



Part 2: LOWER IS HIGHER

→ *When you hear it's going to be a message on pride and humility, what immediately jumps into your head?*

HUMILITY is BEAUTIFUL, POWERFUL & LIBERATING.

- * It's hugely ATTRACTIVE and thoroughly DISARMING.
 - * It's one of the most telling signs of MATURITY (Colossians 3:12).
- *How is humility attractive? How is it disarming? Do you agree that it's a telling sign of Christian maturity?*

The DANGERS of PRIDE are considerable and it's the SUBTLE STUFF that gets you. The PROBLEM is that though as Christians we understand that LOWER is HIGHER, the world's trying to teach us that HIGHER is HIGHER.

- *What would you say were the subtle pride traps? What would overt pride look like?*
 → *To what extent does the world teach that 'higher is higher?' How does it do so overtly? How does it do so more subtly? [Clue: Think about words like influence, power and popularity, and where the world says they are to be found.]*

IN KINGDOM ECONOMY, LOWER is HIGHER.

- * The way UP is DOWN.
 - * LESS of YOU means MORE of GOD.
 - * You LEAD by SERVING not LORDING (Matthew 20:25-28).
- *How do you go lower?*

THREE SUBTLE PRIDE SNARES

1. Self-PROMOTION

- * The world teaches us that you have to PUSH, MANOEUVRE & MANIPULATE your way to the TOP.
 - * PROMOTION in the Kingdom is GOD-GIVEN and comes SUPERNATURALLY in response to FAITHFULNESS & CHARACTER (Matthew 23:12).
 - * Rather than EXALTING OURSELVES HIGHER in PUBLIC, the real work is done by HUMBLING OURSELVES LOWER in PRIVATE.
- *How do you do that? What is the 'real work?' To what extent does it have to be done in private?*
- * It comes down to whether you want NATURAL results (the best YOU can do) or SUPERNATURAL results (the best GOD can do)?
 - * There are huge risks in trying to go FURTHER before you have gone DEEPER.
- *How do you use social media? What are the risks? What abuses have you seen? How do you make sure that you're not using it for overt self-promotion?*
 → *What is it in you that is so desperate to be noticed? What of that is a good thing? What of that is a bad thing? How do you distinguish between the two?*
 → *What is the opposite of 'self-promotion?' Did Jesus 'promote' Himself? How does promotion come in God's economy?*
 → *What are the risks of going further before you've gone deeper?*

2. Self-DENIGRATION

- * Humility is not thinking LESS of YOURSELF, but thinking of YOURSELF LESS.
- * It's not BELITTILING you, but MAGNIFYING God.

* It's more a recognition of HOW BIG GOD IS than HOW SMALL YOU ARE.

* Humility is God in HIS PLACE and you IN YOURS.

→ *What is false humility and why is it a form of pride? Are superiority and inferiority complexes both forms of pride?*

→ *What is true humility? What does it look like? What are its characteristics? How do you distinguish it from false humility?*

→ *What does it mean to think of yourself less, rather than thinking less of yourself?*

3. Putting OTHERS down to make YOU FEEL BETTER

* Pride is OPPOSED; humility is GRACED (1 Peter 5:5, James 4:4-10, Proverbs 16:18).

* Good News: The LOWER you're prepared to go, the more GRACE there is for you.

→ *Why does putting others down make your flesh feel good momentarily? But what is the cost?*

→ *What does it mean to say that God resists pride? Why does He do so?*

* Pride builds WALLS; humility builds BRIDGES.

→ *How does pride build relational walls? Why does pride build walls? What do those walls look like? How does humility build bridges? Why does humility build bridges? What do those bridges look like?*

→ *"Remarkably, lower isn't concerned about how it makes me look or feel, it's only interested in advancing the purposes of God." Discuss!*

SWEET FREEDOM

1. The truly humble no longer need to WORK SO HARD just to LOOK GOOD.

* The great thing about humility is that it's no longer about YOU and YOUR EFFORTS, but about GOD and GRACE.

* You LOOKING GOOD is no longer the TARGET.

→ *"Letting this go breaks all sorts of chains." What chains does it break? What burdens does it release?*

→ *Why is looking good such hard work? Where does the desire to look good (metaphorically, not just physically!) come from?*

→ *"For the truly humble, there is no more need for masks, lies and deceptions." Discuss!*

2. The truly humble no longer need to PLAY DEFENCE all the time.

* You can't OFFEND a DEAD man (Galatians 2:20). If you're already at the BOTTOM, OFFENCE completely loses its POWER.

→ *Why can't you offend a dead man? What does it mean to be dead (see Gal 2:20)?*

→ *"If me decreasing is seen as the win, even a loss becomes a win." Discuss!*

* Humility is a SAFE place, because though there will still be PAIN, it loses its STING

* Humility is a WISE place, because it PROTECTS you from all sorts of NEGATIVE FLESHLY REACTIONS.

* Humility is a FREE place, because the only OPINION that really matters to you is GOD'S.

→ *If you no longer need to play defence / be defensive, what changes? What are you liberated from? What no longer affects you? What's died? If you're no longer concentrating on defence, what can you concentrate on?*

RESPONSE QUESTIONS

1. *Are you happy to let God PROMOTE you or are you MEDDLING?*

2. *Are building WALLS or extending BRIDGES?*

3. *What can you do to go LOWER?*