

Come Follow Me
Elo Viz Production
Matthew 18, Luke 10
Week 17

“Some years ago there was a news story about a man who believed that if he rubbed lemon juice on his face, it would make him invisible to cameras. So he put lemon juice all over his face, went out, and robbed two banks. Not much later he was arrested when his image was broadcast over the evening news. When police showed the man the videos of himself from the security cameras, he couldn’t believe his eyes. “But I had lemon juice on my face!” he protested.³

When a scientist at Cornell University heard about this story, he was intrigued that a man could be so painfully unaware of his own incompetence. To determine whether this was a general problem, two researchers invited college students to participate in a series of tests on various life skills and then asked them to rate how they did. The students who performed poorly were the least accurate at evaluating their own performance—some of them estimating their scores to be five times higher than they actually were.⁴

This study has been replicated in numerous ways, confirming over and over again the same conclusion: many of us have a difficult time seeing ourselves as we truly are, and even successful people overestimate their own contribution and underestimate the contributions that others make.⁵

It might not be so significant to overestimate how well we drive a car or how far we can drive a golf ball. But when we start believing that our contributions at home, at work, and at church are greater than they actually are, we blind ourselves to blessings and opportunities to improve ourselves in significant and profound ways.”

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2014/10/lord-is-it-i?lang=eng>

This story was related by president Uchtdorf several years ago. I share this with you because this social problem is not a new one. We read about the disciples doing the same thing in Jesus's time. Matthew 18 starts:

“1 At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the **greatest** in the kingdom of heaven?” (Matthew 18:1)

We may judge these men to be arrogant and prideful, but before we cast that stone we might want to look in the mirror at our own beams. As a society we love greatness. We worship great athletes, powerful men, and popular icons. And if we measure our devotion to these Idles by the time we spend focusing on them it could be concluded that most worship worldly greatness far more than the creator of the World.

Thus when Jesus's disciples come to him with this question: which of us is greatest in the kingdom of God. Jesus had to be blunt and I'm sure He might have been a little disappointed. You are all not even going to be in the Kingdom if you don't stop what you're doing, forsake your pride and become as a child. (Matt 18:3)

“4 Whosoever therefore shall **humble** himself as this little **child**, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt 18:4)

So what does this mean? We are certain that He doesn't mean to become child-ish. If we consider the characteristics of a child and why God so graciously blesses them. We can surely see how we are lacking in this area. Children are: Meek, submissive, eager to learn, quick to forgive, quick to ask for forgiveness, and patient. If we want to see what this looks like in an actual community and how we can accomplish this, we see several examples in the scriptures. The city of Enoch mastered it. The people of Nephi came close just after Jesus's appearance to them at the temple. In 4th Nephi we read that: the Apostles set up a church and people flooded from all around to be a part of God's people.

“there were no contentions and disputations among them, and every man did deal justly one with another.

3 And they had **all** things common among them; therefore there were not rich and poor, bond and free, but they were all made free, and partakers of the heavenly **gift**.

5 And there were great and marvelous works wrought by the disciples of Jesus, insomuch that they did **heal** the sick, and **raise** the dead, and cause the lame to walk, and the blind to receive their sight, and the deaf to hear; and all manner of **miracles**

did they work among the children of men; and in nothing did they work miracles save it were in the name of Jesus.

7 And the Lord did prosper them exceedingly in the land; yea, insomuch that they did build cities again.

10 Behold, it came to pass that the people of Nephi did wax strong, and did multiply exceedingly fast, and became an exceedingly **fair** and delightsome people.

12 They did walk after the commandments which they had received from their Lord and their God, continuing in **fasting** and prayer, and in meeting together oft both to pray and to hear the word of the Lord.

13 And it came to pass that there was no contention among all the people, in all the land; but there were mighty miracles wrought among the disciples of Jesus.

15 15 And it came to pass that there was no **contention** in the land, because of the **love** of God which did dwell in the hearts of the people.

16 And there were no **envyings**, nor **strifes**, nor **tumults**, nor whoredoms, nor lyings, nor murders, nor any manner of **lasciviousness**; and surely there could not be a **happier** people among all the people who had been created by the hand of God.

17 There were no robbers, nor murderers, neither were there Lamanites, nor any manner of -ites; but they were in **one**, the children of Christ, and heirs to the kingdom of God.

18 And how blessed were they! For the Lord did bless them in all their doings; yea, even they were blessed and prospered until an hundred and ten years had passed away; and the first generation from Christ had passed away, and there was no contention in all the land. (4th Nephi 1:2-18)

One hundred and ten years of peace. Could you imagine what that would be like? What is fascinating is what happens next. After that long the there was a small group that broke off and revolted against this way of life. Becoming again Lamanites in the land, a separation of the people. But they stayed strong in their beliefs for several more years. A Total of 200 years since Christ came among them. "they had become exceedingly **rich**, because of their prosperity in Christ." (4th Nephi 1:23)

Then the pride cycle got them.

"24 And now, in this two hundred and first year there began to be among them those who were lifted up in **pride**, such as the wearing of costly apparel, and all manner of fine pearls, and of the fine things of the world.

25 And from that time forth they did have their goods and their substance no more common among them.

26 And they began to be divided into classes.” (4th Nephi 1:24-26)

It's hard to believe that this would happen. But it did and it does. Pride has destroyed some of the greatest nations to ever exist. And it has destroyed even more great men.

So how do we avoid that? How do we become and stay as humble as children?

CS Lewis once said: “Being humble doesn't mean thinking less about yourself, but rather thinking about yourself less. “

It has also been said that: Humility is something we should ask God for everyday in prayer, but never thank Him that we have obtained it.

When we consider the most humbling characteristic of children, it is that they have no accomplishments. They haven't done anything to be prideful about. As we mature and start looking at all that we have done and accomplished in our lives it becomes easy to see how great we have become. But we usually don't understand or realize the source of our greatness.

Recently my son was the lead in his High School musical and he did an amazing job. He knew it and so did everyone that watched the show. After the first few performances he started to feel sick, not a physical illness but a spiritual illness. We had a chance to talk about it as he prepared for another day of shows. He said: “Dad, at first it was great to hear everyone's praise of me. But now I don't feel good about it. I don't feel close to God or the Spirit.” I asked him if he knew why he was experiencing these feelings. He responded “I think it is because everyone is telling me how great I am, and I think I am starting to believe them.”

We then had an opportunity to discuss how to grievously thank them for their kindness and then how to show humility by turning the praise to them for being a great audience, thanking them for taking the time to come and support him and all of the cast performing with him.

It was amazing to see how much more he enjoyed the final few shows and how it changed him and the light inside of him.

It was pride that took Lucifer, the angel... to be turned into the Devil. It was Pride that caused Cane to become the first murderer when he killed his brother. It is pride that causes wars and destroys nations. It is pride that destroys marriage and leaves children wanting.

It is an incredible thing to accomplish great works in our life as long as we truly understand the source and the reason for each and every accomplishment. Giving praise and glory to Him.

It is not until we truly feel this gratitude to God in our hearts and our first inclination is to give all glory to Him, will we begin to become God's people and prosper as a nation.

The more I learn about humility and submissiveness the more I have come to understand that the miracles of God are directly linked to the level of humility we possess. I don't recall Jesus ever blessing someone with healing unless they were humble. Thus if we want to truly have the windows of heaven open unto us it is vital that we humble ourselves. For blessed are those that choose to be humble. More blessed than those that are compelled to be humble. Thus sayeth the Lord and Redeemer of the world.

Of this truth I testify, in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.