

Humility

by Jonathan Edwards

HUMILITY may be defined to be a habit of mind and heart corresponding to our comparative unworthiness and vileness before God, or a sense of our own comparative meanness in His sight, with the disposition to a behaviour answerable thereto. And a truly humble man is sensible of the small extent of his own knowledge, and the great extent of his ignorance, and of the small extent of his understanding as compared with the understanding of God. He is sensible of his weakness, how little his strength is, and how little he is able to do. He is sensible of his natural distance from God, of his dependence on Him, of the insufficiency of his own power and wisdom; and that it is by God's power that he is upheld and provided for; and that he needs God's wisdom to lead and guide him, and his might to enable him to do what he ought to do for Him.

Humility tends to prevent an aspiring and ambitious behaviour amongst men. The man that is under the influence of an humble spirit is content with such a situation amongst men as God is pleased to allot to him, and is not greedy of honour, and does not affect to appear uppermost and exalted above his neighbours. Humility tends also to prevent an arrogant and assuming behaviour. On the contrary, humility disposes a person to a condescending behaviour to the meekest and lowest and to treat inferiors with courtesy and affability, as being sensible of his own weakness and despicableness before God.

If we then consider ourselves as the followers of the meek and lowly and crucified Jesus, we shall walk humbly before God and man all the days of our life on earth.

Let all be exhorted earnestly to seek much of an humble spirit, and to endeavour to be humble in all their behaviour toward God and men. Seek for a deep and abiding sense of your comparative meanness before God and man. Know God. Confess your nothingness and ill-desert before Him. *Distrust yourself. Rely only on God.* Renounce all glory except from Him. Yield yourself heartily to His will and service. Avoid an aspiring, ambitious, ostentatious, assuming, arrogant, scornful, stubborn, wilful levelling, self-justifying behaviour; and strive for more and more of the humble spirit that Christ manifested while He was on earth. *Humility is a most essential and distinguishing trait in all true piety.*

Earnestly seek then, and diligently and prayerfully cherish an humble spirit, and God shall walk with you here below; and when a few more days shall have passed, He will receive you to the honours bestowed on His people at Christ's right hand.

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