

# First Step Up Is Down: 2

## John Steps Down

To be humble is to be submissive to someone higher or greater.

It is not to debase yourself to the extent where you make yourself to be so unworthy, so poor, so insignificant - this is a form of inverted-pride which God resists.

Humility is measured not in what you say about you, but whether you submit yourself to what God says about you.

When we humble ourselves we are exalted, lifted and raised up. That raising up can only come by taking a step down and submitting to God and surrendering to Him.

Jesus is our ultimate example of true humility (Philippians 2)

- Jesus humbled Himself and surrendered to the Father's will,
- His own testimony was that He only did and said what He heard from the Father

### Matthew 3.13-17

**(1)** Jesus did not need to be baptised by John as John's baptism was a baptism of repentance.

**(2)** John tries to prevent Jesus from being baptised. He "protested strenuously" (Amp) – other translations say "He objected" (CEV); "He forbade Him" (AV); "He tried to make Him change His mind" (TEV)

We can gather from John's statement: "I need to be baptised by You, and are You coming to me" that his reasoning is - "I'm not worthy to do this".

This thought is an overflow of what is in his heart – he testified himself that "I am not worthy to even carry His shoes" (see verse 11).

**(3)** "Permit it to be so now" - Take a step down, humble yourself and submit to this request without any objections.  
"for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" - it is the right and proper way to fulfill righteousness

Take a close look at this verse and two words in particular - "for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" - IT & US

Us – Jesus & John

"..for this is the fitting way for [*both of*] us to fulfill all righteousness [*that is, to perform completely whatever is right*]..." (Amp)

Jesus was saying to John that this was necessary for them both to fulfil righteousness, their duty to God.

“this is how we should fulfil all our duty to God” (Moffatt)  
“for this is the fitting way for both of us to do our full duty to God” (Williams)  
“for it is right for us to do everything that God requires” (Goodspeed)

It – what is that duty? What is it that we must do to fulfil our duty to God?

“we do well to conform in this way with all that God requires” (NEB)  
“It is right for us to meet meet all the Law’s demands” - (JB Philips)

I suggest that Jesus is talking about submitting to God (rather than baptism) so that we fulfil righteousness.

He had to submit to God and be baptised, even though He did not need baptism of repentance.

John had to submit to Jesus and baptise Him, when it really should have been the other way round.

Romans 12.1

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service.”

Our reasonable service (duty) is to present ourselves as a living sacrifice – a life surrendered to God, submitted to Him.

**(4)** John took a step down and submitted to Jesus and baptised Him

As Jesus came up out of the water, John saw the Holy Spirit descending like a dove and coming upon Him and heard the voice of the Father speaking.

God exalted John and raised Him up - he had seen with his eyes what God had revealed to him some time earlier.

### **John 1. 29-37**

In this passage John testifies (v33) that God had shown Him that the One on whom he saw the Holy Spirit descending was the one.

God elevated him and his ministry. From then on he began to point men and women to Jesus.

“He must increase, I must decrease” (John 3.30). John had learnt the lesson to be submitted to God

### **Matthew 11.7-15**

Jesus makes some remarkable statements about John which elevated him, raised him up – and it all began with John taking a step down.