

Humility 101

Andrew Murray's Introduction and First Chapter in "Humility"

(Language updated by Ted Hildebrandt, 2010)

Monday' Reading:

I will here give you an infallible touchstone, that will try all to the truth. It is this: retire from the world and all conversation, only for one month; neither write, nor read, nor debate anything with yourself; stop all the former workings of your heart and mind: and, with all the strength of your heart, stand all this month, as continually as you can, in the following form of prayer to God. Offer it frequently on your knees; but whether sitting, walking, or standing, be always inwardly longing, and earnestly praying this one prayer to God: "That of His great goodness He would make known to you, and take from your heart, every kind and form and degree of Pride, whether it be from evil spirits, or your own corrupt nature; and that He would awaken in you the deepest depth and truth of that Humility, which can make you capable of His light and Holy Spirit." Reject every thought, but that of waiting and praying in this matter from the bottom of your heart, with such truth and earnestness, as people in torment wish to pray and be delivered from it ...If you can and will give yourself up in truth and sincerity to this spirit of prayer, I will venture to affirm that, if you had twice as many evil spirits in you as Mary Magdalene had, they will all be cast out of you, and you will be forced with her to weep tears of love at the feet of the holy Jesus. *The Spirit of Prayer, Pt. II, p. 124*

Monday's Reflection:

If you are brave enough to a begin a journey of humility, Murray's suggested prayer has been a transformative one for me. DO NOT pray it, if you want your life to stay the same and have none of your pride revealed to you. If this is the case, stop reading here and just enjoy the sermons Sunday morning. BUT, if you do wish to receive God's transformation, to be re-formed into the image of God found in Jesus, PLEASE DO pray this prayer fervently and often. My mentor adapted Murray's prayer and I am including that below. God will answer this prayer, pray it with trepidation.

"Father, out of your great goodness make known to me, and take from my heart, every kind and form and degree of pride, whether it is from evil spirits or my own corrupt nature. And, awaken in me the sacred art of humbling myself to the indwelling presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit."

Humility 101

Tuesday's Reading

"You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created." Rev. 4:11

When God created the universe, it was with the one object of making the creature partaker of His perfection and blessedness, and so showing forth in it the glory of His love and wisdom and power. God wished to reveal Himself in and through created beings by communicating to them as much of His own goodness and glory as they were capable of receiving. But this communication was not a giving to the creature something which it could possess in itself, a certain life or goodness, of which it had the charge and disposal. By no means. But as God is the ever-living, ever-present, ever-acting One, who upholds all things by the word of His power, and in whom all things exist, the relation of the creature to God could only be one of unceasing, absolute, universal dependence. As truly as God by His power once created, so truly by that same power must God every moment maintain. The creature has not only to look back to the origin and first beginning of existence, and acknowledge that it there owes everything to God; its chief care, its highest virtue, its only happiness, now and through all eternity, is to present itself an empty vessel, in which God can dwell and manifest His power and goodness.

The life God bestows is imparted not once for all, but each moment continuously, by the unceasing operation of His mighty power. Humility, the place of entire dependence on God, is, from the very nature of things, the first duty and the highest virtue of the creature, and the root of every virtue.

And so pride, or the loss of this humility, is the root of every sin and evil. It was when the now fallen angels began to look upon themselves with self-complacency that they were led to disobedience, and were cast down from the light of heaven into outer darkness. Even so it was, when the serpent breathed the poison of his pride, the desire to be as God, into the hearts of our first parents, that they too fell from their high estate into all the wretchedness in which man is now sunk. In heaven and earth, pride, self-exaltation, is the gate and the birth, and the curse, of hell. (See Note "A" in Friday's Reading.)

Tuesday's Reflection:

Center yourself in God's presence and continue praying Murray's prayer:

"Father, out of your great goodness make known to me, and take from my heart, every kind and form and degree of pride, whether it is from evil spirits or my own corrupt nature. And, awaken in me the sacred art of humbling myself to the indwelling presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit."

Humility 101

Wednesday's Reading

Hence it follows that nothing can be our redemption, but the restoration of the lost humility, the original and only true relation of the creature to its God. And so Jesus came to bring humility back to earth, to make us partakers of it, and by it to save us. In heaven He humbled Himself to become man. The humility we see in Him possessed Him in heaven; it brought Him, He brought it, from there. Here on earth "He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death"; His humility gave His death its value, and so became our redemption. And now the salvation He imparts is nothing less and nothing else than a communication of His own life and death, His own disposition and spirit, His own humility, as the ground and root of His relation to God and His redeeming work. Jesus Christ took the place and fulfilled the destiny of man, as a creature, by His life of perfect humility. His humility is our salvation. His salvation is our humility.

And so the life of the saved ones, of the saints, must needs bear this stamp of deliverance from sin, and full restoration to their original state; their whole relation to God and man marked by an all pervading humility. Without this there can be no true abiding in God's presence, or experience of His favor and the power of His Spirit; without this no abiding faith, or love or joy or strength. Humility is the only soil in which the graces root; the lack of humility is the sufficient explanation of every defect and failure. Humility is not so much a grace or virtue along with others; it is the root of all, because it alone takes the right attitude before God, and allows Him as God to do all.

God has so constituted us as reasonable beings, that the truer the insight into the real nature or the absolute need of a command, the readier and fuller will be our obedience to it. The call to humility has been too little regarded in the Church because its true nature and importance has been too little apprehended. It is not a something which we bring to God, or He bestows; it is simply the sense of entire nothingness, which comes when we see how truly God is all, and in which we make way for God to be all. When the creature realizes that this is the true nobility, and consents to be with his will, his mind, and his affections, the form, the vessel in which the life and glory of God are to work and manifest themselves, he sees that humility is simply acknowledging the truth of his position as creature, and yielding to God His place.

Wednesday's Practice:

Center yourself in God's presence and continue praying Murray's prayer:

"Father, out of your great goodness make known to me, and take from my heart, every kind and form and degree of pride, whether it is from evil spirits or my own corrupt nature. And, awaken in me the sacred art of humbling myself to the indwelling presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit."

Humility 101

Thursday's Reading

In the life of earnest Christians, of those who pursue and profess holiness, humility ought to be the chief mark of their uprightness. It is often said that it is not so. May not one reason be that in the teaching and example of the Church, it has never had that place of supreme importance which belongs to it? And that this, again, is owing to the neglect of this truth, that strong as sin is as a motive to humility, there is one of still wider and mightier influence, that which makes the angels, that which made Jesus, that which makes the holiest of saints in heaven, so humble; that the first and chief mark of the relation of the creature, the secret of his blessedness, is the humility and nothingness which leaves God free to be all?

I am sure there are many Christians who will confess that their experience has been very much like my own in this, that we had long known the Lord without realizing that meekness and lowliness of heart are to be the distinguishing feature of the disciple as they were of the Master. And further, that this humility is not a thing that will come of itself, but that it must be made the object of special desire and prayer and faith and practice. As we study the word, we shall see what very distinct and oft-repeated instructions Jesus gave His disciples on this point, and how slow they were in understanding Him. Let us, at the very commencement of our meditations, admit that there is nothing so natural to man, nothing so insidious and hidden from our sight, nothing so difficult and dangerous, as pride. Let us feel that nothing but a very determined and persevering waiting on God and Christ will discover how lacking we are in the grace of humility, and how impotent to obtain what we seek. Let us study the character of Christ until our souls are filled with the love and admiration of His lowliness. And let us believe that, when we are broken down under a sense of our pride, and our impotence to cast it out, Jesus Christ Himself will come in to impart this grace too, as a part of His wondrous life within us.

Thursday's Practice

Center yourself in God's presence and continue praying Murray's prayer:

"Father, out of your great goodness make known to me, and take from my heart, every kind and form and degree of pride, whether it is from evil spirits or my own corrupt nature. And, awaken in me the sacred art of humbling myself to the indwelling presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit."

Humility 101

Friday's Reading

NOTE A--

"All this is to make it known the region of eternity that pride can degrade the highest angels into devils, and humility raise fallen flesh and blood to the thrones of angels. Thus, this is the great end of God raising a new creation out of a fallen kingdom of angels: for this end it stands in its state of war betwixt the fire and pride of fallen angels, and the humility of the Lamb of God, that the last trumpet may sound the great truth through the depths of eternity, that evil can have no beginning but from pride, and no end but from humility. The truth is this: Pride may die in you, or nothing of heaven can live in you. Under the banner of the truth, give yourself up to the meek and humble spirit of the holy Jesus. Humility must sow seed, or there can be no reaping in Heaven. Look not at pride only as an unbecoming temper, nor at humility only as a decent virtue: for the one is death, and the other is life; the one is all hell, the other is all heaven. So much as you have of pride within you, you have of the fallen angels alive in you; so much as you have of true humility, so much you have of the Lamb of God within you. Could you see what every stirring of pride does to your soul, you would beg of everything you meet to tear the viper from you, though with the loss of a hand or an eye. Could you see what a sweet, divine, transforming power there is in humility, how it expels the poison of your nature, and makes room for the Spirit of God to live in you, you would rather wish to be the footstool of all the world than want the smallest degree of it." --Spirit of Prayer, Pt.II, p.73, Edition of Moreton, Canterbury, 1893.

Friday's Practice:

Center yourself in God's presence and continue praying Murray's prayer:

"Father, out of your great goodness make known to me, and take from my heart, every kind and form and degree of pride, whether it is from evil spirits or my own corrupt nature. And, awaken in me the sacred art of humbling myself to the indwelling presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit."

Humility 101

Saturday's Reading

Note B.(From Chapter Two of *Humility*)

"We need to know two things: 1. That our salvation consists wholly in being saved from ourselves, or that which we are by nature; 2. That in the whole nature of things nothing could be this salvation or savior to us but such a humility of God as is beyond all expression. Hence the first unalterable term of the Saviour to fallen man: Except a man denies himself, he cannot be My disciple. Self is the whole evil of fallen nature; self-denial is our capacity of being saved; humility is our savior ... Self is the root, the branches, the tree, of all the evil of our fallen state. All the evils of fallen angels and men have their birth in the pride of self. On the other hand, all the virtues of the heavenly life are the virtues of humility. It is humility alone that makes the insurmountable gulf between heaven and hell. What is then, or in what lies, the great struggle for eternal life? It all lies in the strife between pride and humility: pride and humility are the two master powers, the two kingdoms in strife for the eternal possession of humanity. There never was, nor ever will be, but one humility, and that is the one humility of Christ. Pride and self have the all of humanity, till humanity has its all from Christ. One therefore only fights the good fight whose strife is that the self-idolatrous nature which one has from Adam may be brought to death by the supernatural humility of Christ brought to life in them." - W. Law, Address to the Clergy, p. 52.

Saturday's Practice:

Center yourself in God's presence and continue praying Murray's prayer:

"Father, out of your great goodness make known to me, and take from my heart, every kind and form and degree of pride, whether it is from evil spirits or my own corrupt nature. And, awaken in me the sacred art of humbling myself to the indwelling presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit."