

Humility in Relationships

by Os Hillman

All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." ~ 1 Peter 5:5b

I'll never forget the first time I discovered what a feeling was. It was in my early forties. Surely not! ...you may be thinking. Yes, it is true. Since then, I have discovered many men still live in this condition. It took an older mentor to help me understand the difference between information and a feeling. Wives are frustrated because their husbands share information, but not their feelings. They want to know what is going on inside their man. The fact is, most men have not been taught to identify feelings, much less how to share them. It is something that men must learn to do because it is not a natural trait. If they do share their feelings, society often portrays them as weak. No man willingly wants to be portrayed as weak.

In order to become an effective friend and leader, one must learn to be vulnerable with others and develop an ability to share feelings. It is a vital step to becoming a real person with whom others can connect emotionally. This is not easy to do if your parents did not teach you to share your emotional life with others. Emotional vulnerability is especially hard for men. Author Dr. Larry Crabb states,

Men who as boys felt neglected by their dads often remain distant from their own children. The sins of fathers are passed on to children, often through the dynamic of self-protection. It hurts to be neglected, and it creates questions about our value to others. So to avoid feeling the sting of further rejection, we refuse to give that part of ourselves we fear might once again be received with indifference. When our approach to life revolves around discipline, commitment, and knowledge [which the Greek influence teaches us] but runs from feeling the hurt of unmet longings that come from a lack of deeper relationships, then our efforts to love will be marked more by required action than by liberating passion. We will be known as reliable, but not involved. Honest friends will report that they enjoy being with us, but have trouble feeling close. Even our best friends (including spouses) will feel guarded around us, a little tense and vaguely distant. It's not uncommon for Christian leaders to have no real friends. [Larry Crabb, *Inside Out* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Navpress, n.d.), 98-99.]

If this describes you, why not begin on a new journey of opening up your life to others in a way that others can see who you really are? It might be scary at first, but as you grow in this area, you will find new freedom in your life. Then, others will more readily connect with you.

© Copyright 2000 Os Hillman. www.marketplaceleaders.org
To contact author: os@marketplaceleaders.org