

When believers seek God, it's not just His omnipresence but His manifest presence we desire. The key difference among believers lies in access to this manifest presence. Faith comes not just by reading scriptures, but by receiving the proceeding word of God. Consider 1 Kings 18 and 19, where Elijah's power stemmed from his continuous connection with the Lord (1 Kings 18:15). Picture it like being in the king's court, hearing heavenly conversations, and understanding God's plans. In these end times, practicing God's presence will set us apart and make a significant impact.

We've been told that prayer is the key to connect with God, and self can be a hindrance. Prayer serves as the currency for our transactions with God since He is a Spirit. We must commune with God to build relationship with Him. The essential component for this journey with God is humility.

Let's clarify what humility isn't. In certain cultures, humility is expressed through gestures like bowing to elders, a practice also seen in the Old Testament (Esther 8:3). However, this doesn't automatically signify true humility; outward actions might not reflect the state of our hearts. When we approach God, He looks at our heart's condition, not just our outward expressions. If our hearts are pure, at peace with Him, and focused on Him, it's akin to prostrating before Him. In this state, we can hear Him clearly and obediently follow His guidance. Along our Christian journey, we'll learn that God may not speak much, but He's a great listener. He might give signs and initial instructions, providing more details as we walk in obedience.

There's this intriguing tale about King David dispatching messengers to a community (1 Samuel 10:2-4). These messengers, upon delivering their message, faced humiliation—their heads and beards half-shaved. Oddly, it wasn't the messengers being disrespected; it was David. They couldn't face him upon return; he instructed them to wait until their beards grew back. The chief person being humiliated? The King himself, who reacted, not the messengers.

In a similar messenger narrative, Jesus came as the messenger of God's covenant. Before Him, there was John, heralding the arrival of this covenant messenger. Despite being Jesus' older cousin, John acknowledged he was forerunning Jesus. Jesus emphasized that the One who sent Him was the true force to be reckoned with (John 5:18-20). He made it clear: He was merely the messenger of God's covenant.

Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God. [19] Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. [20] For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.

In examining this passage, it sheds light on Jesus' role as a servant, marked by profound humility. A servant's character is inherently tied to humility, and one who proclaims mastery ceases to be a true servant. The one who faced the rejection of the message, was not Jesus, but the one who sent him.

To be a son, one must first be a servant, exhibiting complete obedience to the Father. Jesus's mission was clear: He came to do and say what the Master desired. His teachings on the Kingdom likened its inheritors to children—dependent, helpless, and obedient, much like newborns relying on their parents for every need. Translating this childlike dependence into our relationship with God ensures that we even if we err, our Heavenly Father takes responsibility, for we are merely following His instructions.

Philippians 2:3-8 KJVS

Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. [4] Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. [5] Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: [6] Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: [7] But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: [8] And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

When Jesus entered Gethsemane, just before facing the cross, he engaged in fervent prayer. Why? Despite being the Son of God, Jesus possessed a human will and had to wrestle with it to align with God's will. His character mirrored that of a true servant—he consistently sought and carried out God's will, never showcasing miracles for the sake of personal recognition.

Even when the power to heal everyone was present, Jesus adhered to God's plan, whether it meant healing one or many. He remained free from self-consciousness and operated solely in obedience to God's will. As messengers, our task is to stick to our assigned roles, leaving no room for self to take the reins. The moment self gains control, humanity tends to operate at a lower frequency.

In Matthew 3:17, God declared Jesus as His Son, yet in Matthew 4:3, Satan challenged Him to prove it. Notably, Satan didn't tempt Him with an overt sin but aimed to exploit self. When we allow self to guide our actions, we break the spirit of humility, which is the spirit of obedience and being led by another. John 21:18.

John 8:17-18 KJVS

It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. [18] I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me.

This scripture unveils the servant's pattern. Jesus bore witness to the message, and God testified that He had sent Him. The pinnacle of God's transformative work in our lives is leading us to humility and brokenness. This isn't a setback but a prerequisite for reaching the highest heights. The key is being so broken that all we do aligns with God's will. It's about carrying out His will with unwavering obedience—neither subtracting from it nor adding to it. True sons are marked by their perfect obedience to the Father. It is being a faithful and true witness like Jesus, Revelations 3:14. Humility, in essence, is the very life of God within you. As the divine life increasingly permeates you and me, genuine humility blossoms.

James 4:6-7,10 KJVS

But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. [7] Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. [10] Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

This underscores that God opposes those who harbor a high opinion of themselves. The directive is clear: submit yourself to God in both significant and minor matters. When you take the lead, pride and self come into play. By aligning with God, not only does He deal with challenges, but He empowers you to resist them.

Consider the sons of Sceva, knowledgeable yet lacking submission to God. They attempted to use Paul as a shield, but the demons recognized their void of genuine authority. James 4:10 emphasizes that as you humble yourself before God, He elevates you. Humility involves prioritizing the Word of God over personal opinions, even when the latter seems logical. Only God can uplift you, grant you favor, and provide a positive recommendation.

Christian character flourishes when submission to God is paramount. True humility lies in not claiming goodness for oneself but allowing God to be your goodness. Progressing with

God means embracing the reality that our only bragging right is allowing Him to increase while we willingly decrease.

Jesus faced another temptation on the cross, as mentioned in Matthew 27:20. Had he descended, it would have been a sinful act. The critical understanding here is that God is the sole relevance in the universe; our purpose is to express Him. When we assert our relevance alongside God's, sin creeps in. Our lives are meant to be occupied by God, not by ourselves. The spirit within us serves as a receptacle and channel for the expression of God.

1 Peter 5:5-6 KJVS

Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. [6] Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

The concept of being "younger" can be defined by age or rank, and God places particular emphasis on humility, especially among those who hold a position of influence. Pride often stems from self-importance, and the antidote to pride is the spirit of humility—the spirit of Christ, the spirit of a servant. The Holy Spirit plays a crucial role in cultivating humility.

Consider fasting as an example. It is not for God but for yourself. Fasting aids in cultivating humility, reducing self-resistance, and preventing the quenching of the Spirit of God. Humility is the key to spiritual advancement, maturity, and a sign of being a true son. If you are genuinely prostrate before God, you'll naturally bow before others. Even if you are a high-ranking professional, apologizing to a 15-year-old as directed by God is a testament to true humility.

When God resists someone due to pride, it signifies a withholding of blessings, unfulfilled prayers, and a struggle to advance spiritually. It's a way for God to capture your attention and guide you back on the right path. Chastisement is a loving act from God to prevent His children from going astray.

Q&A.

Q: Given that the manifestation of self can be very subtle, how can we identify self in our day-to-day life?

A: If you are not very prayerful, you cannot identify self. If you become prayerful, you will catch it over time. The manifestation of the sons of God doesn't happen overnight. Moses serves as an example—he initially struggled with self-identity, even committing a regrettable act. Fleeing to the wilderness for 40 years, he encountered God and emerged as a deliverer.

Q: You said a person goes and heals someone and then goes around and says bring the dead and lame. Where is the balance between expecting God to move and inviting people and pride?

A: The difference is in your heart. We often mark ourselves instead of letting God mark us. Obedience to the Spirit is crucial. Focus on honoring and moving with the Spirit, leaving behind personal reputation. Live within the limit of the Spirit.

Q: Our Corporate world tells us to exalt yourself so that people take you seriously. How do you marry this with humility?

A: These are two different worlds. Showcase your skills in the marketplace; there's nothing wrong with that. God uses two natures to describe His children—the lamb and the lion. In the church, you are a lamb, and in the workplace, you are a lion. Balancing both requires the guidance of the Holy Spirit. In the corporate world, honesty and upfront communication are crucial. Do your work as unto the Lord, and remember that promotion ultimately comes from God.

Q: Assuming you are a minister and you are trying to preach, is it wrong to decide not to look tattered for the sake of the humanity of the people?

A: If you are in ministry, it makes sense to look decent. It is not spiritual to look ragged. Learning by the Spirit involves praying properly to hear from God, who provides wisdom for life and godliness. Hearing from God is not just a one-time event; it requires persistent prayer and patience. Patience is an essential aspect of humility because we cannot bring God's promises to pass on our own.

Q: What is the difference between confidence and spiritual pride? Jesus made audacious statements like saying “The spirit of the Lord is upon me”. Every believer should be able to say this as well.

A: The difference lies in knowing who you are in God. Before His public ministry, Jesus grew in spirit, wisdom, and grace. When He made audacious statements, it wasn't

spiritual pride because He always did the will of His Father. Believers should come in the name of the Lord with the understanding that God confirms statements made in His name. Growing in confidence is crucial, and audacity in faith might seem like pride, but it is necessary for boldness in fulfilling God's calling. Fear of spiritual pride should not hinder believers from stepping out in faith, just as Noah's audacious act of building an ark demonstrated faith in action. Faith, by nature, looks audacious, and the righteous are bold.