

Speaking to the soul



Humility

All of you, dress yourselves in humility as you relate to one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” 1 Peter 5:5

Some years ago, I was privileged to attend a conference at St George's Windsor for key strategic leaders. We were given the task of identifying the most important personal qualities that were needed for strategic leadership. My small group included a chief constable, a general from the British Army, the managing director of a major engineering firm, a high-flying civil servant and the finance director of a large organisation. I was the only church leader. After many hours of fascinating , the group decided without a shadow of doubt that the first quality that was needed was humility. This was because we recognised that a humble person is good at being flexible. They are willing to admit when they make a mistake and are eager to welcome other people's ideas. Humility doesn't often get a good press so I was amazed and delighted that this hugely competent and successful group of people could see its primary importance.

The problem with pride is that it erects barriers wherever it goes. The proud person doesn't need others, and certainly doesn't want their ideas. God opposes the proud because they believe that they have no need for him. Their hands are already so full that they cannot receive anything more from God. By contrast, the humble person comes to God with empty hands, longing for him to fill them with good things.

The humble person has a true understanding of who they are. They don't believe that they are unimportant and that they don't count. That is what we call false humility and is completely contrary to what the Bible teaches us. The word of God constantly reminds us that we are important, loved by God, gifted and have a wonderful future. The humble person recognises the value and importance of every other person and wants to serve them and learn from them. They are open to whatever God wants to teach them.

True humility flings open the doors to God's blessings, and we should seek it with everything we've got.

QUESTION

Think of the humblest person you have ever met. In what ways can you learn from their example?

PRAYER

Loving Lord, forgive me for those moments of sheer foolishness when I have felt proud about myself and my achievements. Help me to walk the path of humility and have hands that are open to receive your blessings. Amen

Photograph - Belfast Cathedral Lenten Communion burse

