**Humble and Kind**

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This sermon is titled based on a song by the country artist Tim McGraw: Humble and Kind. I like this song very much and I thought it would be good to discuss these two characteristics of the Fruit of the Spirit that we find in Gal. 5:22.

* Play part of the song and read the lyrics

As we discuss the topics of humility and kindness, we will talk about the following:

* Why Humility is necessary?
* Look at the life of Moses and how he exemplified humility
* How we can develop humility?
* Why kindness is necessary for us and how we can show kindness to others?

**Why Humility?**

Because we control this and nothing else. This is the task God gives us to do.

* Swallow our pride
* Lower ourselves
* Subject to Him
* Humble ourselves before others
* Accept our limits
* Acknowledge our sins / failures

We control this part of our life and God controls all the rest. That things grow, multiply, go well, develop, move forward, go up, all the details behind these things are in God's control, He says yes or no, up or down, not us. Oh, we work at these, plan, execute, study, etc. but the final results are in God's hands. God provides great success, God blesses those who humble themselves before Him.

God is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble.
- I Peter 5:5

And therein lies the key to greatness in the kingdom. Those who humble themselves, God will make great. There's perfect symmetry and balance. We control the humbling part; He controls the great part. As we lower ourselves in humility, He raises us in spiritual greatness. No other "system" works, no other method gets results. You can't force God to make you great in any other way.

This is why humility is the pathway to spiritual greatness, it is the only thing in our control, it's the only thing of value (including our faith) that we have to offer God.

The path to greatness lays in a person's intimate knowledge and understanding of humility. You see, in the world people who aspire to greatness study the subject of greatness, the manners of great people, the heights that the great ones reach.

Jesus reversed this idea and taught His followers, especially those who aspired to greatness (and these several, Peter, John, Paul to name a few) .. Jesus taught them that the way to achieve greatness was to cultivate the virtue of humility.

He said this because it was the things that humility produced in a person's character that determined who was spiritually great, and greater and greatest in the kingdom of God.In order to give you an example of this in someone's life I'd like to focus on Moses and his journey to spiritual greatness. Perhaps his experience can guide all of those who may yearn for the ability to be greater spiritually than they are at the moment.

## Moses' Attempt at Greatness

Now if there was anyone among God's people who was prepared by the world for greatness, it was Moses. His efforts failed as both the Jewish and Egyptian people turned against him and he had to flee into the desert for safety. He spent 40 years in the desert tending sheep and raising a family in a simple lifestyle before God would call him to lead His people out of Egyptian slavery.

## Moses' Spiritual Greatness

We are all familiar with Moses' experience leading God's people in the wilderness for 40 years. During this time Moses exercised judgment over the people, taught them, interceded with God on their behalf, led them from camp, fought wars and spent many a lonely night in fasting and prayer. The wilderness period saw many high points where Moses led the people to build the tabernacle and begin formal worship, and low points where God punished the people (even Moses himself) for their disobedience.

All of this culminates in [Numbers 27:12-23](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Numbers+27%3A12-23&version=NASB1995) when the Lord informs Moses of two great events which are to take place in his life in the near future.

* Moses will get to actually see the promise land but will not be able to go there with the people.
* Moses is about to die in a short period of time.

What's interesting about this announcement is Moses' reaction to it. His very first impulse is not to argue or mourn about his impending death (even though the Bible says he was perfectly healthy at the time) His first impulse is to ask God to provide a good leader to take his place and continue the work he had been doing.

This reaction on Moses' part reveals the great change in his character from the days when he aspired to greatness using his own strength and wisdom. At the eve of his demise Moses' great humility, and thus his spiritual greatness, shines through and demonstrates the character of those who are great in God's kingdom. For example we see that Moses…

### 1. Had very little to no "self-will"

12Then the Lord said to Moses, "Go up this mountain in the Abarim Range and see the land I have given the Israelites. 13After you have seen it, you too will be gathered to your people, as your brother Aaron was, 14for when the community rebelled at the waters in the Desert of Zin, both of you disobeyed my command to honor me as holy before their eyes." (These were the waters of Meribah Kadesh, in the Desert of Zin.)
- Numbers 27: 12-14

Moses truly was without self-will after decades of searching, finding, and doing God's will in every kind of situation. Moses accepted God's will without hesitation, without questioning "why". Not his will and rationale for how things should be, but God's will even in life or death situations, especially in life or death situations!

### 2. Focus on God's Purpose not His Own

15Moses said to the Lord, 16"May the Lord, the God who gives breath to all living things, appoint someone over this community 17to go out and come in before them, one who will lead them out and bring them in, so the Lord's people will not be like sheep without a shepherd."
- Numbers 27:15-17

Notice that his concern was for the people's welfare and not his own. God's purpose and plan was bound up in the people of Israel. They were the ones through whom the Messiah would eventually come.

Moses was secure enough in God's love that he could, even at a critical moment in his life, stay focused on what was important, not to him, but to God. He could see the impact that his death would have on the people that he had led for so long. Moses remained centered on what God had given him to do even when the temptation was great to shift his attention to himself.

Those who aspire to spiritual greatness must be able to remain focused on God and His purpose even when there are storms of trials and temptations around.

### 3. The Power that he had

18So the Lord said to Moses, "Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit of leadership, and lay your hand on him. 19Have him stand before Eleazar the priest and the entire assembly and commission him in their presence. 20Give him some of your authority so the whole Israelite community will obey him. 21He is to stand before Eleazar the priest, who will obtain decisions for him by inquiring of the Urim before the Lord. At his command he and the entire community of the Israelites will go out, and at his command they will come in."
22Moses did as the Lord commanded him. He took Joshua and had him stand before Eleazar the priest and the whole assembly. 23Then he laid his hands on him and commissioned him, as the Lord instructed through Moses.
- Numbers 27:18-23

Notice here that Moses prepares, anoints and instructs Joshua, his successor. In the boldness of this book and the next book of Deuteronomy Moses provides the people with instructions on worship, their conduct and their future. We note especially in these passages that the people readily accept his leadership and his teaching because of the power that he had. Now if you read the entire book of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers you will see that Moses' power was based on his humility.

For example, He did not fight anyone for his position even though he was often challenged. He did not debate or scheme to keep his position. On the contrary, he was constantly pleading with God on his knees on behalf of his people, even when they attached him! You see, Moses' complete lack of effort to control, or rule, or win over the people coupled with his total dependence on God provided him with the power he needed to rule.

When God's leaders become tired, many times it's because they are relying too much on their own strength and not enough on God's. Moses shows us that when God's leaders humble themselves before God and others, God raises them up and He empowers them to lead, whether it be nations, families, or churches.

The Bible shows that Moses was Israel's greatest leader and tells us he was also the humblest man on earth ([Numbers 12:3](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Numbers+12%3A3&version=NASB1995)). The greatest leader the most humble; what does this tell us?

It tells me that the key to success in the kingdom of God is humility. If you want to be great, do great things in the kingdom you begin by cultivating the virtue of humility.

## How Humility?

How do we cultivate this virtue, how do we become humble. It's a tricky thing because just talking about being humble or developing humility smacks of pride and boastfulness doesn't it? But simply looking at Moses' life does help us understand the process. I believe Moses' vision or insight in two areas continually nurtured his humble attitude.

### 1. Moses' Vision of Himself

Moses knew himself well. He knew his own history, his own character, his own weakness or sins. He knew the depths of his sinful nature in remembering he killed a man. He knew his own weakness and acknowledged these to God when God wanted him to be a leader and spokesman to the people. He knew the depravity of human nature as a leader of millions who had to settle their disputes and punish their evil behavior.

In short, Moses knew the true person he was without any denial or rationalizations.

### 2. Moses Knew God

From the early teachings of his mother, to the burning bush. From the awesome miracles to freeing the Jews from Egypt, to the many face-to-face encounters with God on the mountain, Moses knew God better and more intimately than any man of his previous generation. His knowledge of God was firsthand and personal, not just theoretically or from hearsay.

My point is that when Moses compared the two visions, of his weak sinful self and of the holy, mighty God, this produced humility in him that seeped through his character and all of his dealings with others. I know that we like "list", you know, 10 Things to do to become more humble or the top 3 exercises to create humility but it doesn't work that way.

**Humility is the product of discovery.**

As we discover our true selves and the true God, a sense of humility overtakes us and grows as we deepen and broaden our knowledge of these two areas. Perhaps I can suggest a few things, as I close out, which will put you on the path of discovery.

1. Set aside a specific time of each day to read God's word and pray.
	* Pushing aside the world and our own activities for God is in itself an act of humility.
2. Begin asking God for different things in your prayer life.
	* Instead of asking for things, happiness, health, peace etc. Begin asking Him to reveal the real you to yourself. This will be a humbling experience I assure you.
3. Try doing the thing God wants you to do.
	* It's different for each of us but in every life there's something God wants of us. Try to find out what that is and begin making that the focus of your life for a change. This can become the first step in lowering yourself before God so He can ultimately lift you up in greatness.

**Kindness**

One of the things about ministry that gives me great joy is showing the love of God and His son, Jesus, to those lost in the world. I remember helping a gentleman who was homeless and not a Christian, and he told me something that stuck with me as we parted ways, "It was nice to be treated like a human being." In the Wednesday teen class, we have been learning a simple yet powerful statement. "If I believe God made me in His image, I must believe He created others in His image." The goal is to learn to love others, even those who do not believe as we do, with the love of the Lord. It's hard to just start loving people though, so how do we start? I have found that the way to love all people begins with learning to be kind to all people.

There is a big difference between how the Bible and our culture defines kindness. Kindness is a fruit of the Spirit ([Galatians 5:22](https://bibletalk.tv/verse/824)) which is defined in this way from the Greek Chrestotes: 'Useful moral excellence of character or demeanor (outward behavior), gracious, gentle, goodness, and kindness.' However, in our culture, kindness means endorsing one's behavior. The Bible gives a definition of how to be kind and our culture says kindness is blind acceptance of one's behavior. See the difference?

Proverbs 11:17 says, "A man who is kind benefits himself, but a cruel man hurts himself." Paul tells Titus in chapter 3:4-5 that it is because of the "goodness and kindness of God" that He saved us through Christ. It is not because we are righteous, but it is one of the beautiful character traits of a loving God. The goal in being kind to all people is that it is a quality of God that we can develop, envelop, and show. When we are kind to all people, they see God.

Of course, kindness isn't just a benefit to others. Proverbs 21:21 tells us, "Whoever pursues righteousness and kindness will find life, righteousness, and honor." Kindness makes life more enjoyable for those who give it out. One cannot practice kindness with malice on their heart, therefore kindness will always leave one with a clear conscience. Personally, I can't think of a time when I practiced kindness and wasn't filled with joy. Kindness benefits the one practicing it, as well.

As we are going in the world this week, I challenge us to look for the lost and show them the character trait of God that brought Him to compassion to save you and me. We may just play a part in saving a soul.

**Conclusion**

Of course Jesus is the greatest in the kingdom because He emptied Himself completely and accepted God's will in death to save us, and now He sits in the greatest position at the right hand of God. It is no accident that our first step into discipleship, our first entry into the kingdom is when we lower ourselves into the waters of baptism and return clean, pure and eternal. If this is God's will for you then I encourage you to humble yourselves today so that God can raise you up in Glory through Jesus Christ our Lord. God bless you all.