

March: Be Humble

Introduction

How good are you at being humble? Would you say you're awesome at it? It's kind of a tricky question to answer if you think about it. Whatever your answer is though, it's pretty much guaranteed that you wouldn't be as humble as Moses was. In the book of Numbers in the Bible it says that "Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone on the face of the earth." Very impressive really. Moses was the world record holder for humility. The humility gold medallist. Although I probably should mention, tradition has it that Moses wrote the book of Numbers, which casts some doubt on the claim...

Humility is a hard concept to define. Most of the time we think it means talking yourself down whenever possible. Like when someone compliments you. "Wow that meal was amazing! You're a really good cook!" "Oh no not really. It was just from a recipe book." Or "Wow that was a great game, you got some awesome goals!" "Oh, well, I guess I just got lucky." But this is not really humility. Talking yourself down whenever you've done well is not really what it means to be humble. I can't find anywhere in the Bible where God says "Oh I'm not really that great...." And when the crowds were cheering after Jesus healed a blind person, we don't see Jesus going "Oh I guess I just got lucky."

So what is humility then? For Jesus, it's about **position**. It's about where you stand, where you sit, where you place yourself in relation to the people around you. Like the time when he and his disciples had just finished a long walk in sandals on dusty roads, and Jesus got down on his knees and started washing the dirt off their stinky feet. "If you want to be great in my kingdom," he said, "Be the servant to all."

Jesus invites us to take a lower position than others....the servant position. Such a position puts us at the end of the line, the bottom of the pack, the least in power, and the lowest in rank. It's a position that communicates that no one is my servant, and I don't expect at any stage that other people should serve me. I am here to serve, no matter who it is, whether someone is important or ordinary, the prime minister or an illegal immigrant, the CEO or a checkout chick serving you your groceries.

Humility is a position that communicates "It's not all about me. Everyone is important. Everyone has dignity and value. Everyone is worthy of love and respect." When we put ourselves in that position, we will find ourselves picking up rubbish left by others on a footpath or in the school grounds, cleaning up toys that your little brother has left lying around, cleaning toilets that are smelly and dirty, feeding homeless people who've forgotten how to be friendly, and taking on the jobs at work that no one else wants to do.

In our neighbourhoods we will take responsibility for others, not trying to control them, but looking for ways to help. Humility is making sure that **other** people are going OK, that they're well-looked after, that people are treating them well, that they have what they need. Even if living this way makes me look less cool. It's not about me. I'm here to serve.

You can't find a better example of humility than Jesus. The king of the universe was the one washing those dirty, stinky feet. Jesus' birth was a long way from a palace. His mum was an unmarried young woman. He grew up in an unimportant town, and people said "Can anything good come from there?" His friends were tax collectors and tradies who at all times smelled a little fishy. Any superpowers Jesus had were always used to help others - healing sicknesses, helping disabled people walk again, helping blind people to see, and feeding the hungry. Jesus lived his entire life putting others before himself. He treated criminals like friends. He had time for children. He risked his reputation constantly to serve and love the lowliest, the least respected people in his society. And when it came down to it, Jesus even gave his own life - humiliated and bullied and scarred - so that the whole broken world could be healed.

This month the challenge is not simply about thinking differently about ourselves. It is about practicing a different position in society. It is about getting down in the mud, sweat and tears of people who are struggling and actually doing for them what we expect others to do for us. It is about acting in ways that affirm that other people are more valuable than me. Not because they are more talented, more powerful, or wealthier, but because they are made in the image of God.

God loves every life, every person, every family, every individual, and so should we. No matter who they are. Even the ones with dirty feet.

Challenges

There are challenges listed for each version of a Big Year. Please select the challenges that best suit you and your group or family. Also, feel free to rewrite the challenges, or create new challenges to better reflect Jesus' teaching in your day-to-day setting.



- Compile a collage of images of Jesus' life (e.g. born in a manger, washing feet, serving others, blessing children). Spend some time looking at the images and consider the posture of humility that Jesus showed.
- Pray that life will bring you 'one good humiliation a day'. It might be a situation where you don't get your own way, where you're overlooked or when someone doesn't respect you. Watch how you respond - if you become defensive, consider what you might be defending. If you are able to respond with love (or at the very least, say nothing), you just might be practicing humility. Record your experiences each week in your journal.
- Ask a trusted friend to tell you honestly about a blind spot (something you are unaware of) that they think you need to work on. Pray about this and take action to if you need to.



- Silently take the lead in keeping your workplace kitchen clean this month. If you eat at a cafeteria or fast food joint, clean up your own mess and two other tables as well.
- Look at your own social media profile and ask how you can convey that everyone else on your friends list is more important than you (e.g. praise other people's achievements, ask for advice, ask how other people are, encourage others - especially those who might not usually get encouragement)
- Share a story of your own weakness or failure with someone who you look up to or usually try to impress.



- Volunteer at Clean Up Australia Day in your local area. To find a site near you, go to www.cleanup.org.au
- Find a recipe for 'Humble Pie' and bake one. While you're baking, think about any relationships that are difficult at the moment. If possible, go and eat the pie you've made with that person and apologise for any part you've played in the relationship breakdown, even if you don't think you're at fault.
- Set aside eight hours to show kindness to or serve those who are considered by some to be the 'lowest' in our society (e.g. homeless, indigenous, disabled, mentally ill, and elderly). *EIGHT HOUR CHALLENGE*