

Humility ~ Part 2

In my last post, we began to explore the Godly characteristic of humility. I made my confession that I certainly don't have much of a reputation for being humble. In this post, we will look at the concept of humility from the pages of the Tanakh.

Humility Defined

Humility is a personal quality in which an individual shows dependence on God and respect for other persons. Various Bible translations use humble, meekness, gentleness, tender, mild, afflicted and considerate to describe the characteristic of humility.

Humility in the Tanakh ¹

The Tanakh connects the quality of humility with Israel's lowly experience as slaves in Egypt - a poor, afflicted, and suffering people. ***"And the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, and imposed hard labor on us."*** (Deuteronomy 26:6 emphasis added.) The Hebrew word translated as *humility* is similar to another Hebrew word meaning ***"to be afflicted."*** Humility was closely associated with individuals who were poor and afflicted (see 2 Samuel 22:28).

What God desires most is not outward sacrifices but a humble spirit. ***"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise."*** (Psalm 51:17) ***"He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God?"*** (Micah 6:8)

Such a humble spirit shows itself in several ways:

1. Recognition of one's sinfulness before a Holy God. ***"Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I live among a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts."*** (Isaiah 6:5)
2. Obedience to God. ***"You shall remember all the way which the LORD your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not."*** (Deuteronomy 8:2)
3. Submission to God. ***"Because your heart was tender and you humbled yourself before the LORD when you heard what I spoke against this place and against its inhabitants that they should become a desolation and a curse, and you have torn your clothes and wept before Me, I truly have heard you,' declares the LORD."*** (2 Kings 22:19)

"He leads the humble in justice, And He teaches the humble His way." (Psalm 25:9)

The Tanakh also promised blessings to those who were humble:

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all scripture references in this series will be from the New American Standard Bible (NASB ~ 1995 Update)

- Wisdom. ***"When pride comes, then comes dishonor, But with the humble is wisdom."*** (Proverbs 11:2)

"You shall remember all the way which the LORD your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not."

(Deuteronomy 8:2)

- Good news. ***"The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, Because the LORD has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives And freedom to prisoners."*** (Isaiah 61:1) Yeshua quoted this verse in Luke 4:18.

"Though He scoffs at the scoffers, Yet He gives grace to the afflicted." (Proverbs 3:34)

- Honor. ***"The fear of the LORD is the instruction for wisdom, And before honor comes humility."*** (Proverbs 15:33)

The experience of many kings indicated that those who humble themselves before God will be exalted (see 1 Kings 21:29; 2 Kings 22:19; 2 Chronicles 32:26; 33:12, 19). Those who do not humble themselves before God will be afflicted (2 Chronicles 33:23; 36:12).

The prophet Zephaniah appealed to the "humble" of the land to seek the Lord. ***"Seek the LORD, all you humble of the earth who have carried out His ordinances; seek righteousness, seek humility. Perhaps you will be hidden in the day of the LORD'S anger."*** (Zephaniah 2:3) He knew they were the ones who would listen to him and accept God's message.

The pathway to revival is the way of humility. If ***"my people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land."*** (2 Chronicles 7:14)

In my next post, we will explore the concept of humility in the Brit Hadashah.