

The Precious Quality Few Want

The few who possess it have difficulty keeping it. And most ministers, including me, struggle to retain it. As with a suit or dress that's ten sizes too large, we can't bear to be seen in it. Yet the consequences of not having it make our chances of going to heaven less than our ability of doing a limbo under a gnat's knee.

As you probably guessed, I refer to humility. Professional sports feature few role models of humility. Even in seminaries, humbleness can be scarcer than a round-the-world hot-air balloon trip. We hate smart-alecks and know-it-alls. Still, we love to be the first to solve riddles or decipher problems. How can we be humble when we scored in the upper percentiles of our SATs? And make more in one year than our parents did in their lifetime? We even know all the answers in Bible class. It isn't easy, either, when friends consult us constantly.

Jesus warned that many of us who pride ourselves on knowing the way to heaven will be amazed by our failure to get there. And those who end up there will be the ones who never thought themselves good enough to deserve it.

Though we have a hard time acting that way, it's refreshing to find humility in others. It delights us to be in the presence of unpretentious folks. God wants us to act humbly so that others can be refreshed. So how can we do it?

For a while I tried to appear humble. "Why are you slouching? Straighten your shoulders," Norma said. So much for my attempts at lowliness. Trying to look humble is as ludicrous as trying to look brilliant.

I cautiously offer two secrets of humility. First, we remember that compared to God, we're less than mites. Second, Jesus sent us to serve, not to be served.

"Don't try to act big . . . And don't think you know it all,"

Romans 12:16 Living Bible

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