

Becoming Like Christ, Teacher's Guide

Lesson 11: Humility: The Mind of Christ

Philippians 2:1–11

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

This lesson carries two great weights at once, and the teacher must hold both. The first is a matter of Christian living: humility is not an optional grace for the unusually meek but the very mind of Christ that every disciple is commanded to share (Philippians 2:5). Paul writes to a church threatened by rivalry and self-importance, and his cure is not a management technique but a long, worshipful look at Jesus. Make sure the class leaves understanding that pride is the root sin that fractures fellowship and that humility, counting others more significant than ourselves, is the shape love takes when it grows up.

The second weight is doctrinal and immense. The Christ-hymn of 2:6–11 is one of the clearest windows in all of Scripture into who Jesus is. It teaches plainly that He existed in the very form of God and possessed equality with God before His incarnation, that He did not stop being God when He became man but took on a true and full humanity and the role of a servant, and that the Father has exalted Him as Lord over all. The teacher must handle the phrase emptied Himself with great care, guarding against the false idea that Jesus laid aside His deity. He emptied Himself not by subtraction of His Godhood but by addition of our humanity and by veiling His glory in the form of a servant. Be ready to defend the full deity and lordship of Christ, and to present His exaltation not as a future earthly reign but as the reign He exercises now at the right hand of God.

Pastorally, the aim is to let this passage do its disarming work. People do not become humble by being told to try harder; they become humble by beholding the humility of God in the flesh and by receiving the grace He won. Teach so that the class marvels, that the worship of the exalted Christ in the second half of the hymn fuels the lowliness of mind Paul commands in the first. The student who truly sees the Lord of glory kneeling with a towel will find his own grasping grip beginning, by grace, to loosen.

Question 1

Student Question:

Paul grounds his entire appeal for unity and humility in a string of realities the Philippians already possess in Christ: encouragement in Christ, comfort from love, participation in the Spirit, affection and sympathy (Philippians 2:1). Why does Paul root the command to be humble in what we have already received from God rather than in mere moral effort? What does this tell us about where genuine humility comes from?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Begin where Paul begins, which is not with command but with grace. Before he asks the Philippians to do a single thing, he reminds them of a string of things they already have in Christ: if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy (Philippians 2:1). These are not hypothetical. The little word if functions almost like since; Paul is naming realities the church genuinely possesses because they belong to Jesus. Only after stacking up these gifts does he make his appeal in verse 2 to be of the same mind.

This order matters enormously, and it guards us from a common mistake. We tend to treat humility as a raw act of willpower, something we manufacture by gritting our teeth and thinking less of ourselves. But Paul roots the command in what God has already poured out. The humble life is a response to grace received, not a performance offered to earn grace. People who know how much they have been given, comforted, befriended by the Spirit, loved, are the people most able to stop grasping and start serving.

Press the class to see that this is the very pattern of the whole Christian life. We love because He first loved us (1 John 4:19). We forgive as we have been forgiven (Ephesians 4:32). And here, we count others significant because we ourselves have been counted significant by God when we had nothing to offer Him. Humility that does not flow from grace quickly curdles into either pride at how humble we are or despair at how proud we remain. Humility that flows from grace is sturdy and glad.

Help the class also feel the pastoral wisdom of Paul's approach to a divided church. He does not open with rebuke. He opens by reminding them who they are and what they share. Sometimes the path to peace among Christians begins not by cataloging each other's faults but by remembering together the immense mercy that has bound us into one body in the first place.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Humility and unity grounded in grace already received, not in mere moral effort (Philippians 2:1–2)
- The Christian life as response to God's gifts: we love because He first loved us (1 John 4:19)
- Fellowship (participation) in the Spirit shared by all who are in Christ (Philippians 2:1)
- Pride and rivalry as threats to the unity of the local congregation
- Genuine humility as a glad response to mercy rather than a grim act of willpower

Discussion Prompts

- What has God already given you in Christ that should make humility a response rather than a strain?
- Why does humility built on willpower alone tend to collapse into either pride or despair?
- How might remembering shared mercy heal a strained relationship in the church?

Question 2

Student Question:

Paul says to do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility to count others more significant than yourselves (Philippians 2:3). Selfish ambition can wear very respectable clothes, even in church work. Where have you noticed the desire to be seen, thanked, or recognized quietly shaping why you do what you do? What would it look like to serve in that area for an audience of One?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question turns the truth inward, and the target is the subtlest of sins, ambition dressed in respectable clothes. Paul names two motives to crucify: selfish ambition and conceit (Philippians 2:3). The danger is that both can hide perfectly well inside good works. A person can teach a class, lead a song, organize a meal, or speak up in a discussion, and underneath it all be quietly feeding a hunger to be noticed, thanked, and admired. The deed looks like service; the motive is self.

Invite real honesty here, gently. Most of us would never say out loud that we want the credit, but we feel the deflation when our effort goes unthanked, the irritation when someone else is praised for what we did, the small thrill when our name is mentioned. These reactions are diagnostic. They show us where we have been serving an audience of many rather than an audience of One.

The remedy Paul implies is not to stop serving but to reorder why we serve. Jesus warned against doing our righteousness to be seen by others, and pointed instead to the Father who sees in secret (Matthew 6:1–4). To serve for an audience of One is freeing: it means we can keep working when no one notices, refuse to compete for credit, and even rejoice when another is honored. The applause of God quiets the craving for the applause of people.

Encourage each person to name one specific area, a ministry, a role, a relationship, where the desire for recognition has been steering the wheel. The goal is not to feel guilty but to hand that steering wheel back to Christ, asking Him to purify the motive even where the action stays the same.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Selfish ambition and conceit as sins that hide inside good works (Philippians 2:3)
- The diagnostic value of our reactions when service goes unthanked or another is praised
- Serving for the audience of One who sees in secret (Matthew 6:1–4)
- Purifying motive, not abandoning service, as the path forward
- Freedom from the tyranny of human approval

Discussion Prompts

- Where do you feel deflated or irritated when your service goes unnoticed?
- What does it mean, concretely, to serve for an audience of One?
- How can you keep serving in that area while letting Christ purify why you do it?

Question 3

Student Question:

Paul writes, Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others (Philippians 2:4). Notice he does not forbid attending to our own needs; he forbids stopping there. How does this balance protect us both from selfish self-absorption and from an unhealthy neglect of ourselves? What does it teach us about the nature of Christlike love?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Paul's instruction in verse 4 is more carefully balanced than we often notice. He writes, Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others (Philippians 2:4). The little phrase not only is doing important work. Paul does not command us to ignore our own needs entirely or to pretend we have none. He commands us to refuse to stop there, to enlarge the circle of our care until it includes the interests of the people around us.

This balance protects us from two errors that often masquerade as virtues. On one side is the selfish self-absorption that treats the world as a stage for my needs alone, where other people exist mostly as means to my ends. On the other side is a false and exhausting selflessness that neglects all legitimate care for oneself, often out of a need to be needed, and that eventually collapses into resentment or burnout. Christlike love is neither. It tends to its own house and then opens the door wide to the neighbor.

Help the class see that this is exactly how love behaves. Paul elsewhere says no one ever hated his own flesh but nourishes and cherishes it, and uses that as the baseline for how a husband loves his wife (Ephesians 5:29). The point is not to despise ourselves but to extend to others the same active, practical attentiveness we naturally give ourselves. Real love notices, it asks, it remembers, it shows up. It treats the other person's concerns as worth its time.

This is also where humility becomes concrete and unsentimental. It is easy to feel warmly about people in general; it is harder to look, actually look, at the interests of the particular person in front of us, the tired spouse, the struggling coworker, the lonely member three pews over. Counting others significant means giving them our attention, the rarest and most costly gift in a self-absorbed age.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Looking to the interests of others without forbidding legitimate care for oneself (Philippians 2:4)
- The guard against both selfish self-absorption and exhausting, resentful self-neglect

- Love as active, practical attentiveness modeled on how we naturally care for ourselves (Ephesians 5:29)
- Humility expressed as giving real attention to particular people
- Christlike love as noticing and acting, not merely feeling

Discussion Prompts

- How does not only protect us from both selfishness and unhealthy self-neglect?
- Who is one particular person whose interests you have not been looking to lately?
- What does it look like to give someone the costly gift of real attention this week?

Question 4

Student Question:

Humility is not mainly a feeling; it shows up in ordinary, costly choices toward real people. Think of one relationship right now, at home, at work, or in the church, where counting the other person more significant than yourself would change how you act. What is one concrete thing you could do this week to look to their interests as well as your own?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Here the lesson presses humility down out of theory and into the friction of a real relationship. Paul has been speaking to a congregation, but humility is never general; it is always exercised toward this specific person at this specific moment. The question asks each student to name one relationship where counting the other more significant would actually change behavior, not just feeling.

Encourage concreteness, because vague resolutions to be more humble change nothing. It is one thing to admire humility in the abstract; it is another to decide that this week I will let my spouse choose, I will listen to that coworker without interrupting, I will go to the person I have been avoiding and take the lower place. Humility lives in the details, in who yields, who serves, who apologizes first, who lets the matter drop.

Remind the class that Jesus' own humility was relentlessly concrete. He did not merely feel compassion; He touched lepers, He stooped to children, He knelt at the feet of His friends with a towel (John 13:3–17). And note what John tells us framed that act: Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, rose and washed feet. He served from security, not from insecurity. Secure people can stoop; insecure people must climb.

Let that be the encouragement. We do not count others more significant because we think we are worthless; that is not humility but self-contempt. We do it because, like Jesus, we know who we are and whose we are, and so we are free to bend low without fear of losing ourselves. Name the relationship, name the step, and take it.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Humility as concrete action toward specific people, not general sentiment
- Jesus' humility expressed in tangible service, washing feet (John 13:3–17)
- Serving from security in God rather than from insecurity or self-contempt
- True humility distinguished from self-hatred
- The freedom to stoop that comes from knowing whose we are

Discussion Prompts

- Which specific relationship needs you to take the lower place right now?
- What is one concrete action this week that would put the other person's interests first?
- How is serving from security different from serving to prove your worth?

Question 5

Student Question:

Paul commands, Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus (Philippians 2:5), and then points to Jesus emptying Himself and taking the form of a servant. Why does Paul give us a person to imitate rather than simply a list of rules for humility? How does keeping our eyes on Christ shape humility differently than merely trying hard to be humble?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Now we arrive at the hinge of the passage. Paul does not hand the church a list of rules for humility; he hands them a Person. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus (Philippians 2:5), and then the great hymn unfolds. The mind we are to share is not an abstract attitude but the actual disposition of Jesus, displayed in the most concrete acts imaginable: emptying, descending, serving, obeying.

There is deep wisdom in this. Rules can tell us what humility is, but they cannot make us love it, and they easily breed either pride (when we keep them) or despair (when we do not). A Person, on the other hand, can capture the heart. We become humble not chiefly by studying humility but by beholding the humble Christ until our affections are won and our grip is loosened. As we saw in the very first lesson of this study, we are changed into His image as we behold Him (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Notice too that Paul says this mind is yours in Christ Jesus. It is not a foreign attitude we must import from outside; it is the disposition that belongs to those who are united to Christ. The humility we are commanded to display is, in a real sense, already ours by virtue of our union with Him. The command is to live out who we already are in Him.

Encourage the class to make Jesus, not their own willpower, the center of their pursuit of humility. The person who fixes his gaze on the Lord of glory kneeling in the form of a servant will find his own self-importance quietly shrinking, not because he tried to shrink it, but because he was looking at Someone far greater and far lowlier than himself.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Christ Himself, not a rule list, as the pattern and motive for humility (Philippians 2:5)
- Being changed into Christ's image by beholding Him (2 Corinthians 3:18)
- The mind of Christ as ours by union with Him, to be lived out
- Imitation of Christ as the heart of Christian ethics
- Affection captured by a Person rather than mere willpower

Discussion Prompts

- Why does Paul give us a Person to imitate rather than only rules to keep?
- How does beholding the humble Christ change us differently than trying harder?
- What does it mean that the mind of Christ is already yours in Him?

Question 6

Student Question:

Paul says the One who was in the form of God did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made Himself nothing (Philippians 2:6–7). We tend to cling hardest to our rights, our reputation, and our comfort. What is one right or privilege you find yourself gripping tightly, and what might it look like to hold it with an open hand the way Jesus held His?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question moves into the descent itself and lands it on our grasping hands. Paul says the One who was in the form of God did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant (Philippians 2:6–7). Set the contrast vividly: the only Person in the universe with an absolute right to assert Himself is the very One who refused to clutch at His privileges. He had everything to hold onto and held it with an open hand.

We are the reverse. We clutch. We grip our rights, our reputation, our comfort, our being in the right, our way of doing things, and we feel the threat keenly when any of it is challenged. The grasping reflex is older than we are; it goes back to a garden where the temptation was precisely to seize equality with God by snatching the fruit (Genesis 3:5). Where the first Adam grasped at being like God, the last Adam, who actually was God, refused to grasp and gave Himself away.

Bring the class to honest examination. What is the thing each of us grips most tightly? For one it is the need to be right in every argument. For another it is a reputation carefully guarded. For another it is comfort, or control, or recognition, or a grievance held close. Naming it is the first step toward loosening it.

Then hold up the open hand of Jesus as both pattern and power. He did not lose Himself by letting go; He was, in the end, highly exalted. The way of the open hand is not the way of loss but the way of life, because the God who gave Himself away is the God who raises and exalts. We can unclench, because we are following the One whose unclenched hands now hold all authority in heaven and on earth.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Christ's refusal to grasp at His divine prerogatives though fully entitled to them (Philippians 2:6)
- The grasping reflex as the ancient root of sin (Genesis 3:5)
- The contrast between the first Adam grasping and Christ self-giving
- Holding our rights, reputation, and comfort with an open hand
- The way of self-giving as the way to life and exaltation, not loss

Discussion Prompts

- What is the one thing you grip most tightly, your rights, reputation, comfort, or being right?
- How does it help to see Jesus as the One who could have clutched everything yet did not?
- What would holding that one thing with an open hand look like this week?

Question 7

Student Question:

The hymn says Jesus humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross (Philippians 2:8). In the Roman world the cross was the most shameful, degrading death imaginable. Why is it significant that Jesus' humility led not merely to lowliness but to obedience, and that His obedience went all the way to the cross? What does this reveal about the connection between true humility and obedience to God?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Now Paul takes the descent to its lowest point. Jesus humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross (Philippians 2:8). Two things deserve careful attention here. First, His humility expressed itself as obedience. Humility is not merely a low opinion of oneself; it is a glad submission to the will of God. Jesus did not simply feel lowly; He obeyed, surrendering His own will in Gethsemane with the words, not my will, but yours, be done (Luke 22:42). True humility always bends the knee to God.

Second, that obedience went all the way to a cross, and we must let the class feel what that word meant. In the Roman world crucifixion was not merely execution; it was calculated humiliation, reserved for slaves and rebels, so shameful that Roman citizens were exempted from it and polite society did not speak of it. For the Lord of glory to descend to such a death is a descent past the bottom of anything we can imagine. He who was in the form of God ended naked, mocked, and cursed on a Roman gibbet.

Connect humility and obedience tightly, because our age tends to admire a vague, comfortable humility that never has to actually obey anything costly. But Jesus' humility was not soft; it was the hardest obedience ever rendered, carried out against every natural desire to be spared. Real humility before God will always show itself in obedience that costs

us something, in saying yes to His will precisely where our own will pulls hardest the other way.

Press the application gently. Where is God's will costly for us right now, in a relationship we must repair, a sin we must forsake, a duty we would rather avoid, a wrong we must let go unavenged? The humble heart, looking at the obedient Christ, says with Him, not my will but Yours, and means it all the way down.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Humility expressed as glad obedience to the will of God (Philippians 2:8; Luke 22:42)
- The cross as the ultimate point of Christ's descent and humiliation
- The shame and horror of Roman crucifixion as the depth of His self-abasement
- The inseparable link between true humility and costly obedience
- Surrender of our own will where it pulls hardest against God's

Discussion Prompts

- Why is it significant that Jesus' humility took the form of obedience?
- What does the shame of the cross reveal about how low He was willing to go?
- Where is obedience to God's will costing you something right now?

Question 8

Student Question:

Paul says God highly exalted Jesus and gave Him the name above every name (Philippians 2:9), so that the path down was also the path up. Where in your life are you tempted to grab exaltation for yourself instead of humbling yourself and trusting God to lift you up in His time (1 Peter 5:6)? What would it look like to entrust your reputation and your future to God this week?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

After the long descent comes the great reversal, and this question lets it search our hearts. Paul writes, Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name (Philippians 2:9). The word therefore is the hinge: because He humbled Himself, God exalted Him. The path down turned out to be the path up. This is not an accident of the story but a settled principle of God's kingdom, stated plainly elsewhere: humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time He may exalt you (1 Peter 5:6).

Here is where the gospel rebukes our instincts. We are forever tempted to seize exaltation for ourselves, to promote our own name, to defend our own honor, to make sure we get the credit and the place we feel we deserve. Jesus shows another way entirely: He humbled Himself and left the exalting to His Father, in the Father's time. He did not grab the throne; He received it from the hand of God.

Bring this down to the everyday. The temptation to grab exaltation is rarely dramatic; it is the subtle self-promotion, the quiet name-dropping, the defending of our reputation, the maneuvering to be seen and rewarded. The alternative is to entrust our reputation and our future to God, to do the humble and faithful thing in obscurity and let Him do the lifting if and when He chooses.

Encourage the class to a deep act of trust. To humble ourselves and wait for God to exalt us requires believing that God actually sees, actually keeps account, and actually lifts up the lowly in His good time. The One who exalted His humbled Son can be trusted with our hidden faithfulness. We do not have to push our own way to the top; we can leave that in stronger and kinder hands.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- God's exaltation of Christ as the answer to His humility (Philippians 2:9)
- The kingdom principle that the way down is the way up (1 Peter 5:6; Matthew 23:12)
- Refusing self-promotion and entrusting exaltation to God's hand and timing
- The temptation to grab honor versus the call to humble faithfulness
- Trusting that God sees and lifts up the lowly in His good time

Discussion Prompts

- Where are you tempted to grab exaltation or defend your honor yourself?
- What would it look like to entrust your reputation and future to God this week?
- How does believing God truly sees your hidden faithfulness free you from self-promotion?

Question 9

Student Question:

The hymn rises to its climax: Jesus, who was in the very form of God and equal with God, emptied Himself and took the form of a servant, yet God exalted Him so that at His name every knee should bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:6–11). What does this passage teach us about the deity of Christ, about what did and did not change when He became a servant, and about His present lordship over all things?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This is the heaviest doctrinal block of the lesson, and it deserves our fullest care, for these verses are among the clearest windows in all of Scripture into who Jesus Christ is. Walk the class slowly through the whole arc. Paul says Jesus was in the form of God and counted equality with God something He already possessed (Philippians 2:6). The word form here does not mean mere outward shape; it points to the very nature and essential character of God. Before His incarnation, Jesus existed as God, sharing fully in the divine nature and equal with the Father. This passage stands alongside John 1:1, where the Word was God,

and Colossians 1:15–19, where in Christ all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and Hebrews 1:3, where the Son is the exact imprint of God's nature. The deity of Christ is not a later church invention; it is the plain teaching of the apostles.

Now handle with great care the phrase that He emptied Himself (Philippians 2:7). This must never be read to mean that Jesus stopped being God, or laid aside His deity, or somehow ceased to possess the divine nature while on earth. He did not empty Himself of His Godhood. Rather, Paul tells us exactly how He emptied Himself: by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. The emptying was not a subtraction of His deity but an addition of our humanity, and a veiling of His rightful glory. He who was rich became poor (2 Corinthians 8:9); the eternal Son took on a true and complete human nature, with a real body and a real human will, and took up the role of a servant, while remaining fully and truly God. Both natures, undiminished, met in the one Person. Guard the class against any teaching that makes the incarnation a diminishing of His deity rather than the taking on of our humanity.

Then trace the exaltation. Because He humbled Himself and obeyed to death, God highly exalted Him and gave Him the name above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:9–11). Note that Paul is deliberately echoing Isaiah 45:23, where God declares that to Him alone every knee shall bow and every tongue confess. Paul applies those very words to Jesus, an unmistakable assertion of His full deity and universal lordship. To confess Jesus as Lord is to confess Him as the divine sovereign over all creation, and this confession lies at the very heart of the faith into which we are baptized (Romans 10:9–10).

Make plain what His exaltation means and does not mean. Jesus reigns now. He is not waiting for some future earthly kingdom to begin His rule; He was raised, ascended, and seated at the right hand of God, where He reigns as Lord and Christ over all (Acts 2:33–36; Ephesians 1:20–22). The kingdom is not a coming earthly empire of a thousand years but the present reign of the exalted Christ, into which we have already been brought (Colossians 1:13). One day every knee without exception will bow, willingly or not, but His lordship is a present reality to which the church already submits with joy. Let the class feel the wonder of it: the One who knelt with a basin now sits enthroned, and the path of humble obedience He walked is the path He calls us to walk after Him.

Finally, draw the doctrine back to the call of the whole passage. Paul did not insert this towering Christology to settle a debate but to fuel humility in a quarreling church. The proper response to these verses is not only correct belief but bowed knees and a lowered heart. If the eternal Son, equal with God, emptied Himself and obeyed to a cross, then we who follow Him have no business clutching our small dignities. Right worship of the exalted Christ and a humble mind among ourselves are meant to grow on the same stem.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The pre-existence and full deity of Christ: in the form of God, equal with God (Philippians 2:6; John 1:1; Colossians 1:15–19; Hebrews 1:3)
- The incarnation: He emptied Himself not by laying aside deity but by adding our humanity and the role of a servant (Philippians 2:7; 2 Corinthians 8:9)
- Two natures, fully God and fully man, united in the one Person of Christ, His deity undiminished
- His exaltation as Lord, every knee bowing and tongue confessing, echoing Isaiah 45:23 to assert His deity and universal lordship (Philippians 2:9–11)
- Confessing Jesus as the divine Lord at the heart of the faith into which we are baptized (Romans 10:9–10)
- Christ reigns NOW at God's right hand, not in a future earthly millennial kingdom (Acts 2:33–36; Ephesians 1:20–22; Colossians 1:13)
- Towering Christology given to fuel humility: right worship and a lowly mind grow on the same stem

Discussion Prompts

- What do these verses teach about who Jesus was before He came in the flesh?
- Why is it vital to say that emptying Himself meant adding humanity, not subtracting deity?
- How does confessing Jesus as the reigning Lord shape both our worship and our humility?

Question 10

Student Question:

Look back across the whole hymn: the One in the form of God who did not grasp, who emptied Himself, who took the form of a servant, who obeyed to the point of death on a cross, and whom God highly exalted. Name one specific way you sense Jesus forming His own humility in you through this passage, and one concrete step you will take this week to count someone else more significant than yourself.

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The capstone gathers the whole hymn and asks for a personal, concrete response. Walk the class once more down the great descent and up the great ascent: the One who was in the form of God and equal with God; who did not count that equality a thing to be grasped; who emptied Himself by taking the form of a servant; who humbled Himself in obedience all the way to a criminal's cross; whom God therefore highly exalted, giving Him the name above every name, before which every knee will one day bow. It is the steepest descent and the highest exaltation in the history of the universe, and Paul sets it before us not merely to admire but to imitate.

Now make it personal and particular. Humility, we have seen, is never abstract; it is exercised toward this person, in this situation, this week. Ask each student to name two

things. First, one specific way they sense Jesus forming His own humility in them through this passage, perhaps loosening a grip, softening a defensiveness, redirecting a hidden ambition, or calling them to a costly obedience. Second, one concrete step they will actually take to count someone else more significant than themselves, a particular act toward a particular person.

Guard against vague good intentions. Humility in general changes nothing; it is the specific yielding, the specific service, the specific apology or act of attention that bears the image of Christ. Encourage students to write down the name and the step, and to do the small, hidden thing trusting the God who sees in secret.

Close with worship, because that is where the passage ends. The hymn does not finish with our effort but with every tongue confessing that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Remind the class that the power to become humble flows from beholding and confessing this Lord. The One who knelt with the towel and hung on the cross now reigns, and as we keep our eyes on Him, He gently pries our fingers open and forms His own lowly, glad, self-giving mind in us. We are not asked to manufacture humility by force; we are invited to follow the humble King who is also the exalted Lord.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- A synthesis of Philippians 2:1–11: descent and exaltation, deity and servanthood, humility and lordship
- Humility as personal and particular, exercised toward specific people
- The necessity of concrete steps over vague intentions
- Worship of the exalted Christ as the fuel and end of Christian humility
- Transformation by beholding and confessing the humble, reigning Lord (2 Corinthians 3:18)

Discussion Prompts

- What one way do you sense Jesus forming His humility in you through this passage?
- What one concrete step will you take this week to count someone else more significant?
- How does ending in worship of the exalted Lord empower the humble life He calls you to?