

## Humility In Wisdom: 1

### First Step Up Is Down

#### Proverbs 4.7-12

“Wisdom *is* the principal thing; *Therefore* get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding. Exalt her, and she will promote you; She will bring you honor, when you embrace her. She will place on your head an ornament of grace; A crown of glory she will deliver to you. Hear, my son, and receive my sayings, And the years of your life will be many. I have taught you in the way of wisdom; I have led you in right paths. When you walk, your steps will not be hindered, And when you run, you will not stumble.”

Since the beginning of this year we have been looking at the theme of walking in wisdom, more recently we have seen that one of the benefits or results of walking in wisdom is entering the place of rest. In this teaching we are going to examine yet another aspect of walking in wisdom – that of humility so that we might be elevated or exalted.

In these verse from Proverbs we read that if we deal rightly in wisdom we will be exalted and promoted, wisdom will honour us, our steps will not be hindered or made to stumble. We are told in verse 8 that we are to exalt wisdom and she will promote us. In this teaching we are going to see how we can exalt her, how individuals in the Bible applied this principle and some of the teaching that goes along with it.

Let me start with a short illustration - a few years ago I was in a hotel and noticed something strange. In order to get to the upper floors you first had to go down a few stairs to get to the where the lifts and staircases were. In order to ascend you had to first descend – the first step up, is down! All too often we want to promote ourselves, give ourselves the credit because we think that will get us noticed and give us a name. Wrong! If we lift up wisdom, lift up Jesus (who is our wisdom) we will be promoted. If we humble ourselves we will be exalted.

#### Luke 14.7-11

In this parable Jesus told about a man who was invited to a feast and presented the scenario where he occupied the best seat. Then a man came in who was an important guest and the first man was sitting in the seat reserved for the important guest. He was shamed as he was made to take a lower seat. Jesus taught that we should occupy the lower seats in order that we may be exalted.

If we want to come up higher we need to first go down or humble ourselves – this is the teaching throughout the New Testament and not just an isolated case.

John the Baptist said of himself “[Jesus must increase and I must decrease](#)” (John 3.30) To be exalted we must become less and less. All that’s of me must become less and all that’s of Him must become greater.

### **1 Peter 5.5-6**

“Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to *your* elders. Yes, all of *you* be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "GOD RESISTS THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE." .Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time”

Humility (or to be humble) is to submit yourself to someone higher or greater, submission, make low.

Humility is not to make ourselves so great or build ourselves up. Humility is to submit ourselves to God. Pride will bring us down, Humility will exalt us.

The first step up is down – to submit to God.

### **James 4.6-7,10**

James quotes the same Old Testament scripture – God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble

To be humble is also not making ourselves to feel so unworthy, or so poor, so debased – this is not humility, this is a type of pride, an inverted-pride and God resists that too. To be humble is to submit yourself to God and what He says about you.

### **Luke 18.9-14**

Here’s another parable Jesus taught, this time about two men.

Trusting in yourself is pride – God resists the proud. The Pharisee was full of pride, His prayer was based on himself and his achievements.

The tax collector could hardly lift his eyes as he focused on God and not himself – be merciful to me. He submitted to God and he went home justified

Verse 14 reminds us that those who exalt themselves will be brought down, those who humble themselves will be exalted.