

# JESUS' ESTEEM, AN EXAMPLE OF ENDURANCE FOR EMPATHY'S SAKE

**Conundrum:** God asks me to receive something that my entire nature resists. God designed me to resist threats to my wellbeing and yet requires that I receive His will. This feels manipulative, unjust, dirty!

**Contradiction:** When God makes Himself unfindable and calls me to seek him! This makes no sense!

**Crisis of faith:** When circumstances require from me a trust in God that my knowledge of God cannot justify. This feels like abandonment at the fork in the road.

**Covenant fellowship:** Jesus exemplified a relentless desire for an intimate relationship with his beloved and invites us to share in his agony which he esteemed as worthy of endurance for empathy's sake. Entering his agony requires me to know Jesus intimately by enduring as he endured.

He allowed himself to feel the agony of death.

Philippians 2:6-8 He always had the nature of God, but he did not think that by force he should try to remain equal with God. Instead of this, of his own free will he gave up all he had and took the nature of a servant. He became like a human being and appeared in human likeness. He was humble and walked the path of obedience all the way to death—his death on the cross.

He accepted the agony of death as a condition for loving others.

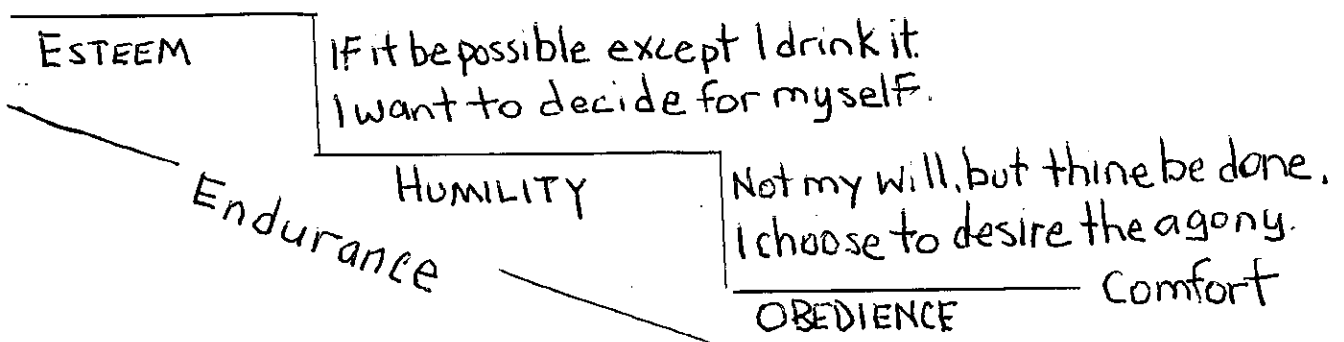
Matthew 26:39 After walking a little farther, he quickly bowed with his face to the ground and prayed, "Father, if it's possible, let this cup [of suffering] be taken away from me. But let your will be done rather than mine."

He acquired empathy for others by learning obedience through agony.

Hebrews 5:8 But even though he was God's Son, he learned through his sufferings to be obedient.

Let this cup pass from me!  
I do not deserve it!

Crisis



The Lab Rat: I have rights! I do not deserve this! I want to relate with those going through agony.

**TAKEAWAY:** Agony serves to make real, tangible, and redemptive this choice, this decision between choosing God and rejecting his invitation (Recall Satan accusing God of manipulating Job's love).