

Humility (XII): Be Teachable

I. Humility Is Shown by Being Teachable

1. Abigail spoke to David, 1 Samuel 25

1. No one dares to talk to Nabal because of his fierce nature

- ◆ Nabal was rich. When David came to them in the fields, he not only did not bully them, but also became their security for the day and night. David only asked Nabal for whatever he had at hand, but Nabal refused David's request with bad words.
- ◆ The servants of Nabal only dared to speak to Abigail because he was afraid of Nabal. He felt that David had treated them well, and was afraid that if his master treated David badly, evil would come upon him and upon his whole house.

2. Abigail's advice to David

- ◆ Abigail spoke to David and prevented David from shedding the blood of the innocent. So that David would not feel guilty when the LORD made him king over Israel.

3. David's reaction

- ◆ When David heard Abigail's words, he immediately praised God and the insight of Abigail, and said to her, *"I have listened to you and granted you favor; go home in peace!"*
- ◆ The LORD struck Nabal and he died: and when David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, *"Praise be to the LORD, for he has done Nabal iniquity against me, and has prevented his servant from doing evil, and has brought the evil of Nabal upon the head of Nabal."*
- ◆ Who did God send to stop David from doing evil today? By the mouth of Abigail, a woman.

David's heart was humble. He did not think he was a king (Samuel anointed him king), and he had a group of people who followed him, and what he was going to do was actually right, as Nabal did do evil, otherwise the Lord would not have reached out and struck him. But even so, when a woman opened her mouth to advise, he would not look at who was speaking to him? What was the content? He immediately came down and said, *"Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel."* No wonder David was a man after God's own heart in God's eyes.

Nabal was so fierce that none of his servants dared to speak to him, and as a result he did not even have a chance to repent for this matter, and the LORD struck him, and he died.

- ◆ We would lose a huge blessing in our pursuit of the Lord if we are not teachable. Someone will say that we only want God to speak to us. Only God's conviction is the best. When others speak to us, we think that person is lacking in love and is trying to condemn us.
- ◆ Do you know what it means to be veiled? Being veiled is when everyone else knows my problem while I don't, but I don't allow others to talk about it.

2. God spoke to Balaam through the donkey, Numbers 22

- ◆ Balaam wanted to curse Israel because of the money, and every time he said I have to ask God, and God spoke to him, but he had what he wanted most in his heart, so even if God spoke to him, it was useless. Then the Lord spoke to him through a donkey. Can you imagine? How did Balaam react? Balaam became angry and struck the donkey with his staff until the Lord opened his eyes.
- ◆ If a donkey can speak to Balaam today, let alone a man to us, do you believe that God can speak to you through an unbeliever, through anyone around you? Speak to you through your circumstances?
- ◆ Sometimes we think that we are being persecuted, while in reality it is our fault. That is an example of being veiled. Unless you are being slandered for the sake of the gospel or suffering for God for the sake of the truth, but other things, such as a person who is having trouble with you, the circumstance is having trouble with you, or even your car is having trouble with you and breaking down, it could all be God trying to speak to you.

Sometimes God uses something that is difficult for us as a testimony of our wrongdoing, so we have to ask the Lord to convict us.

- ◆ If we can't be spoken to, if we don't have ears to hear, or if we are like Nabal who are *"fierce and no one dares to speak to them,"* we can't blame others for talking about us behind our backs and criticizing us.

In fact, sometimes what people say about us behind our backs, which reaches our ears, is the Lord's way of giving us a chance to repent, but when Nabal did not even have a chance to repent, the Lord could only strike him hard.

- ◆ Let us be careful not to think that only those who are above us can speak of us – only my leader's words are from the Lord and other's words are not. Remember, God spoke to Balaam through a donkey.

As we are asking God for humility, how do you think God will help you? Sometimes God speaks to us when we wait upon the Lord. But for our blind spot,

even if God tells us we might still not be able to listen, just like Balaam. God really likes to speak to us through people. However, are we willing to humble ourselves in those cases?

3. Nathan accuses David, 2 Samuel 12

- ◆ David had a great victory in that he did not sin against the Lord in the matter of Saul, and it is evident from the Psalms that David wrote how close he was to God, but in the matter of Bathsheba he sinned.

Brothers and sisters! Don't think that because we have reached a certain point in our pursuit that we can take it lightly and think we won't fall down.

- ◆ I don't know if Nathan was a very famous prophet at that time, but God used Nathan to speak to David. At that time David was already a king, and if there was someone higher than David who could speak to him, it was only God and Samuel, but Samuel had already passed away. In this issue, God did not condemn David by Himself, but He sent Nathan to speak to David.
- ◆ What was David's reaction? David immediately said, *"I have sinned against the Lord."* David did not say another word, he did not argue, *"I did not do it on purpose, and Joab helped me, Joab killed him."* When David confessed his sins in this way, without making any excuses for himself, God gave him the opportunity to repent and was pleased with him, and still determined to bless him and his descendants, and chose his second son Solomon, born to him and Bathsheba, to build the temple.
- ◆ Do we have a lot of excuses when we are corrected?

Pride will make you have a lot of feelings—being wronged, suppressed, treated unfairly, not understood, or deserving better! Many times pride will make our whole body full of feelings, which come from the fact that we can't humble ourselves and we are not teachable.

4. David and Joab, 2 Samuel 11:14-25

- ◆ When someone tells us something, our reaction determines the kind of people who surround us.
- ◆ Joab was a faithful general who helped David from the time he was on the run until he became king. David sent a letter to Joab to kill Uriah, and Joab obeyed David to the point of helping him even when he did something wrong. Brothers and sisters! When a person submits to your flesh and your feelings, it is likely to lead us down a dangerous path and all the way to perdition.

5. King Ahab and the prophets around him, 1 Kings 22

- ◆ Ahab hated the prophet Micaiah because *"he pointed to my prophecy, and spoke*

not good words, but evil words.” So when Ahab wanted to go up and take Ramoth-gilead, all the prophets around him said, *“The LORD will deliver that city into the king’s hand.”* Even when Micaiah first prophesied to the king he also said good words, because it was an auspicious word that King Ahab wanted to hear, and he didn’t really want to know what the LORD was going to say.

When Micaiah did tell Ahab the word of the LORD, Ahab put him in prison.

- ♦ What kind of words do you like to hear? Do you like it when people come to compliment you? Do you like it when people praise you? Do you like to hear only words of encouragement? Encouraging words are good, and we need to learn to say them, but for those who listen, if you only listen to encouraging words, you will lose a great blessing, that God cannot correct you through people when you are in the dark, like God helped David through Nathan.
- ♦ Our reaction will determine whether people around us dare to tell us the truth. You may think you are not as violent as Nabal, but if you cry for three days and feel hurt after someone tells you something that you need to improve, eventually no one will tell you anything again.

Brothers and sisters! How teachable we are determines how much we will be blessed!

- ♦ We look at other people’s problems very clearly, but the biggest blind spot is on ourselves. Usually the ones who know our problem the best are the people around you, who are closest to you.

6. Saul and Samuel, 1 Samuel 13:11-14,15:14-16,22

- ♦ In verse 11 Samuel asked Saul, *“What is it that you are doing?”* Saul had many explanations, and some of them make sense! Samuel was late, and people would have left Saul if he had not sacrificed. Because he had so many reasons that he did not hear what Samuel really wanted to say to him, *“You have done a foolish thing, and have not kept the command of the Lord your God.”*
- ♦ 15:14-16 And the Lord God told Saul to go and destroy the Amalekites, and destroy all that they had, and not to have mercy on them; but Saul had mercy on Agag and on the good sheep and cattle, and when Samuel reproached him, Saul had many excuses and explanations.
- ♦ In these 2 events, the only thing that Samuel was trying to tell him was that, *“to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams”* But Saul was too eager to tell his reasons. He always had a reason, so he couldn’t listen to it. If he had listened to it and known he was wrong, he wouldn’t have disobeyed again in the second destruction of the Amalekites, and thus offending the LORD.

Often our long list of reasons and excuses really prevents us from being convicted. Our unwillingness to humble down and admit our faults really prevents

God from speaking to us.

♦ 1 Samuel 20:32-33

From these verses it is almost unbelievable how Saul could be so mad as this. He was even trying to kill his own son. In fact, a person's sudden and unexpected reaction is not the result of just one day. Saul never had a listening ear from the beginning to the end. He always had a reason. So that his mind and his desires seized his heart, to a point of losing control of his temper.

How you react when someone corrects you will determine how you end up.

Saul was later rejected by God. On the contrary, when David was corrected by either Abigail or the prophet Nathan, he immediately came to his senses and repented, and God still saw him as a man after God's own heart.

II. Speak the Truth in Love

- ♦ We often quote this verse "*Speak the truth in love.*" But we usually use this verse in the wrong way. We usually think others did not speak the truth in love, and that is the reason why we don't like to be corrected. However, this verse is supposed to be used to demand of ourselves, not of others.

Was there love in Nathan's tone when he corrected David? Nathan's words are very harsh! Instead of saying, "You've done a good job in the issue of Saul, and I know it's not easy for you, but there's one thing you shouldn't do..." Nathan says, "*You're the one who's shedding blood!*"

- ♦ Speaking the truth in love is something that we ask ourselves to do. However, if we require others to do that so that we will listen, we lose a lot of blessings. Nathan's harsh words saved David, while Joab's obedience led David to destruction.

Pastor Hans Waldvogel said, "when we make excuses for the flesh, we leave room for the devil."

Humility (XII) Assignment

1. Why does no one dare to talk to Nabal? What is your attitude when people tell you what you need to improve?
2. What was David's response when Abigail spoke to him? Do you thank God from the bottom of your heart when people tell you what you need to improve?
3. David is a king and Abigail is just a woman, but David accepted her advice. If it were you, would you think this is just a woman's opinion? Are there any words that people say that you take particularly lightly?
4. Do you listen only to what God says to you, but not to what people say to you?
5. God spoke to Balaam through the donkey. When things don't go well for you, do you blame others, or do you come to the Lord and ask for His conviction?
6. How did David and Saul react differently when their mistakes were pointed out to them? How did you react when your mistake was pointed out to you? Did you make excuses for yourself?
7. Think about your friends. Do you have more friends like Joab? Or are they more like Nathan?
8. Why did Saul repeatedly sin against God?
9. When we make excuses for _____, we leave the ground open for _____," said Pastor Hans Waldvogel.
10. When others speak honestly to you with love, will you criticize them for speaking without mercy and cannot listen to them?