CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

MARCH 29 2025

Scripture Story: John 3:22-36.
Commentary: *The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*), chapter 18.

it's your turn



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flashlight

"John had by nature the faults and weaknesses common to humanity, but the touch of divine love had transformed him. He dwelt in an atmosphere uncontaminated with selfishness and ambition, and far above the miasma of jealousy. He manifested no sympathy with the dissatisfaction of his disciples, but showed how clearly he understood his relation to the Messiah, and how gladly he welcomed the One for whom he had prepared the way" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 179).

key text

"He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease."

(John 3:29, 30)

what do you think?

Think about what true humility means to you. Write your own definition of humility:

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Read Philippians 2:5-8 and reflect on the example of true humility Jesus left for us. What can you learn from Jesus' life of true humility and surrender to the will of God? How can you apply these principles in your own life?

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did you know?

Which of the following characteristics matter most to you in another person: compassion, consideration, friendliness, generosity, honesty, humbleness, humorous, integrity, intelligence, sensitivity, or thoughtfulness?

Humility is seen as reverence (respect) for the Lord. Humility is recognizing that you are a created being and God is the Creator. It is being able to see yourself in the light of who God is.

INTO THE STORY

"After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He remained with them and baptized. Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there. And they came and were baptized. For John had not yet been thrown into prison.

"Then there arose a dispute between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purification. And they came to John and said to him, 'Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified—behold, He is baptizing, and all are coming to Him!'

"John answered and said, 'A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven. You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, "I am not the Christ," but, "I have been sent before Him." He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease. He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all. And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony. He who has received His testimony has certified that God is true. For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure. The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand. He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.' "

(John 3:22-36)



OUT OF THE STORY

Why do you think the people were constantly coming to John to be baptized?

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What do you think was the real reason behind John the Baptist's disciples complaining about more people listening to Jesus than to John?

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What does John's illustration about the bridegroom tell us about John the Baptist?

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What is the main point John is trying to make?

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How does this message impact how I am to live?

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How can I "testify to what I have seen and heard"?

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punch lines

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God" **(Matthew 5:5-9).**

"But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted" **(Matthew 23:11, 12).**

"So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God" **(James 1:19, 20).**

"You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD" **(Leviticus 19:18).**

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust" **(Matthew 5:43-45).**

further insight

"Those who are true to their calling as messengers for God will not seek honor for themselves."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 179

"Happy are they who are willing for self to be humbled, saying . . . , 'He must increase, but I must decrease.' "—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 182

Sabbath

Read Titus 3:2 and Colossians 3:11, 12.

Unfortunately, humility is not a characteristic that is often displayed in society today. We are quick to anger when things do not go our way. Think about the people you encounter on a daily basis: teachers, parents, teenagers, cashiers. In the last year, which one has shown the most humility? Briefly write the circumstances and why it stands out in your memory.

Sunday

Read James 1:19, 20.

Look back through the *Into the Story* and *Out of the Story* sections. Notice that John's disciples and Jesus' disciples argued over baptism—even about the language that should be used at a baptism. Jealousy and anger are contrary to humility. As John's disciples complained to him about the popularity of Jesus and baptism, John had a choice to make: get angry or be humble. John chose the latter because he knew that anger and jealousy were not the answer. When was the last time you got angry, when humility would have been a better option? What can you do not to let anger overtake you the next time, and let humility be the answer?

Monday

Read John 3:30.

Too often people don't do the decreasing part. We want to stand out and be applauded for what we have done—that's human nature. Even those who stand in the background want to be recognized for their contribution. In fact, we are taught to give recognition to work done well—we even expect it. But what does it really mean, "I must decrease"? In what ways can you do this today?

Tuesday

Read Philippians 2:13.

In the *Flashlight* section we see that John's task was to prepare the way for Jesus Christ. That was the only task that God called John to do. John delighted in the task and was a witness to its successfulness as people flocked to Jesus. John had a deeper understanding. Surrounded as he was by human nature, he understood his part in God's work. And it was time for his job to be over. Instead of letting his disciples pull him in to hindering Jesus' work, he expressed his joy at working with Jesus, and then slowly stepped back and let Jesus take over completely.

Wednesday

Read Matthew 5.

Being meek and merciful is closely related to being humble. But people often mistake a meek or merciful person for someone who is submissive to others. What do you think? Read through the Beatitudes in Matthew 5 and write what you think meek, merciful, peacemaker, and pure in heart really mean.

Thursday

Read 2 Timothy 2:24 and Ephesians 4:26, 31, 32.

In nearly all Asian countries, including India where Mahatma Gandhi lived, saving face is most important. To admit that you made an error would be to lose face. For Gandhi to admit to errors was a big thing in Asia. Because of his humbleness he was instrumental in bringing India into its own country.

People in other countries are not that different. While they may not have the same saving/losing face philosophy, no one likes to admit they make mistakes. But admitting to mistakes and stepping back to correct or apologize is a form of humility. Someone who can admit their errors shows true character, and is often well thought of. What can you admit to today that will allow you to become a more humble person?

Friday

Read Romans 12:10 and Ephesians 4:29.

John experienced joy when he allowed Christ to be in charge of his life.

Write and post these verses somewhere where you will see them every day. Building others up and honoring them above yourself is part of decreasing yourself. This week pray for humility to become second nature to you. Find ways to show humility to those you meet on a daily basis. Encourage your friends to show humility. You never know what may happen. Your classroom may become a better place.

this week's reading*

The Desire of Ages (or *Humble Hero*), chapter 18.

**Humble Hero* is a special adaptation of *The Desire of Ages*, created by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press®. Get more information about it at http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companionbooks#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages series each year.