

Dignity and Humility

In this world filled with social media influencers and entertainers who are treated like royalty, it can be difficult to maintain our dignity and humility.

Introduction

It is getting more and more difficult to maintain our dignity and humility as we see the world continue to get more self-absorbed and self-focused. We treat entertainers like royalty. We allow social media influencers to speak into our hearts and minds. The thought of dignity has left many people's minds and finding humility is more difficult than finding water in a desert.

Some even believe that dignity and humility cannot coexist in a person. Today we are going to discuss dignity and humility and how they can and should coexist in every Christian's life and why.

Dignity and Humility Are

Let's start by looking at what dignity and humility are.

Dignity is defined as a quality or state worthy of esteem and respect. Humility is defined as a lack of pride or modesty with regard to one's achievements or status.

You can already see that many of the people that are looked up to in this world do not fit into either of these characteristics. Christians are to hold themselves to a higher standard than what the world holds someone to. We are to be Christ-like.

Being Christ-like

The Bible teaches us to be Christ-like. We are to be like-minded with Jesus. We learn this from many verses, but here are two.

1 Corinthians 11:1

(1) Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

1 John 2:6

(6) Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.

Here, both the Apostle Paul and the Apostle John teach that we should live as Christ lived and follow his example. That is truly what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. When we are a disciple of Jesus, we must become like him. We must take on his characteristics and leave our own behind. We must be a living embodiment of the love, grace, mercy, and forgiveness of Christ. Two of those characteristics are dignity and humility.

Dignity and Humility of Jesus

There are many examples of dignity and humility in Jesus. Far too many to recount in this teaching. The first we will look at is found early in the gospel accounts and is often referred to as the Temptations of Christ in most modern translations. Let's read Luke 4:1-13.



Luke 4:1-13

(1) Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, (2) where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry. (3) The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread." (4) Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone.'" (5) The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. (6) And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. (7) If you worship me, it will all be yours." (8) Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'" (9) The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down from here. (10) For it is written: "'He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully; (11) they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'" (12) Jesus answered, "It is said: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" (13) When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.

Many things can be taught from this passage of scripture but today we are talking about dignity and humility. Jesus has just spent 40 days in the wilderness fasting and praying. He was hungry and undoubtedly tired. During these 40 days, the devil tempted him. It would have been so easy for Jesus to fall to the temptation of food, authority, and power. When we are faced with similar situations it is easy to fall to the temptation of power, authority, or self-proclamation.

Look at Jesus' response to the devil as he tempts him. He does not agree with the devil. He quotes scripture and continues to point to God. He maintains his focus on the purpose and plan God sent him for. He shows humility by never making it about himself, but always pointing to God. Jesus shows dignity by not focusing on himself or his situation.

We Are Tempted

We are tempted by the devil every day. He lays traps for us and we often take the bait. When we take the bait, we are letting go of our dignity and humility. The traps we fall to most often are found on social media and in politics.

We get into arguments and debates on social media that get our emotions controlling us more than the Holy Spirit. We angrily respond to what celebrities, athletes, and politicians say and do instead of going to our prayer closet and praying for them. We are not saying we should not confront evil when the Holy Spirit prompts us to. We are saying that Jesus never went looking for confrontation and did not stir it up himself. He graciously addressed things with love when presented to him.

Jesus also held his dignity in some of the worst places he found himself. One of the best examples of Jesus' dignity is as he stood being judged by Pilate just before being sentenced to be crucified. This leads to the other passage of scripture that really shows Christ's dignity and humility in extreme circumstances.



Facing Dire Situations

We read about Jesus' crucifixion in the gospels. There is so much that can be taught just from the passages of the crucifixion, but today we will stick to Jesus' dignity and humility.

As Jesus was being led to his execution, he wasn't thinking about himself. He was not going kicking and screaming. He was still teaching as he went even though he had been beaten. Let's read Luke 23:27-31.

Luke 23:27-31

(27) A large number of people followed him, including women who mourned and wailed for him. (28) Jesus turned and said to them, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children. (29) For the time will come when you will say, 'Blessed are the childless women, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!' (30) Then "they will say to the mountains, "Fall on us!" and to the hills, "Cover us!" (31) For if people do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?"

Jesus maintained his dignity and humility by not focusing on his situation. He made it about others. He is teaching that it can and will get worse, but we need not worry about that if we are following Christ. Jesus was facing certain death, and he held his head up and took the worst the world could throw at him, death on a Roman cross.

Jesus was crucified between two thieves. Here is the Son of God hanging on a Roman cross between two thieves. However, Jesus did not look at them as thieves. He looked at them as his mission field for that moment. He presented the Kingdom of Heaven to them. One insulted him, the other showed a repentant heart. Jesus could focus on himself and the pain he was in, but he chose to preach the gospel to his last breath.

Jesus' last words before his death on the cross are found in Luke 23:46-47.

Luke 23:46-47

(46) Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last. (47) The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, "Surely this was a righteous man."

Even facing death, Jesus did not lose his dignity or humility. He willingly gave up his life so that you and I could live.

Our Dignity and Humility

In the western world, we are much less likely to face physical death for our faith than our brothers and sisters in the Middle East and Asia. Yet we hear and read more about Christians crying out about how unfair this or that is and how they are being persecuted. Jesus was persecuted and treated unfairly. A brother and sister we prayed for to have a baby were thrown into a brick kiln furnace alive in Pakistan because they were Christian. Christians in China are routinely gathered up and sent away to prison camps and never heard from again.



We get bothered and get ourselves spun up into a frenzy over something that offends us on social media. We are more interested in people understanding and lamenting with us about something we are facing ourselves instead of others.

We also spend more time following after and almost worshipping celebrities, athletes, and politicians, many of whom do not share our faith. We ought to be spending far more time focusing on Jesus and listening to the Holy Spirit than the celebrity who knows how to deliver a line and does not follow their own advice.

Conclusion

Friends, we encourage you to focus on Jesus and look at the world through the lens of the Holy Spirit. Stop the “woe is me” thinking and talk and focus on others that you can help, not pointing out what is wrong, but encouraging and helping them regardless. In that, we can maintain and build our dignity and humility in Christ.

