

Humility

Two Soviet ships collided in the Black Sea off the coast of Russia in 1986, resulting in mass casualties. An investigation revealed that the crash was not caused by mechanical failure or weather conditions. It was the result of pride. Both captains knew of the other ship's presence and could have easily steered clear, but neither would yield. A lack of humility cost hundreds of people their lives.

Humility is lowliness of mind. It refers to one who has a modest opinion of himself. This does not mean that he has a *poor* opinion of himself, but a *proper* opinion of himself. He does not "think more highly of himself than he ought to think" (Romans 12:3). Humility is the opposite of arrogance or pride.



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Humility was a despised characteristic in the ancient world. The Greeks and Romans viewed it as weakness. In fact, William Barclay wrote, "In Greek there is no word for humility which has not some suggestion of meanness attaching to it." Jesus, however, challenged that view. He extolled humility as an essential characteristic for pleasing God. He even began what is perhaps the greatest sermon ever preached, the Sermon on the Mount, with a call to humility (Matthew 5:3) and made humility the focus of a well-known parable (Luke 18:10-14). Everything about the Lord's life — from his birth in a barn to his burial in a borrowed tomb — was a lesson in humility!

There can be no real love without humility, for love "does not boast," "is not arrogant," and "does not insist on its own way" (1 Corinthians 13:4-5). Moreover, when we do all that is commanded of us, we are still "unworthy servants" who have "only done what was our duty" (Luke 17:10). Remember, God reigns in the highest heavens and in the lowliest hearts.