

KEY ATTITUDE: HUMILITY AND SUBMISSION

'Sometimes the best things in life are the simplest.' This is what I read years ago on the back of a shredded wheat cereal box.

It was in reference to the ingredients listed inside

100% Whole Wheat

Look at most other food products today and you will find a multitude of ingredients and additives. Not so the shredded wheat, just 100% whole wheat. I cut out and saved part of that cereal box as it was a practical illustration and reminder of something even more impressive, the simplicity of the early church. They were not highly educated or wealthy, but they had a major impact on the world. They walked in childlike faith, supernatural power and sacrificial love. They were not perfect, but they walked closely with Jesus and proclaimed the plain and simple message of the Lord Jesus Christ and His kingdom. - Acts 28:31

As we look at the life of Jesus Christ, we find something similar. His life was the best that was ever lived, and yet there was a simplicity about it. One character ingredient that describes his life and teaching is this.

100% Humility

Jesus was born in humility a place where animals dwelt.

Jesus grew up in humility Nazareth was a town looked down upon and scorned

Jesus started his ministry in humility near the lowest place on earth, at the Jordan River where he went under the water.

Jesus began his main teaching with the message of humility

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. - Matthew 5:3,5

Jesus lived a life of humility He said that He could do nothing of himself and that he was meek and lowly of heart as a servant of God.

Jesus died in humility naked on a cross, a place of scorn, shame and the curse

Humility, the place of entire dependence on God, is from the very nature of things, the first duty and the highest virtue of man. It is the root of every virtue. It is simply the entire nothingness which comes when we see how truly God is all, and in which we make way for God to be all. Man must realize that this is the true nobility. -Andrew Murray

HUMBLING ON A BOULDER

It was late September 1984 and I had just returned to rural N.Y. state after 3 months of mission work in London, England and one year in Belgium. During the summer of 1983, I had led three different international evangelism teams at three different churches in London. At conclusion of our time at the final church, the pastor said to me, 'If you ever want to come back, let me know'. I then moved to Belgium, to help lead an

evangelism team at the largest Roman Catholic University in Europe. It was after 11 PM one night in February of 1984, when I lay awake on my bed, and wondered where God might lead me after August, when my year commitment was completed. Suddenly, these words began to reverberate in my mind.

***'If you ever want to come back, let me know.'
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I recalled that those were the last words spoken to me by Pastor Boyd six months before in London. I kept thinking about those words for several weeks. Finally, in March, I decided to write him a letter. I told him what I had been doing and asked him how the work was going at the church. I purposely did not mention anything about returning to work there at the church. In a few weeks, I heard back from Pastor Boyd. In the letter, he said that if I wanted to come back to work at the church, I should let him know. On my way back home to the USA in early September, I decided that I should at least stop over in London for a few days to talk with Pastor Boyd. I learned that my potential role would be as outreach director to the largely Indian population surrounding the church. Southall was a working class suburb about 12 miles from downtown London, with few trees and many row houses crowded together.

In Belgium, I had been a team leader of international young people seeking to evangelize university students. Going back to London to work at a local church seemed like a lonely atmosphere compared to the excitement of working with university students. With all this in mind, I returned to America and was in mental turmoil for a few weeks. Finally, I decided one morning to get alone with God to sort this all out in my mind. I grabbed a small New Testament and headed out to a woods about 200 yards in back of our house. I told God: 'I am not coming back from the woods until you speak to me about this decision.' On my way to the forest, I noticed a large boulder. It was a nice sunny morning, so I decided to sit on the giant rock and just sit in silence as I overlooked some rolling farmland. Within 10 minutes, the following phrase came to my mind; 'Philippians 2'. As I turned to that chapter in my New Testament, I wondered what I would find. I discovered that it was the account of how Jesus humbled and emptied himself to leave heaven to come to earth as a servant. It was then that God spoke these words to me, not audibly, but with sudden spontaneity in my mind.

***If Jesus was willing to leave heaven to come to earth,
shouldn't you be willing to leave the USA to go to Southall?***

Gulp. What could I say? I quietly told the Lord that I was willing to go. However, I did not tell the Lord that I was going, just that I was willing. I then asked God to confirm to me by October 20, if I should go to Southall. That gave me a few weeks to relax a bit before having to make a firm decision. By mid-October I was in Florida attending a conference in Tampa. On the afternoon of October 18th, I retreated to a quiet library setting to relax. After awhile I found myself whispering these words out, as if God was speaking to me prophetically:

Go to Southall, I will be with you.

Over the next few months I raised some very modest money support and then applied for a visa to England. Later that winter I received notice that my visa was rejected. I found out later that they did not think that I had enough money in support. During this long delay, God taught me much about faith, patience and being rooted in His divine love. It was a humbling time for me as I had to rise at 4 AM to work for a year at a local dairy farm. As I gazed at the early morning stars, I often thought of Abraham and how he had to wait for God to fulfill His promises to Him. A year later Pastor Boyd appealed my case in England and won it against an attorney that had never lost before. God had intervened on my behalf.

I landed in England on June 4, 1986 to begin several years of ministry in a suburb known as 'Little India'. Soon after I arrived I heard that Herbie from Malaysia and Martina from Germany were coming to the church to join me in outreach among the Indian community. God had quickly formed a team with me as their leader. Within a year more American couples arrived in the area as missionaries, which was a blessing for fellowship. A year later our church started a School of Language and Missionary Orientation, which was designed to teach English to those training to be missionaries around the world. Many of the students came from Brazil, South Korea and many other countries. The Brazilians and Koreans brought lots of energy and prayer focus. I started a weekly open air evangelism team that took to the streets for singing, some preaching and passing out much literature to the teeming crowds of Saturday shoppers. Some of the students also helped us in our regular home visitation outreach during the week.

As time passed, I came to realize that my concern about being bored or lonely in Southall was anything but that. I could not have asked for a more interesting place to serve the Lord. We had Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims, various cults and people from many different countries and cultures living in the area. In my last years at the church, I stayed in their church housing and had roommates from places such as Brazil, S. Korea, Finland, Germany, Greece, India etc. Eventually, I was asked to teach at a Bible School the other side of London which had students mainly from Africa.

Jesus was willing to make himself of no reputation when he left the glory of heaven to live in a world filled with moral filth and human corruption. God gives grace to those who walk in humility and submission. **Jesus lowered himself for a season,** but now He is **exalted forever** as the victorious Savior and King. **Jesus** is the epitome of **true nobility**. It was **preceded by** His example of walking and living with **100% humility**.

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