



## Daily Verse and Comment

### Colossians 3:12

(12) Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;

*New King James Version*

How does the New Testament present humility? According to commentator William Barclay, the classical Greek language did not even have a word for humility that included no sense of shame. The root of the word the apostles used literally means "to depress," a very expressive word. To the Greeks, humility indicated servility and slavishness. This may have been because Greeks looked down upon anyone who acted in humility as not being an upstanding person of good character. Culturally, it was evil, shameful behavior, as to them it exhibited someone untrustworthy. At best, they would consider the person to be a wimp because they admired people who aggressively took charge, commanding others about.

The Christian approach is entirely different. We will consider a few scriptures that give a description of the way humility enhances one's character.

**Psalm 113:4-7** : "For He is high above the nations; His glory is far greater than the heavens. Who can be compared with God enthroned on high? Far below Him are heavens and the earth; He stoops to look, and lifts the poor from the dirt" (*The Living Bible*).

**Psalm 138:6** : "Yet though He is so great, He respects the humble, but proud men must keep their distance" (*The Living Bible*).

Both of these psalms picture God as being of awesome power, but He holds His power in check to achieve a greater good. Rather than destroy through imperious self-centeredness, He pities and builds with gentle, understanding [kindness](#).

[Matthew 20:25-28](#) shows New Covenant leadership: "But [Jesus](#) called them to Himself and said, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.'"

[Matthew 11:29](#) makes Jesus' insistence on humility exceedingly clear: "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."

[Matthew 11:29](#) is a direct command from the same God described in Psalms, though here He is acting as a Man. His example and commands regarding this continues to be the way Christians are to follow.

Humility is not a weak, cringing approach to life. It is not a denial of power but the deliberate controlling of power to accomplish a greater good. It comes into proper use when a converted person deliberately utilizes a servant approach rather than a natural, proud, and carnal human-ruler approach. It is the attitude that best promotes good relationships because it neutralizes pride and the damage it can wreak. At the very least, it indicates modesty that grows from a genuine self-evaluation that concludes in the person deeming himself worthless in relation to God and His truth.

It is important that we understand self-evaluation better. In the Christian sense of humility, the person is not deeming himself worthless because he sees himself as a vile creature full of sin—though to some degree this is true in comparison to God—but because he is merely a creature, absolutely

dependent upon God even for every breath of air. Further, he views himself as possessing nothing intrinsically good, having to receive all good, spiritual things from God as well. Even Jesus had this attitude, and He is our model.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

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