

Humility (XIII): Don't Be Subjective

I. Humility Is Evident in Being Not Subjective

1. John 7:24, *"Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment."*

- ◆ Why is it that once this scripture says, *"Do not judge by appearance,"* it then goes on to say, *"but judge with right judgment"*? It means usually if we judge by appearance it is not the right judgment.
- ◆ **A proud person will use appearance to determine right and wrong.** He has strong subjectivity and lots of opinions, and often feels his opinions are correct and the most accurate. Although he is not omnipotent, he appears to be so.
- ◆ Some people listen to the sermons, feeling that they know what the speaker is going to say only after a few sentences, and they would say, "I have heard this, and I know it all." Then they will close their ears. These people are very subjective.
- ◆ In the Corinthian church, everyone is filled with the Holy Spirit. Paul described them as having all the knowledge and all the gifts of the Holy Spirit, but Paul needed to spend so much time to teach them. This means that even if we have some direct receiving from the Holy Spirit, it does not mean we are always right. Even if you receive something from the Holy Spirit, you still need to operate under God's order.

In Minister Pearl Young's later years, she once said at a meeting, "I find that young co-workers really dare to say that I know very well that this is God's will, but the older I get, the less confident I am to say that, "I know very well and I am sure that this is God's will."

Her words have a huge impact on me. We should not always say, "The Lord told me this and that, and it is clear that this is the will of God; I know very well that when I seek the Lord on this and that."

We are so quick to declare that we feel God's presence or guidance from the Holy Spirit that we don't listen very well to the teaching or advice from others. Paul was not like that, he taught the Corinthian church the most. So we need to be very open-minded and often need to be corrected, taught, and know that I could be wrong. **The subjective person feels that my opinions and feelings are always correct.**

2. Watchman Nee said in “The Character of the Lord’s Worker” that “a subjective person is of no use in serving God.

- ◆ Why did Watchman Nee say this? It is because a subjective person feels that he knows what the other person is going to say before the first word is out, so he does not want to listen! In fact, the other person is usually not like what he thinks at all.
- ◆ Because of his subjectivity, he might already have some friction with the person who comes forward. So when the person comes to speak to him, he thinks that the person is to teach him or explain themselves, and he does not want to listen anymore. But usually the opposite might be the truth. Or maybe when someone is explaining their things, because we are so subjective and have a preconception about that person that we no longer want to listen to any of their explanations. Even if we do listen, we listen with our subjectivity and preconception. I use my feelings to understand what it means, and don’t want to understand what you are trying to say.
- ◆ Do you find that communication is often a problem between husband and wife because they live by themselves and are very subjective? **A subjective person is a poor learner.** It is not easy for him to learn, because he already has his opinion, his way, and his thought in everything, in both earthly matters and in spiritual pursuits.
- ◆ **Brothers and sisters, let us ask ourselves, “What have I learned from others during my pursuit of the Lord?”** Some people may only learn one thing in a year, which is too slow. Some people simply speak the truth of “praise” in the Bible, and they say, “But I’m not used to opening my mouth,” “But why do I have to praise so loudly?” But, why do I have to open my mouth? All these “buts” are subjectivity.

Neither God’s word nor people’s teaching can change them. **Subjectivity makes it very difficult to understand God’s will, and makes it very difficult for us to change or learn anything. Unless someone is convicted or broken by the Lord at some point, otherwise we usually become more subjective as we grow older. Being subjective means our old self has never been broken.** He has a strong will, strong opinions and strong preconceptions. Those preconceptions are very hard to change or give up. A very subjective person will not be happy in his marriage.

- ◆ Nabal was so fierce that no one dared to say anything to him, and his wife Abigail was so wise and beautiful that she helped King David in time; but her husband, who had lived with her all his life, could not get any help from his wife.

God actually created a wife to help her husband. But sometimes a wife often helps many people outside, but she cannot help her husband, and her husband has not changed at all. What a pity! Therefore, brothers, you should accept your wife's help. Maybe you think that your wife is the one who always opposes you, who always goes against you, who does not appreciate you the most. Others always praise me, but my wife always says that I am not good and need to change. He doesn't know that God wants him to be helped by his wife.

On the contrary, there are many husbands who can help others, but also can not help his wife, because whenever the husband says something to the wife, the wife will cry, and think you just hate me. But in fact, the husband is just trying to tell her, if you improve this will be better.

Everyone likes to be the best in front of their spouse. When his spouse says any tiny bit of correction words, just hoping that he can change a little bit, he cannot tolerate and just try to explain or defend himself. That's why they cannot be built up and be changed. Are we subjective? **Being subjective is pride.**

3. John 5:30, Jesus does not judge

- ◆ The Lord Jesus is so gentle and humble, He is the Son of God in the flesh, but He says I can do nothing by myself, and He does not judge anything by Himself. He says I judge as I hear, that is, He does not judge, so He says "my judgment is fair, because I do not seek my own will, but the will of Him who sent me." **This is teaching us how to get rid of subjectivity and preconceptions. The key is to only seek God's will and don't often judge on my own.**
- ◆ Peter was a very subjective man, and he was sure of everything he said. You can see that he was so subjective that even the Son of God said to him, "*Peter, Satan will sift you,*" "*You will deny me three times,*" and "*I will pray for you, and after you turn back, you will strengthen your brothers!*" But Peter still insisted that he will not fall, though all men fall. **For a subjective person, even the Son of God cannot speak to him, because his opinion is more correct than God's opinion.**

A subjective man is so sure of himself that he cannot even listen to the Son of God when he speaks to him, let alone his wife, husband, or co-worker. **If he does not listen when the Son of God speaks to him, how can he listen when a man speaks to him? This is the pity of subjectivity. How did Peter change later? It was not until he became a complete failure.** When he denied the Lord once and did not come to his senses, then denied the Lord twice and did not come to his senses, and then finally came to his

senses after he denied for the third time, when the rooster crowed, he remembered the words of the Son of God and cried out in repentance.

Peter's self was finally broken at that moment, as he realized that he was not as reliable as he thought, and his opinions were not always correct. He realized that he was not as strong as he thought. **When he was finally no longer confident of himself, his old self was broken.** When Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, his old self was broken, so that when Paul resisted him and said that he was wrong, he did not speak anymore, unlike the old Peter. He was not the same as the old Peter. Paul stood against him. He could have felt humiliated! Who are you Paul? I have been following Jesus for more than three years, but have you followed Jesus? You only met the Lord on the road to Damascus, you are so many years behind me. But when Paul corrected him, he didn't say anything. **That's how a person with a broken self reacts. When they are corrected, they are instantly convicted and blessed. But some people are so strong in their subjectivity that people's corrections are useless.** Even being whipped seems useless, and they can only be awakened when they are pushed to the brink. Yet there are still people who cannot be awakened even then they are pushed to the brink.

- ◆ **Brother Watchman Nee said that the division of the church is built on the subjectivity of people,** and that small things become big things. Certain things have to be done in a certain way, and if others don't do that, they will get mad. Many people can only work as individuals but cannot do the work for church. They can care for others, but cannot do the work of the church because he is too subjective. He has his own strong opinions, his own views, and his own practices. Some people only know about personal ministry, but they do not know what it means to serve as the body of Christ, because the body is meant to be cooperative and embraced by one another, and the body is to be united with one another. Many people have never met authority, so they cannot be an authority because they have never been under the authority of another person, so naturally they cannot be set up by God as an authority to lead others. Wherever he goes, he always has his own opinions and views. Because of his grumbling, he never truly submitted under the authority. His so-called obedience can only happen when everything makes sense to him, but that is not obedience.

4. 1 Kings 19:14, Elijah's subjectivity

- ◆ Elijah said in verse 14, I am the only one left, but in verse 18 God said, *"But I have left for myself seven thousand among the children of Israel, who have not bowed down to Baal."* **Our subjectivity often blinds us.** Our

subjectivity often thinks there is only me, but God says there are 7,000 more.

Brothers and sisters! Our judgments are usually wrong. That's why God said not to judge by appearance. Elijah's judgment was: Israel has forsaken your covenant, destroyed your altar, killed your prophets with the sword, and looked at all the desolation. He thought that there was only him, so God asked him to perform signs and wonders to tackle 450 false prophets of Baal. But God told him that was not true. It wasn't just him, but there were 7000 more. **Our perspectives are usually very narrow, and what we see is often wrong. So don't judge by appearances, and don't be so subjective and sure that this must be the case.**

5. Job 23:4,7, Job's self-righteousness

- ◆ God said that Job was a good Christian who was perfectly upright, who feared God, and who kept away from evil. So what was his problem? His problem was that he is self-righteous, which is a serious thing in God's sight. **Sometimes our goodness makes us very subjective and very self-righteous.** Even though his three friends had wronged him somewhat by their judgment, in 27:5-6 it says: *"I will never think of you as righteous, but I will not think of myself as unrighteous unto death; I will not relax in my righteousness, and my heart will not reproach me in the days of my life."* **You can see how sure Job was of himself.**
- ◆ Brothers and sisters! How much we need to be in the light of God. How did Job get rid of his pride and his self-righteousness? In 42:5-6: *"I have heard of you, and now I see you with my own eyes. Therefore I detest myself, and repent in the dust and ashes of the furnace."* In the footnote it says, *"I detest my words."* **How do we get rid of our subjectivity and quick judgments? We need to see Jesus more often, and in His light we will repent in the ashes of the furnace, and we will detest our words. Otherwise we think we are right in our judgments, we are right in our opinions.** Every person, whether he says it or not, is always sitting on his throne as the king of judgment, and we need the Lord to convict us!

6. Philippians 1:15-18, Paul's non-subjectivity

- ◆ Paul was really a humble man. The first time when Mark went out to preach with Paul, he backed out, so Paul felt that Mark was not suitable for missionary work. He had some conflicts with Barnaba because of this issue. However, Barnaba had been training Mark, and Paul later noticed that Mark has changed, so Paul kept using Mark later on. This is an example of not

being subjective. Paul did not just banish Mark because of his mistake in the past.

- ◆ For some other people, they failed in the past and were criticized by a person. So they subjectively think that they were always bad in this person's eyes, and this person will never accept me. This is also being subjective. Maybe others see you differently now. But you don't need to worry if they are using the new perspective to see you, you only need to care if you have really changed. **So a humble person can often forget the things behind, but for a proud person the past can not be washed away.**
- ◆ Paul said: "*Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry,*" and that's okay! But a subjective and proud man is not like this: "He preaches Christ with wrong motives: he is jealous and contentious, and we will forbid him from preaching! He preaches Christ to compete with me, so that is not acceptable, and I have to suspend his serving."
- ◆ **Also pride makes us willing to ask for help, but we are not willing to surrender**

A proud person will also say: "Please speak truth with me in love! Tell me how I can improve!" When people really tell him, he is immediately triggered, thinking that people are attacking him personally, and starting to defend himself immediately. So we don't truly want to hear the truth, we don't really want to ask for help, and we don't really want to be changed to resemble Jesus, but we like to hear what sounds good to us.

So brothers and sisters! Let us pray for humility, first of all with honesty!

Humility (XIII) Assignment

1. Are you always so certain about God's leading or the prompt of the Holy Spirit, and think that you will never receive them wrong?
2. Why did Watchman Nee say, "A subjective person is useless in serving God"? Do you not participate in team ministry because of disagreements or differences of opinion? Or do you get upset about it?
3. Think about how well you learn. Is there something that has been said many times in weekly sermons, but you still have your own opinion?
4. Can your spouse's correction of you be a help to you?
5. John 5:30, where does the humility of Jesus appear?
6. The Son of God said to Peter, "*You will deny me three times,*" why did he not believe? What was the turning point for Peter when he later changed?
7. What was Job's problem? How did he get out of his pride? Do you have the same problem as Job?
8. Have you ever asked someone to tell you the truth with love, or to tell you what your shortcomings are, but then you feel very hurt?
9. Brothers and sisters! We pray for humility, starting with _____!
10. Did you learn anything from Paul's attitude towards Mark afterwards?
11. Scripture memorization: John 7:24.