

HUMILITY

THE NARROW WAY TO WORTHY LIVING ...



... do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit ...

... regard one another as more important than yourselves ...

... do not merely look out for your own personal interests ...

THE ABUNDANT RESOURCES ON THE NARROW WAY ...

1. In Christ we have more than sufficient motivation in our abundant, available resources for us to turn away from our pride and give ourselves up in humility for the unity and harmony which is vital to living worthy of the gospel of Christ, 2:1-2.

- (Philippians 2:1-2 ESV) So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, 2 complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

A. So (or therefore) ... directs us to the main point in the context—living worthy of the gospel (which is living worthy of our calling, of the Lord, of God).

- (Philippians 1:27a ESV) Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ.
- (Ephesians 4:1 ESV) I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called.
- (Colossians 1:10 ESV) So as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.
- (1 Thessalonians 2:12 ESV) We exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.

The person who is in Christ has available, abundant resources to rely on. Before proceeding maybe we need to take inventory. Are these resources present in your life? If not, then maybe you should test yourself.

- (2 Corinthians 13:5 ESV) Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?²—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!

If you pass the test and Jesus Christ is in you, then the following is true in your relationship with Christ.

B. The person who has believed the gospel is in Christ and has these four powerful incentives/resources in Christ upon which to draw.

- i. Encouragement in Christ.
- ii. Comfort from love.
- iii. Fellowship in the Spirit.
- iv. Affection and sympathy.

C. We certainly have the resources to do all things that God calls us to do through Jesus Christ who strengthens us.

- (Philippians 4:13 ESV) I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

D. He provides his sufficient grace.

- (2 Corinthians 12:9a ESV) But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”

E. He strengthens us with power through his Spirit.

- (Ephesians 3:14,16 ESV) For this reason I bow my knees before the Father ... that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being.

F. Through our abundant, available resources God is able to provide for us in a way exceeds far beyond what we are able to ask or even think.

- (Ephesians 3:20-21 ESV) Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

G. Motivated and empowered by these powerful resources we are ready to take our next step in this progression—preparing our minds.

Note: The Apostle Paul says that obedience in this would complete (fill him up) his joy.

Here is how we, as the body of Christ, together prepare our minds for the detailed instructions that will follow ...

- i. Be of the same mind.

Mind ... φρονέω [phroneo] – to think thus; to dispose the mind in a certain way; to be of the same mind, i.e. agreed together.

- ii. Have the same love.

- iii. Be in full accord.

Full accord ... σύμψυχος [sumpsuchos] – two words combined, thus one souled; one minded; being united in the same character, affections, mindset as another.

- iv. Be of one mind.

One mind ... εἷς [heis] – one ... mind ... φρονέω [phroneo] – same as above, to think thus; to dispose the mind in a certain way.

THE HUMBLE OBEDIENCE OF THE NARROW WAY ...

2. So being properly motivated and our minds reset we are now ready to receive and obey the detailed instructions as to how to live in the humility that is crucial to the unity and harmony in the body of Christ that is worthy of the gospel, 2:3-4.

- (Philippians 2:3–4 ESV) **Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit**, but in humility count **others more significant** than yourselves. 4 Let each of you **look not only to his own interests**, but **also to the interests of others**.

A. We are given four clear instructions that if obeyed will not only change our behavior toward others but will renew our minds and transform our lives.

B. This spiritual training will reset the course of our lives away from our pride and onto the path of true humility and the ability to live right before God and others.

- (Proverbs 15:31–33 ESV) **The ear that listens to life-giving reproof** will dwell among the wise. 32 Whoever ignores instruction despises himself, but **he who listens to reproof** gains intelligence. 33 **The fear of the Lord is instruction in wisdom, and humility comes before honor**.
- (Micah 6:8 NIV) **He has shown you, O mortal, what is good**. And what does the Lord require of you? To **act justly** and to **love mercy** and to **walk humbly with your God**.

C. Here are the four clear instructions in the spiritual discipline of learning and living in true humility.

- i. We are to do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit.
- ii. On the contrary we are to in humility consider others as more significant than ourselves.

Humility ... *ταπεινοφροσύνη* [tapeinophrosune] – a state of mind where the person values or assesses oneself appropriately; especially in light of one's sinfulness or creatureliness; having a deep sense of one's littleness.

If we have an ear that listens, then the following Scriptures will provide perspective and help us think more biblically and appropriately about ourselves.

- (Isaiah 40:21–22a ESV) **Do you not know? Do you not hear? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood** from the foundations of the earth? 22 **It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers**.

- (Romans 12:3a ESV) For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you **not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment**.
- (Romans 12:16 ESV) Live in harmony with one another. **Do not be haughty**, but **associate with the lowly**. **Never be wise in your own sight**.
- (Psalm 144:4 ESV) **Man is like a breath**; his days are like a passing shadow.
- (Job 8:9 ESV) For **we are but of yesterday and know nothing**, for our days on earth are a shadow.

- iii. We are not to look out only for our own interests.
- iv. But we are also to look out for the interests of others.

THE INCREDIBLE DIRECTIVE OF THE NARROW WAY ...

3. Momentum builds as we gain further insight into this necessary mindset by understanding that what we have been blessed with and urged toward is the mind of Christ, 2:5-8.

- (Philippians 2:5–8 ESV) **Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus**, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Mind ... *φρονέω* [phroneo] – as above, to think thus (in this way); to set the mind in a certain way.

A. Have this mind among ourselves (in us as a group).

B. Have this mind which is ours in Christ Jesus.

- (1 Corinthians 2:16 ESV) "For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" **But we have the mind of Christ**.

**So the big question is –
How do we have this mind?**

- C. We have this mind by understanding and following the previous instructions and by learning from the example of Christ Jesus that is set before us.

THREE THINGS WE MUST LEARN FROM CHRIST'S EXAMPLE ...

1) HE DIDN'T CLING TO WHO HE WAS.

He did not grasp at who he was and what he was perfectly entitled to – equality with God.

2) HE SET ASIDE WHO HE WAS TO BE WHO GOD CHOSE HIM TO BE.

He emptied himself of his exalted position to take the form (as a human and a slave) chosen by God as what was necessary for his service.

3) HE PROVED HIS HUMILITY BY OBEDIENCE TO THE END.

As a faithful slave he confirmed the genuineness of his humility with his obedience to God's sovereign purpose for his life—even to death on a cross.

Summary note: True humility is validated by consistent, committed obedience to whatever service God has chosen for us ... and to whatever end.

THE PROVIDENTIAL EFFECT OF THE NARROW WAY ...

CONCLUSION: The life that is humbled before God and waits to be lifted up by God at the proper time is the life that God deems to be worthy of the gospel, 2:9-11.

Providential speaks of God's divine guidance and governance by which he directs all things in the universe, ensuring that His purposes are fulfilled at the exact right time.

- (Philippians 2:9–11 ESV) **Therefore God has highly exalted him** and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

A. Therefore ... exaltation is God's response to Jesus' righteous manner of life and his completed mission as a submissive slave to his Father in heaven.

B. The example of the righteous life of Jesus Christ demonstrates to us the manner of a life worthy of the gospel.

- (Philippians 1:27a ESV) **Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ.**

C. This is the life that God extols most highly.

D. The consequence of living on the narrow way of humility is right living now and God's exaltation at the proper time.

E. Humility then exaltation.

- (1 Peter 5:5b-8 ESV) **Clothe yourselves**, all of you, **with humility toward one another**, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” **Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you**, 7 casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. 8 **Be sober-minded; be watchful.** Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.
 - i. God gives us grace when we humble ourselves in our relationships with others.
 - ii. God opposes us in our pride when we do not humble ourselves in our relationships with others.
 - iii. It is by his grace that we are able to endure in humility because we are able to throw all our cares on God knowing he cares for us.

Humbling ourselves under the mighty hand of God we grow in our faith as we experience the compassion, power and presence of our mighty God ... and we learn four things ...

1) God is more than able to handle all our concerns ...

2) God cares for us ...

3) God will one day exalt us ...

4) The devil would like to destroy us ...