



CHAPTER 1

Humility
- Come in Low

“I am only 21 years old, not amazing or academically smart. The way the Lord uses me is all from Him.”

- Caleb

We walked together through the graveyard of distant memory dotted with tombstones of prayers unanswered. I’m the reluctant follower and He the patient Guide. As if it were only yesterday, I hear again my desperate cries for rescue from pain and pleas for life restored to one too young to die—prayers first declared with fists clenched, then spoken from knees bent, and finally whispered faintly with head bowed.

“Why? Why must I remember?” My throat tightens in the futile attempt to suppress emotion from spewing its ugly bile, piercing the paper-thin veil of denial.

Through the cemetery He leads, stopping briefly to face each

marker. Brushing debris from carefully etched inscriptions, He reveals succinct details of each prayer initiative. As we walk, He holds my hand firmly in His, bringing comfort as ancient wounds are exposed—naked, stripped and bare. Only with Him, would I dare venture into these frigid shadows. Questions turn into indisputable answers as we walk together.

From dawn's first appearing until the sun's full rise, He tenderly led the way, penetrating the healing oil of revelation into each memory. Gradually, the patterns of my frail prayer journey take form.

Each stone marker signified a close relative, loved too deeply and held too long.

Aunt Arrogance and Uncle Unbelief,
Junior Judgment and Cousin Critical,
Brother Bitterness and Daughter Doubt,
lying next to Sister Sin.

For me, though not for Him, the graveyard tour seemed long—sapping strength, denying hope and magnifying loss. I breathed a deep sigh of relief as we passed through the open gate toward a narrow path which angled sharply to the right as it edged upward. All the while, He adjusted to my slower pace, never leaving my side.

Upon reaching a small summit, we sat quietly together—hearts still and knowing. With spring long gone and summer reluctantly giving way to fall, the heavy scent of harvest filled the air with the promise of labor's reward. From this elevation, the tombstones looked more like milestones saluting the progress of developed prayer. Each stone, rather than marking the place of failure, pointed onlookers toward a large wooden cross upon which He, the One who still held my hand, once hung.

Prayers tainted by the rawness of emotion and the brokenness of my human heart had to die. Only those humbly voiced in surrender to the Lord's perfect will held the continuum of life. In the shadow of the cross

proud petitions are silenced,

the foolish angst of childhood stilled,
selfish desires quenched, and
retaliation for offense nullified.

He turned my gaze from the dismal landscape below to the cerulean blue sky. With unmoving wings, eagles soared effortlessly upward. They rose ever higher, circling on currents of warm surrender until they touched the clouds.

With unspoken words, God helped me understand that through humility, by coming in low, He carries prayer high. Entering into His Presence in prayer can never be arrogant, but it must be bold.

Suddenly, with brazen interruption the accuser appeared, pointing back to the graveyard of unanswered prayer. He taunted, “You? You are too sinful to approach the Father. He won’t, can’t and refuses to hear your prayers now.” His words slurred and stretched with disdain, echoing my fear and regret, as I hung my head in shame-filled resignation.

His words though right were deadly wrong.

Jesus squeezed my hand gently, then rose victoriously to His feet, taking His stand between me and my accuser. “Not true!” His voice boomed with authority, thundering through the hills, resonating past time for all Heaven and hell to hear.

“Preposterous!” the adversary seethed. “Clearly she is too weak and flawed to pray again.”

“Forgiven!” He spoke not to the accuser, but to me. With a single word, the judgment was rendered, sending the adversary slithering back into the dark dungeon from which he came.

Jesus refocused my attention to an adjacent hillside where a festive celebration was assembling. Throngs of people gathered in excitement—their joy contagious and inviting.

“What’s happening?” I asked. “Is it a wedding? A family reunion, perhaps?”

Together we watched as the crowd cascaded over the brim of the hill like froth overflowing a glass. They approached with exuberance—laughing, dancing and praising God.

These were
once prisoners in chains but now free,
once blind but had received their sight,
once persecuted but now exonerated,
once prodigals now safely returned home—
the redeemed, children of God.

Jesus welcomed each one, ruffling the hair of some, high-fiving others, tenderly embracing yet more, sharing and amplifying their joy. Then one-by-one they came to me. Shaking my hand, they looked beyond my eyes into the depth of my heart. “Thank you for praying,” they said.

Unbelieving, I glanced over my shoulder at the graveyard, then back to the multitude and finally to Him. **“With man it is impossible, but with God all things are possible”** (Mt 19:26). The pain of failure held no comparison to the joy of triumph. Humbled by God’s favor, I knew more than ever that in Him alone every victory was won. My only qualification to enter the place of prayer reads, **“. . . in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ”** (Eph 2:13).

No expiry date mars prayer’s open invitation. Nothing diminishes prayer’s essence of wonder. The key that opens the door of prayer is clearly labeled “humility”. With it, we enter the throne room of God to petition, linger and listen—ready to obey.

Though Jesus walks with us through the cemetery of unanswered prayer, He never abandons us there. He takes us onward to view the cross, to catch the wisp of harvest, and to see the reward of fervent trust. With an awareness of His undeserved grace and an attitude of reverent humility, He invites us to come again and again in prayer, laying our requests before Him where

His silence is sweet,
His voice fierce,
His arms inviting,
His majesty overwhelming,
His power sufficient,
His authority indisputable.

For that reason, we continue to pray.



Personal Perspectives

In conversation with Merodee, she said,

“Over and over in our prayer journey, we have the answers and the seemingly unanswered. In everything profitable, there is one big decision supported by a hundred other decisions. Every day and many times throughout the day, we continue to draw near to God.

“I had a dream in which I was pregnant and in labor. The doctor came and said there wasn’t one baby but two. With joy I moved to the floor, rocking and weeping, ‘Thank You, Lord. We have asked for one and You have given us two.’

“When I woke up, I sensed God was talking about two ministries. I knew that I had to birth one and the other would come. It was one work. I realized the twins in my dream were kings and priests who represented God to the people. As they made themselves available, God gave them an opportunity. With opportunity came boldness and opposition. If we would travail in prayer, laboring as priests, the birth of the kingly ministry would follow.

“While they were worshiping as priests before the Lord in prayer and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘I have called Barnabas and Saul to do an important work for me. Now, release them to go and fulfill it.’ So, after they had fasted

**and prayed, they laid hands on them and
sent them off.”**

Acts 13:2-3 TPT

“God asked, ‘You have the desire for ministry, but are you available?’

Whatever is asked of me is provided for me.

“‘Teach me to pray Lord,’ is our request. He does so much more, pouring out the spirit of travail, inviting us to draw near to Him. In prayer, I must remain small, resisting the temptation to pull away and allowing the conviction of Holy Spirit to draw near, compelling me to fast and worship. My righteousness is in Christ alone. If we remain small there is so much God can do.

“It is the humility of prayer,
being emptied of what we want,
sitting quietly in His Presence,
letting the Spirit of prayer use us, that
is profoundly overwhelming.

“We daily have the invitation in the prayer closet to ask, ‘Lord, give me the words.’ When we come as an open empty vessel through which the Holy Spirit can flow, He won’t be far. Then we will know Jesus’ glory flow through us in prayer, seeing His beauty, understanding His heart, and beholding Him not from afar but from within. Here His peace guards our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus (Phil 4:7). We aren’t to be looking ahead to a kingly calling but to remain small and humble in prayer, birthing what God desires.

“In prayer, there is the chaos of childhood—responsive

or reactionary. Then there is the disciplinary prayer that brings order and puts structures in place. Finally, there is a lifestyle of prayer, mature and unceasing, blending adoration and supplication. Each stage is beautiful and precious.

“Daniel couldn’t bow before King Nebuchadnezzar because his heart was already bowed in complete humility to another greater King, the Lord God (Dn 3). To obtain a Daniel-like resolve, it’s not the strength to stand in the face of opposition we must possess, but rather the strength to bend before the Lord in humility.

“Daniel **‘got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God’** morning, noon and evening (Dn 6:10). Jesus also slipped away to pray in the morning, sent His disciples away at noon to solitary places, and sought out time with His Father at night. The lifestyle of prayer has a rhythm of inviting us back to humility—bending and bowing before our Lord.

“I read in our church history, ‘We didn’t have to decide to pray. Prayer came upon us.’ When we make ourselves available for prayer and humble ourselves under it, prayer *comes*. The continuum of prayer—childlikeness, discipline, and lifestyle—brings us to the place of laying ourselves down saying, ‘Holy Spirit, have Your way.’ We come in low and humble. Then we let God breathe His strategy of prayer into our lives.

*I desired a praying lifestyle, but I didn’t know
it would come at the price of humility.*

“There is something in me that wants to turn prayer into a work. I can be tempted to believe that the answers are a by-product of my own doing. Everything God offers is a

gift of grace, including prayer. I pray that there would be a heaviness that settles on me to respond to God in prayer.”



Joy-Lyn says,

“Prayer carried a lot of guilt for me when I felt like I should be praying for people but wasn’t. Then the Holy Spirit challenged me, ‘Praying for someone out of guilt is just as bad as not praying for someone I told you to pray for.’ I saw praying for others as an obedience thing.

“There were times I chose to listen to the Holy Spirit’s voice and obeyed. There were also times I sensed God’s prompts and didn’t follow through. I had to realize that praying and answers to prayer are all because of Jesus. It is *all* Jesus!

“When I was younger, I had an understanding that prayer was the right thing to do. I never explored or evaluated why. As I grew older, in my early teens, I saw the alternatives and choices people were making and the results in their lives. Then I knew for sure that Jesus was the right way to live my life. Finally, I came to a point where praying and reading my Bible were out of pure desperation, knowing that if I didn’t, I would have nothing else. When I was seventeen, I started spending time in prayer and Bible reading because I needed to, not just because I wanted to. I couldn’t get through my day if I didn’t, or at least my day wouldn’t turn out well. More and more I positioned myself in a place of humility before God.

“I grew up watching my parents’ worship, raising their hands and singing with all their hearts. I would go to church not feeling like worshipping at all. I spent about three years not engaging in worship and not understanding what I was missing while waiting for a moment or an encounter.

“My Dad told me, ‘We don’t worship because we feel something, we worship because the Lord is worthy. We worship because that is what we are meant to do.’

“I have never looked back. Whether I feel like it or not, I passionately worship the Lord. Out of worship the encounters, the moments, come. Worship is the one thing I have to give the Lord that He doesn’t already have.

“Worship and prayer aren’t something I do when I go to church. Worship and prayer are acts of submission of my spirit to the Lord. Worship and prayer are Holy Spirit led, allowing Him to steer me in any direction. By His prompting, in humility, I worship Him and pray for people and things.”



Kate said,

“Humbly, we cast all our crowns at His feet. Anything that is of God in my life, originates from Him. It has nothing to do with me. He gets all the thanksgiving and the glory for everything godly that comes out of my life.

“There is a continuation of the awe of the Lord and a deepening reverence for Him. In prayer, we come in awe of His sovereignty, knowing that all the glory and praise goes to Him.

“God calls me to simply show up in prayer, yielding myself in obedience. True prayer is His ministry through us. To communicate with Almighty God is incredible. Knowing He wants to have fellowship with us is very humbling. Prayer is the ultimate communication to have.”



In our interview, Emily also commented on humility.

“Be humble and stay humble! In the whole process, never run ahead of the Lord. He is your Master. Yes, pray and utilize your spiritual gifts, however, be humble before God and have respect for all people. Humility is the process God uses for Him to be able to use us.

“When I was young, my head was always up in the sky. God has brought me down so low. Since I was sixteen, I’ve had a hunger and grace for prayer that has come from Him alone, but He had yet to bring me through the process of humility. Humility is a daily surrendering, where our flesh is pruned away so Christ can be formed. Humility is necessary to know who He made me to be in Christ and what He has planned for me.

“In the hard places, God brings one to realize that everything one needs is in Him. I have everything I need because He has given me Himself; Christ is my inheritance. I’m so thankful.”



Two years ago, a friend and I visited a dear gentle saint in the hospital. She had extensive open sores on her lower legs which her

diabetic body was unable to heal. Without the amputation of her legs, the surgeons gave her two weeks to live. She was more willing to turn from earth's struggles to Heaven's glory than to consent to the radical surgery. When we prayed for her complete healing, she experienced an intense warm feeling in the diseased part of her legs, but there were no visible changes to her condition.

This beautiful woman slowly recovered. Over the past two years, I have visited her several times. I'm always challenged by her complete humility and passionate love for her Savior and others. Thankfulness, rather than criticism, constantly flows from this delightful woman.

Did our prayers make a difference in her healing? Beyond a doubt! Were our prayers the turning point? Maybe, maybe not!

Dozens of people had been praying and continue to pray for her. Every single petition on her behalf moved the hand of God. My friend and I simply were a part of the greater crowd of witnesses, aligning ourselves together on her behalf.

Meekness and humility recognize humanity's smallness in light of God's greatness. Even in those times when instant and dramatic healing occurs, we err if we boast in ourselves as if we brought about some great thing. Prayer allows God to speak His intention through us. **“Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord”** (1 Cor 1:31).



Allison shared with me her understanding of the connection between humility and prayer.

“I have witnessed arrogance and pride in the prayer world, both in me and in others. People sometimes assume they have specialized knowledge or revelation about prayer, creating inaccessibility to prayer for all Christians. Yes, God can give revelation knowledge to some people, but

pride lords such revelation over others, creating a stumbling block in their minds.

“Jesus reveals himself to everyone freely, inviting all believers to pray. He welcomes everyone to seek Him and empowers us all to intimately engage with Him in prayer.

“Some people might try to convince you to pray a specific way: ‘Follow these twelve steps in prayer, but if you don’t you won’t see the answers.’ Such fallacy creates the belief that prayer is for professionals and elite prayer specialists.

Humility makes prayer accessible to everyone while honoring the Gospel and the heart of God.

“Pride creeps in so subtly that we can be ignorant of its presence. ‘Do you know how much I’ve fasted? Do you know how many people I’ve seen healed?’ Lack of humility may spring from insecurity, the need for personal significance or a person’s desire to find their place in the body of Christ. We’ve all been there!

“What does humility look like? To me, it looks like surrender. When we use prayer as a means of control, in any fashion, humility is lacking. Humility possesses a soft heart toward God and faith in people’s relationship with Jesus while honoring God’s sovereignty. Humility holds the highest value.

“Compassion for people with chronic illnesses or praying for loved ones to come to the Lord grows as we encounter those things too. If we can reflect on our unanswered prayers, learning and allowing God to build faith in us through them, we gain compassion for others. God is no less good or His power no less real or accessible to us

because we haven't seen answers to those things yet.

“However, we persist. Second Peter 1:5-7 says,

‘For this reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love.’

“These are all qualities of humility in prayer.

“It’s easy to have a practice of prayer based on answered prayers as opposed to the practice of prayer based on the character of God. I want to see the power of God released through prayer, and I want to know who God is even if I don’t see circumstances change. That has been a wrestle for me.

“I have been humbled by living my Christian life with Christians from many different denominational backgrounds. Through those experiences, I’ve grown to appreciate the different ways God answers prayer and the different practices of prayer.”



Unlocking the Legacy

Many people have learned through experience that
the humble are often trampled,
the meek are usually bullied,
and the weak regularly ignored.

In our attempts to have an impact for the Kingdom of God, we have all too frequently assumed the ways of the world. Contrary to God's intention, we have resorted to self-promotion, human effort or wisdom, and the misuse of positions of influence for both good and evil.

One of the great struggles most Christians face is to completely lay aside ourselves so God, and God alone, will be glorified in everything we do, including prayer: not through a false humility which is pride in disguise, but through the awareness that **“every good and perfect”** thing comes from the Father (Jas 1:17). Jesus did it all; every victory was won through His death and resurrection.

“... a Lamb-turned-Lion descended into this death camp through the porthole of Golgatha. Crashing through the gates of hell, He met the dark prince in the mother of all battles. With three spikes and a thorny crown, the Captain of the Host conquered the devil, eternally disarming his destructive weapons of sin, death, hell and the grave.”¹

Prayer must be void of any effort to impress God or others. Though we pray scriptural prayers in the power of the Holy Spirit, with wisdom and understanding, every answer comes through God's divine grace according to His perfect will.

We prefer formulas over fellowship and systems of prayer over the process. Jesus didn't offer His disciples the luxury of charted formulas. He invited them into an ever-deepening relationship. Even in the most quoted prayer of all time, **“Our Father . . .”** Jesus taught us that prayer is about an intimate connection with a Person—God, our Father. We approach the throne of God's grace boldly, but humbly, not as slaves but as friends of Jesus knowing the Father's desire (Jn 15:14-15).

Every time we abandon our relationship with God for a formula or personal agenda, we err in the high calling of prayer.

Every prayer Jesus prayed,

every miracle He performed,
every deliverance He orchestrated,
every hungry mouth He filled,
every funeral He turned into a living encounter,
every word He taught, flowed from an unhindered relationship
with His Father—submitting to the Father’s will, purpose and ways.
Meekness and humility are fraternal twins. Jesus said,

**“Blessed are the *meek*,
for they will *inherit the earth.*”**

Matthew 5:5

(Emphasis mine)

God has given us the keys to unlock our legacy, taking territory and possessing our inheritance, through the blood of Jesus Christ. To do so we must accept the posture of complete meekness and humility. In this verse, meekness is not an outward expression of emotion but an inward grace of the soul and calmness toward God. It is the acceptance of how God deals with each of us, considering it good and enhancing the closeness of our relationship with Him, including mildness and forbearance.²

Perhaps it broadens our understanding by knowing that meekness comes from a military term referring to horses. When wild stallions were brought down from the mountains and trained, depending on their temperament some were used for work, others for racing, but the finest were trained for war.³

Warhorses retained their fierce spirit, courage, and power, but were disciplined to respond to the slightest nudge of the rider. They would gallop on to the battlefield, coming to a sliding stop at a word, unfazed by the brutal sights, sounds and smells of warfare. This was considered true meekness—incredible strength and undying spirit under the complete control of another.

Jesus demonstrated humility and meekness perfectly. True strength knows when to assert itself and when to be passive, as opposed to reacting purely out of emotion. Those who walk in

humility and meekness possess a strength to effectively defend themselves and what they value while knowing they are not in control. It is the attributes of humility and meekness that bring us to understand that we are simple but competent, capable and crucial instruments of the One who is.

Jesus humbled Himself and washed the disciples' feet, not because He forgot His greatness and power, but because He knew who He was, what His mission required and where He was going.

“It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus *knew* that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. *Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end . . .* Jesus *knew* that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist . . . began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel . . . You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you . . .”

**John 13:1-17
(Emphasis mine)**

The strength and power of a horse are not effective when denied. In the same way, both the strength and power of prayer flow effectively when it is yielded in humility and grace to God.

Effective prayer comes from those who know who they are and the God to whom they belong. Effective prayer flows from those who know the power they possess and the One who holds that power. Effective prayer moves in authority under the One who possesses all authority. James asserts, **“The prayer of a righ-**

teous person is powerful and effective” (Jm 5:16).

As we focus on Christ, in relationship with the Father, we are neither blind followers nor passionless cowards. We are warhorses, led into battle—trained, instructed and submitted to the Rider’s command. We cooperate with His power and authority, taking the keys of victory into hell’s corridor, and setting people free from inevitable destruction and death. We yield to the soft hand of the Master, going where He directs, saying what He says and doing what He asks us to do.

In this place, pride has no room, but through meekness and humility, God’s greatest desires are accomplished.

We must be both people committed to prayer, and people who love their relationship with God more than anything else. Such will be those who take the keys, unlocking legacy and doing great exploits for the One they know and love (Dn 11:32).

**“If my people, who are called by my name,
will *humble* themselves and pray and seek my
face and turn from their wicked ways, then I
will hear from Heaven, and I will forgive their
sin and will heal their land. Now *my eyes* will
be *open* and *my ears attentive* to the prayers
offered in this place.”**

2 Chronicles 7:14-15

(Emphasis mine)



Taking Territory

“Father we come today, refusing to deny the power and greatness of who You are or the greatness of what You have called us to do in prayer. We accept the key of humility as a

strategic tool You have given us for unlocking the legacy You have for both us and others.

“Jesus, You said, **‘whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these’** (Jn 14:12). Because of the finished work of the cross, we yield ourselves completely to Your authority and sovereign will. We are not satisfied with what we have already seen You accomplish; we ask for greater. Like war horses fully submitted to our Rider, we come in prayer, running into the battlefield on Your behalf, unafraid of the arrows, spears and flaming torches coming from the enemy camp. We come in prayer to **‘do even greater things than these.’** Give us a fresh understanding and a tenacity in prayer to pursue greater and greater miracles of Your grace.

“May the unanswered prayers of the past not in any way diminish our faith. What You did for others, do again, Lord. We want to see Your hand at work in our time. As war horses, meek and humble, with a fierce spirit and courageous tenacity, we are yielded instruments, trained for Your purposes, releasing the power of prayer.

“We throw aside the cloak of pride that would deny Your greatness and the crown of false humility which diminishes both who You’ve called us to be and the great things You have called us to do for Your Kingdom. We secure the servant’s towel of prayer firmly around ourselves, washing and drying the feet of those You so dearly love.

Lord, we recognize that prayer is
powerful and effective,
active and strong,
efficient and able,
full of vigor and force (Jas 5:16).

“Take the reins Lord and spur us into battle. With Your authority, we take the key of humility, unlocking the greatness of Your Kingdom into this world. With every battle won, every victory secured, may You be glorified and honored.

Amen.”



“It isn’t formulas or strategies, but the humility of prayer that allows the Spirit to use us in prayer.”

– Merodee

“To enlist in God’s victorious prayer army, humility must be sealed in our hearts and stamped across our minds. Prayer is in itself an act of humility, depending not on ourselves but in our loving Father and gracious Savior.”

– Meg

“It was easy for me to have a practice of prayer based on answered prayers as opposed to the practice of prayer based on the character of God.”

– Allison

Notes

1. Bill Johnson and Kris Vallotton, *The Supernatural Ways of Royalty: Discovering Your Rights and Privileges of Being a Son or Daughter of God* (Shippensburg: Destiny Image Publishers, 2006), 17.
2. Spiros Zodhiates Th.D., ed., *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament: For a Deeper Understanding of the Word*, rev. ed., (AMG International Inc., 1993), 1209-1210.
3. Elizabeth Pardi, "Do You Know What 'Meek' of 'Meek and Humble of Heart' Really Means," Aleteia, March 22, 2017, <https://aleteia.org/2017/03/22/do-you-know-what-meek-of-meek-and-humble-of-heart-really-means/>.