know the story of the life of Moses. He was born into an adverse situation. He was raised in the Egyptian court. He received the best education and according to tradition became a great military leader and was in line to become the next Pharaoh. Then something happened that changed the course of his life. The Scriptures say that he began to think about his people.

II. Pride — The First Phase of Moses' Life

A. *Read Exodus 2:11-15.*

B. It states that Moses looked this way and that. There was only one problem. He did not look up. Moses' problem was pride. He evidently knew that he was the one called to liberate his people. So he took the problem into his own hands. Pride could best be defined by a Frank Sinatra song called, "I did it my way." Moses did it his own way and not God's way. The result was forty years of exile.

III. Brokenness — the Second Phase of Moses' Life.

A. Any person that God wants to use must be broken of pride. John 15:5 says that "...Apart from Me [Jesus] you can do nothing." God is not looking for the talented nor those with great ability, but rather those with great availability. Moses' training in this area lasted the 40 years that he was in the wilderness tending sheep. He had gone from a mighty prince to a lowly shepherd.

B. When brokenness has finished its work, then God can replace the pride with humility. If you are in this phase of your life, be open to God. Let him work. Relax

IV. The Strong Man Becomes Weak.

- A. Moses encounters God. *Explain Exodus 3:1-15. Say something like this.* This is the story of Moses and the burning bush. In this account God calls Moses to be the liberator of the people of Israel. Moses' pride has changed into fear. We see a broken man who is fearful of speaking and serving God. He sees himself as being completely inadequate. Brokenness is the first step of usefulness in God's kingdom. We see this fearful broken man obeying the Lord and eventually leading the people of Israel out of Egypt.
- B. In Moses' life, brokenness resulted in humility toward God. What is humility? It is being dead to self, because God is our all in all. Humility is also the displacement of self (our dreams, wishes and rights) by the enthronement of God. Humility is the disappearance of self in the vision where God is all. Humility says, "Life: it isn't about me, but it's about Jesus, my spouse, my children, others, and I'm somewhere near the bottom." Pride says, "I'm the best" or "I'm not wrong" and "I'll do it my way." Basically self is on the throne and the center of the universe. This was central in Satan's fall and man's fall.

V. Humility — the Secret of Moses' Strength.

Let's fast-forward in Moses' life to the book of Numbers. The Bible describes Moses as being the most humble man on the face of the earth.

Read Numbers 12:3 & 6-8.

We see that Moses had learned his lesson. From a proud, arrogant man, Moses had become a very humble man who God used mightily.

VI. Application for us:

- A. Which stage of life are you in? Are you in the stage of pride, brokenness, or humility that leads to usefulness?
- B. Why is humility so important and fundamental to our Christian life? Because the opposite is pride, and God is opposed to the proud (Psalm 138:6; James 4:6). Also because without humility, we will fail in our pursuit of holiness. Without humility, our faith will be superficial. Without humility, pride will constantly be popping its head up in our lives, even amidst spiritual victories. Our effectiveness in ministry will be kept shallow and there will be a hindrance between God and us. But with humility, the door will be kept open for God to be our all in all. He will be free to do His work in and through us for His glory. Because of our fallen nature, humility restores our rightful position of complete nothingness before God.

How do we grow in humility? Realize that it's from God alone. We cannot create humility in ourselves. We need to ask ourselves, do we have humility? And we need to ask Jesus if we have humility. We need to have the attitude found in Matt. 5:6, to hunger and thirst after righteousness which comes as a result of humility. Then, we need to ask God to give us humility.

- C. Humility and relationships: But humility is not something that we learn just between God and us. Humility is learned and practiced in the context of interacting with people. Whether we're with friends or those who irritate us or those who mistreat us, God uses this

environment to develop our humility. This is where we can see if we're dead to self and if God is our all in all. After a difficult interaction, ask yourself, "Did I handle it humbly?"

Humility is a very important and fundamental virtue in our Christian lives. We need it in order to see our need for God in our daily lives and to allow Him to be our everything and to let Him work. Just like a car can't go anywhere without gas, we can't go deeper in our relationship with God without humility.

- D. Are you a strong person with no need for help? Are you self-sufficient? Are you naturally gifted? Many times the naturally gifted person is the person who has the most difficulty with humility since he is capable. Often couples going through marital struggles pridefully say, "I can handle it on my own" instead of humbly saying, "I need help." Let's take a few minutes to assess our lives. In what stage of development are you? Are you in the stage of pride, the stage of brokenness or in the stage of humility and therefore usefulness for God? Let's pray and ask God that agape love – which is never boastful or proud (1 Corinthians 13:4) but rather humble – would be built up and demonstrated in our lives.

(Hand out copy of attached "Proud, Unbroken People/Broken People." You could explain that this is from a talk given by Nancy Leigh DeMoss at Campus Crusade's US Staff Conference in July 1995. After Nancy's talk, God visited the staff and for 13 hours, staff were coming forward and humbly confessing sins and seeking help and prayers from one another.)

(Close in prayer)

Proud, Unbroken People

Focus on the failures of others

Are self-righteous; have a critical, fault-finding spirit; look at own life/faults with a telescope but others with a microscope

Look down on others

Are independent; have a self-sufficient spirit

Maintain control; must have their way

Have to prove that they are right

Claim rights

Have a demanding spirit

Are self-protective of time, rights, reputation

Desire to be served

Desire to be a success

Desire for self-advancement

Are driven to be recognized and appreciated

Are wounded when others are promoted and they are overlooked

Think "the ministry is privileged to have me!"

Think of what they can do for God

Feel confident in how much they know

Are self-conscious

Keep people at arm's length

Are quick to blame others

Are unapproachable

Are defensive when criticized

Are concerned with being respectable

Are concerned about what others think

Work to maintain image and protect reputation

Find it difficult to share their spiritual needs with others

Want to be sure no one finds out about their sin

Have a hard time saying, "I was wrong. Would you forgive me?"

Deal in generalities when confessing sin

Are concerned about the consequences of their sin

Are remorseful for being caught

Wait for the other party to come and ask for forgiveness in a conflict

Compare themselves with others and feel deserving of honor

Are blind to their true heart condition

Don't think they have anything of which to repent

Don't think they need revival (think everybody else does)

Broken People

Are overwhelmed with their own spiritual need

Are compassionate; have a forgiving spirit; look for best in others

Esteem all others better than self

Have dependent spirit; recognize others' needs

Surrender control

Are willing to yield the right to be right

Yield rights

Have a giving spirit

Are self-denying

Are motivated to serve others

Desire to be faithful to make others a success

Desire to promote others

Have a sense of unworthiness; are thrilled to be used at all; are eager for others to get the credit

Rejoice when others are lifted up

Think "I don't deserve to serve in this ministry!"

Know that they have nothing to offer God

Are humbled by how much they have to learn

Have no concern with self at all

Are willing to take the risks of loving intimately

Accept personal responsibility

Are easy to be entreated

Receive criticism with a humble, open heart

Are concerned with being real

Know all that matters is what God knows

Die to own reputation

Are willing to be transparent with others

Are willing to be exposed; knowing once broken, there's nothing to lose

Are quick to admit fault and to seek forgiveness

Deal in specifics

Are grieved over the root of their sin

Are repentant over sin and forsake it

Take the initiative to be reconciled; gets there first

Compare themselves with the holiness of God and feel desperate for mercy

Walk in the light

Have a continual heart attitude toward repentance

Continually sense their need for a fresh encounter with the filling of the Holy Spirit