

How would you define humility? Who would you point to as an example of humility?

GO DEEPER

Read more about Christ's example of humility in the following verses: Philippians 2:4–11

How does Jesus display humility in these verses?

How does the Father respond to the humility of his Son?

Since we are called to approach life with the mind of Christ (v. 5), what needs to change in order for you to live with a greater sense of humility? In other words, where can you invite God to shape you to look more like his Son?

Based on Kyle’s description of the “attitude of Jesus,” what are some practical ways you can strive for having that same attitude in the coming week?

Humility is essential, but it does not spare us from times of strained relationships. As Peter makes clear in verses 3–4, even a humble pursuit of holiness can feel like an indictment on those who have committed themselves to worldly ways of living. They will be “surprised” that we no longer join in sinful activities like we may have done before.

What are some of the most distinctive ways your life has changed since coming to know Christ?

How has your faith changed the way you approach the relationships you had prior to knowing Christ? What are some ways others have been “surprised” by your choice to not join them in their lifestyle?

This is why our hope must be in Christ rather than our circumstances. Even when we strive to live holy and obedient lives, we’re prone to experiencing abuse from those around us. And if our hope is in those relationships or any other temporary thing it will fail us. But there’s another reason for hoping in Christ and that is that our time here is short, as Peter makes clear in verses 5–11.

When Peter writes, “the end is near” we shouldn’t read that phrase in the sense of doomsday. Rather, the end is our great hope because it means we will be with our Savior as he makes all things new. **What would change about your daily life if you were able to keep “the end” at the forefront of your mind? What would you become more urgent about?**

Peter offers a couple of practical ways the temporariness of life should shape us, the first being prayer (v. 7). He says to be alert and sober-minded in order to pray effectively. **Would you say these terms characterize your prayer life? What are some of the consistent obstacles you have to overcome for a disciplined prayer life?**

Kyle compared this life to a turbulent plane ride: the flight itself can be rough, but we’re going to land soon. **How does suffering affect your commitment to prayer? How should the truth that we’re going to “land” soon with Christ change the way you pray?**



The most important command Peter gives is to “love each other deeply” (v. 8). And he applies that in two ways—hospitality and service. **What role does hospitality play in the way you express your faith? How do you practice it?**

Kyle noted how the Greek term for hospitality is a compound word that combines the terms for “love” and “strange” into one. Literally, it means, “love strangers.” Of course, there’s nothing wrong with being hospitable to those we know well, but biblical hospitality extends beyond that to those who are not a part of our group, regardless of their faith or lack thereof.

Who is a “stranger” in your life that you could show hospitality to this week?

In addition to hospitality, Peter tells his readers to serve one another with whatever gift they have received from God.

PEEK AT THE GREEK

The term Peter uses in verse 10 for “gift” is *karisma*, which generally refers to earthly goods given by God. In this context, it likely has a more spiritualized meaning, referring to those intangible gifts, like those he mentions in the following verse. That said, the principle here is simply that whatever gift we have received—whether tangible or intangible—it is meant for the purpose of serving others and encouraging fellow believers in Christ. God does not gift us for the sake of our self-esteem, but to give ourselves away in service to others. When we do so, we display the love of Christ and faithfully steward God’s grace in sight of a watching world.

Horizontal lines for writing.

What would you consider some of the gifts God has given to you?

Leader: *These don't necessarily have to be overly spiritual gifts, like prophecy or tongues. Rather, try to steer the direction where Peter takes it in verse 11 to suggestions like teaching or service itself. Other options could be financial means or general giftings like cooking, singing, writing, etc.*

How are you serving others with your gifts? What are some ways you could be more intentional about using your gifts to encourage the body of Christ?

Up to this point, Peter has been describing ways for us to live that prepare us for times of suffering. Humility, love, hospitality, and service should not vanish from our lives when things get difficult. Rather, they help us stay engaged with people—especially other believers—so that we can remain faithful. In verses 12–19, Peter reminds us once again not to be surprised when testing comes. Instead, we are to be joyful because our suffering partners us with the suffering of our Savior.

According to verses 14–16, when should we rejoice in suffering? (When we suffer for the sake of Christ—not when we suffer for deserving reasons, like murder, theft, or any other kind of criminal activity)

This is an important point for us to remember. Peter's statement does not apply to every kind of suffering. Some forms of persecution are deserved as punishment for breaking lawful rules. We rejoice when our suffering comes as a result of our obedience to Christ. It is not something we should seek, but it is something we should be willing to embrace when it comes trusting that God will use it to refine our faith, reveal his blessing, and confirm the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

How has God used suffering in your life as a way of deepening your faith in him? What did you learn about him in the midst of your suffering?

Based on what you've heard in this session, what can you begin doing to prepare yourself for suffering? How can you begin cultivating habits that will help you to remain faithful when things get difficult?

LAST WORD

When suffering comes, we are told to do two things—praise God and continue to do good. That’s not something that we’ll magically decide to do unless we’re cultivating those habits when things are going well. Like an athlete training for an important match, we as Christians ought to prepare ourselves to suffer well.

The primary ways Kyle explained we do that is through regular study of God’s Word and participation in the local church. Make those your priorities in the days ahead. Look for ways to use your gifts in service to others and rejoice in the fact that God has made you his own through Christ.

LIVE IT OUT

Pray: Wherever you sense doubt, ask the Lord to strengthen you and help you to persevere when difficulties arise that challenge your faith in him.

Encourage: If there’s a fellow believer in your life struggling today, reach out to them and offer your encouragement by reminding them of God’s faithfulness.

Serve: Look for a practical way to serve your local church with the gifts God has given you this week. If you do not yet have a clear idea of your gifts, reach out to another believer this week and talk about that with him or her.
