

A Heart of Trust and Humility

Passages: Gen 39–41; Num 12:1–8

Memory Verse

“Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.” (1 Peter 5:6–7)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Works [Behavior]
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Trust God in all circumstances by doing the best we can without worry or anxiety.2. Keep a humble heart by remembering God’s power and provision.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. God is worthy of our trust.2. God loves those who are humble.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Applying trust in our lives requires and produces patience.2. Cultivate a heart of true humility.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. Joseph’s Trusting Heart
 1. Joseph as a Slave (Gen 39:1–6)
 2. Joseph as a Prisoner (Gen 39:7–23)
 3. Joseph is Forgotten by the Cupbearer (Gen 40:14–15, 23)
- B. Moses’ Heart of Humility
 1. Moses as a Prince of Egypt (Ex 2:1–15)
 2. Moses as a Shepherd (Ex 2:16–22)
 3. Moses as the Israelites’ Leader

Life Application

1. Applying Trust in Our Lives
2. Living in Humility

Memory Verse

Conclusion: It is hard to be humble or to trust entirely in God because Satan uses pride as a tool to bring us down. This makes it even more important to remain vigilant and to keep our hearts and minds in check through spiritual cultivation.

Introduction

Our teachers, elders, deacons, and preachers often tell us that we need to have a heart that trusts God, and to be humble in all that we do. We know that we should have these virtues, but how do we cultivate them and make them a part of us? We know that we should be humble, and that we should entrust all our problems to God. But we still wallow in our worries or attribute our successes to ourselves instead of God. How do we break such habits, and cultivate a heart of trust and humility? Today, we'll be looking at two examples in the Bible to help us learn how.

A. Joseph's Trusting Heart

Joseph had a childhood that was unlike any of our own. Most of us have grown under the safe protection of our parents, surrounded by the comforts of our home. We have food to eat, clothes to wear, and a safe bed to sleep in every night. Joseph, on the other hand, was only seventeen when his brothers sold him! Betrayed by his family, torn away from the comforts of his home, and faced with the often-dreadful fate of a slave, how did Joseph react? The answer is at once simple and deeply meaningful: he patiently waited and trusted in God.

1. Joseph as a Slave (Gen 39:1–6)

Egypt was a completely foreign land to Joseph. The people did not look like him, lived a different culture, and worshiped man-made gods. On top of this, Joseph was no longer the favored son of a large and rich family, but a slave, expected to work day and night for his master. At this point, Joseph could have given up on his faith and cursed God for the calamities that he faced. But he didn't, because he understood that there was no one else he could depend on except God. In this very lonely time in his life, with no friends, family, or even fellow worshippers, God was Joseph's only and closest confidant. Nothing in Egypt was familiar to him, but he still had God.

a. The Lord was with Joseph

Genesis 39:3 says that Joseph's master "saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD made all he did to prosper in his hand." Despite being a Gentile, Potiphar clearly saw the true God reflected in Joseph. Later, the prison keeper saw the same thing and, like Potiphar, "did not look into anything that was under Joseph's authority, because the LORD was with him; and whatever he did, the LORD made it prosper" (v. 23). Why did Joseph receive such prosperity and blessings? The answer is simple: he feared God (v. 9).

b. Joseph's refusal to sin

Let's read Genesis 39:10. Many people would be worn down by the constant temptation, but Joseph remained steadfast in his faith. He clearly feared God more than anything, even his own desires and the potential punishment he could face from his master's wife.

2. Joseph as a Prisoner (Gen 39:7–23)

Although he established himself as a trustworthy servant, Joseph was thrown into prison for a crime he did not commit. His faithfulness to God seemed to have only gotten him into deeper trouble! It is worth noting that Potiphar could easily have executed Joseph on the spot. Instead, he chose to place Joseph, his slave, into the royal prison. This was a place that Potiphar himself seemed to be in charge of (39:1, 20). It is also likely that he specifically gave Joseph charge over Pharaoh's two imprisoned officers (40:4), an action curiously at odds with his anger.

His circumstances were dire, but Joseph once again escaped a worse fate. However, he had again been treated unjustly, and once again, Joseph had reason to complain against God. But he remained patient, with no expectations for God's plans. He simply continued doing what he did best: he trusted God, worked hard, and fulfilled his duties to the best of his ability.

3. Joseph Is Forgotten by the Cupbearer (Gen 40:14–15, 23)

Joseph had to face a third test of patience: he had faithfully interpreted the baker and the cupbearer's dreams, but the cupbearer forgot about him after being restored to his position. Joseph had to continue his days in prison. And yet, it is clear from when he stood before Pharaoh that he had not lost his faith in God.

Joseph could easily have demanded his release in exchange for his services. But his only answer to Pharaoh's request was deference to the one true God (41:16). In a court of pagan worshippers, Joseph boldly proclaimed the power of the true God without fear of any repercussions and without thought for his own release. He even told Pharaoh, "And the dream was repeated to Pharaoh twice because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass" (41:32). Despite years of unjust suffering, he still declared his faith and fear towards the Lord!

Joseph was thirty years old when his patience was finally rewarded. Within a single day, he was abruptly freed from prison and elevated to a role where he was set over all the land of Egypt! For thirteen years, Joseph experienced a roller coaster of hope and disappointment. But he remained patient and trusting from the moment he was sold until the day he came to oversee Egypt. While the long wait was difficult, and maybe even painful, it was only clear after the fact that God was certainly watching over him, training him, and preserving him for His will.

B. Moses' Heart of Humility

The Bible records that Moses was humbler than any on the face of the earth (Num 12:3)! Why does the Bible say this about him? Let's study his life to see what he did to earn such a description.

1. Moses as a Prince of Egypt (Ex 2:1–15)

Moses was raised in a life of privilege as a prince in the palace of Egypt. He grew up in safety and comfort. But more importantly, he also received the finest education of the time. Stephen said Moses was "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds" (Acts 7:22). However, Moses, stirred by the injustice, killed a taskmaster who was beating an Israelite. Moses was at the top according to the standards of men, but it was at this point in his life that he was impulsive, rash, and lacked discretion.

2. Moses as a Shepherd (Ex 2:16–22)

Although Moses' impulsiveness led to his flight from Egypt, it was God's will for Moses to live as a shepherd for forty years. It was a vastly different lifestyle from that of a prince, but the Bible says that Moses was "content" (v. 21). When God eventually called Moses through the burning bush, Moses repeatedly protested (3:11, 13; 4:1, 10, 13)! Do you remember his excuses?

- a. "I'm not important enough...What should I say?" (3:11, 13)
- b. "What if they don't believe me?" (4:1)
- c. "I don't know how to speak well!" (4:10)
- d. "I'm not as qualified as others." (4:13)

Four times Moses basically said, “Anyone but me!” His time as a shepherd had transformed him from a reckless prince to an uncertain herdsman. We can now see that God had deliberately used this time to train him in a characteristic that is necessary for all of His workers: humility.

3. Moses as the Israelites’ Leader

Imagine standing before the Red Sea and watching the waters part before your hand (Ex 14:21)! Wouldn’t any normal person feel proud of themselves? But throughout the many miracles recorded in the Bible, Moses remained humble and devoted to God. Even after accomplishing the impossible and freeing a nation, Moses treated his father-in-law with respect, and listened to his advice (Ex 18:7, 24). Let’s examine a few events where he showed his humility.

a. Moses’ treatment of the Israelites

When God told Moses that the people had committed idolatry, Moses prayed for the Israelites three times, even though he was also very angry at them (Ex 32:11–14, 30–32; 33:12–14). He even prayed that his own name be blotted out of God’s book! Offering himself as a sacrifice to save the Israelites could only have come from a heart of humility. Much later, when Korah rebelled, his followers accused Moses of acting like a prince, but Moses angrily responded that he had never abused his authority (Num 16:13–15).

b. Moses’ deference to God

As opposed to the brash young man who killed the taskmaster, Moses demanded of God: “If Your presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here” (Ex 33:15). His refusal to travel without God’s presence shows his understanding of his humble position before God, and his wholehearted reliance on God’s wisdom and direction. Later, when the Israelites refused to enter Canaan, God angrily declared that He would strike them down and make a nation out of Moses instead, one “greater and mightier than they” (Num 14:12). Let’s read Numbers 14:13–19. Moses didn’t care about birthing a nation. He only feared that God’s greatness would be diminished and cared only for God’s glory.

c. Moses’ respect for his co-workers

After being judged without cause, any normal person would feel a thrill of satisfaction if their accusers were justly punished. But when God afflicted Miriam with leprosy for dissenting against Moses, he begged for God’s mercy on her behalf (Num 12:1–3, 9–13)! In another instance, Joshua wanted Moses to forbid two men from prophesying in the camp (Num 11:28). But Moses answered, “Are you zealous for my sake? Oh, that all the LORD’s people were prophets and that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them!” (v. 29). He wasn’t worried about his authority being undermined. In fact, Moses wished that all of the Israelites had the same relationship with God that he himself experienced.

The position God gave to Moses was the first of its kind. He was the very first Israelite leader, and the miracles that God performed through him were numerous and vast. But Moses remained humble. He knew that he could accomplish nothing without God’s power (Ex 32:11; 33:15–16). This should be the guiding principle in our lives, especially if we are blessed with beauty, intelligence, or a particular skill. If we are ever arrogant, James 4:16 says that “such boasting is evil.” We should always be vigilant, so that we do not fall into the trap of pride and remember that all that we have comes from God (Jas 4:14–15).

Check for Understanding

1. **Explain some of the sufferings that Joseph endured.** He was sold to Egypt as a slave; imprisoned for a crime he didn't commit; he was forgotten by the cupbearer and continued his days in prison.
2. **Why did God allow such terrible things to happen to Joseph?** It was all part of God's plan to train and guide Joseph into the role where he saw over all the land of Egypt, so that he could save his family during the famine.
3. **How long was Moses' training in the wilderness, and how did he change during those years?** His training was forty years. His time as a shepherd transformed him from a reckless prince to an uncertain herdsman.
4. **Why does the Bible say that Moses was the humblest man on the face of the earth?** Moses remained humble even though he had performed the greatest of miracles in human history.

Life Application

1. Applying Trust in Our Lives

Throughout his life, Joseph was willing to simply wait and see what God had in store for him. He never complained or acted rashly. From this, we can see that trust in God requires and produces great patience. In an age driven by instant gratification, waiting with no end in sight can be especially difficult to endure! Let's read two testimonies to try and understand the nature of trusting in God.

Testimony 1

Pinky is a smart student, and very confident in herself. She believes that she has a strong faith in God, and not only attends Sabbath every week, but also reads the Bible and prays at home every day. One day, Pinky began developing stomach problems, and she had to go to the toilet more often than usual. She promptly began to self-medicate with some anti-diarrheal drugs, with the thought that this was simply a minor medical issue that could easily be solved on her own.

After a few days of taking medicine, her problem transformed into one where she was unable to go to the toilet instead! Pinky was now deeply worried, so she tried a different tactic. As she was now facing a constipation problem, she decided to take some natural laxatives like cherries, instead of taking more drugs. She ate 500g of cherries, but her digestive problems persisted. It was then that Pinky realized: That entire week, she had forgotten to ask God for help, despite the fact that she prayed every day. She thought that this was too small a problem for God to help her with and had decided that she could solve it on her own. Only after being unable to fix a seemingly simple problem did Pinky realize that God wants us to turn to Him first, no matter how big or small the issue.

Pinky immediately prayed to God for forgiveness. She realized that God has power over all things, and that she should have been humble and trusted in God first, instead of relying entirely on her own limited abilities. After the prayer, Pinky was able to go to the toilet, and her stomach problems disappeared. The incident taught her that she should always trust God and give all of her problems to Him. God is an almighty God, and no problem is too big or small for Him!

– Anonymous

Testimony 2

When Joe and his family moved to a new country, for more than six months he could not find a job to support his family. One day, he was offered a job as a new house sales agent. The salary was high, and all he had to do was sit behind a counter and convince customers to buy newly built houses. It seemed like the perfect job, until Joe found out that his working hours would include Saturdays.

Joe was greatly tempted to accept the new job. His savings were running low, and bills still needed to be paid. He was in dire need of money, but he knew that the right thing to do was trust in God and continue hunting for other jobs. His wife told him to accept the job and look for other opportunities in the meantime, but Joe knew in his heart that the high pay would make it difficult for him to leave in the future. It was unlikely that other jobs would offer the same kind of salary. So, he prayed to God and decided not to take the job. His friends said that he was silly to give up such a hard-to-come-by opportunity, but Joe was patient, and he continued to trust in God.

Joe searched for another eight months before finally finding a job that allowed him to go to church. The salary was smaller, but it was sufficient for him to support his family. Moreover, it was close to home, with flexible working hours and a good boss. Joe had been jobless for a total of fourteen months! But he did not cave in to the temptation to take up a job that would draw him away from God. He continued to wait, despite the fact that God did not immediately give Joe a new job after he rejected the initial offer. Like Joseph, he patiently waited on God's will and did not rush to take matters into his own hands. After fourteen months without a job, Joe learned that trust and patience in the Lord is always rewarded in a way that God knows is best for us.

– Anonymous

Discussion: What do you think are some characteristics of people who trust in God? (Ex: They do not complain or take things into their own hands; They know that God will never forsake them, and they believe in God's love; They do not worry excessively, nor are they anxious about how things will turn out.)

Because we cannot know God's will, our trust in Him must be manifested in our patience. This means living a life free of anxiety. It means knowing that God will take care of us, and simply doing our best without worrying about the future. Let's read Proverbs 3:5–6. "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths."

2. Living in Humility

Moses was a competent leader with the education of a prince in the most advanced civilization at the time, but we can also see that he knew his knowledge was still limited. He was still willing to listen to the counsel of his co-workers, and he still sought help from God for all of his problems. He truly lived a life that was free of pride. How can we do the same thing?

We enjoy dwelling on moments in our life that boost our self-esteem or our image. But the more we boost our ego, the more our humility falls behind. We begin seeking praise that we think we deserve, or we do church work not to serve God, but to show off. Eventually, all our actions drive our hunger for recognition, and we become resentful when we aren't acknowledged. Pride is an incredibly simple tool of Satan's, yet countless brethren have fallen to it. This is because it can be difficult to identify, and it shows itself in many ways. Let's study a few characteristics which are sure symptoms of pride.

a. Impatience

As a generation that has grown up with smartphones and fast computers, we are more computer-savvy, so we may become impatient when trying to help our elders use a smartphone or find something on the internet. But we cannot forget that as our elders, they have a wealth of experience in areas that we have not even ventured into yet. If we have a humble heart, then we can realize this and accept that it is wise to listen to their counsel (Prov 19:20). This is just one example of when our impatience is a result of our pride.

b. Boasting

An obvious symptom of pride is when a person often boasts of their accomplishments or riches. A boastful person rarely, if ever, attributes what they have to God. They believe that they have earned the right to brag, which means that they have forgotten the blessings and power of God.

c. False humility

False humility, or “humble bragging,” is when someone pretends to be humble, but says things that are specifically for the purpose of pointing out their achievements. It’s a more complicated form of boasting, but still a symptom of pride that we should be wary of. We must remember that true humility is not just a matter of lip service. God doesn’t consider us to be humble if we say that we aren’t good enough, all while secretly hoping to garner the approval of others.

d. Seeks validation

Another subtle sign of pride is when a person always wants validation or is afraid that everyone thinks poorly of him. This type of person cares a lot about their image and is deeply anxious about what others think of them. They hate to be humiliated or ashamed before others, so they always hide their shortcomings, and act or speak in a manner that elevates themselves. They often also harbor jealousy and hate admitting when they are wrong. But true humility comes with no hypocrisy. It comes from a heart that only seeks God’s approval, not mankind’s.

So, what can we conclude about true humility? A humble person doesn’t boast, is willing to ask for help, isn’t concerned with his image, and is able to admit his own shortcomings. James 4:6 says, “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” Therefore, we must learn to replace our boasting with compassion, and our self-esteem with the ability to admit when we are wrong. When we serve, serve with love for others, not for ourselves, and if we find that we have received much, take the opportunity to give secretly rather than show off. As James teaches us, “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up” (v. 10).

Memory Verse

“Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.” (1 Peter 5:6–7)

Meanings

1. To have a humble heart means to remember that everything that we have comes from God. If we can learn to have a heart of humility, God has promised to bless us.
2. To cast all our cares upon God means to give all of our problems to Him, big or small. This requires a heart not only of humility, but also of trust. To trust in God means understanding that He is all-powerful and loving. We cannot solve all our own problems, but God will always take care of us when we give our problems to Him, because He cares for us.

Conclusion

We cannot please God if we do not trust in Him, because if we do not, it means that we do not believe He is the Almighty and powerful God. It is hard to be humble or to trust entirely in God because Satan uses pride as a tool to bring us down. This makes it even more important to remain vigilant and to keep our hearts and minds in check. If we do, eventually, we will grow in trust and humility, and will please God through our actions.

Lesson 6 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. How do we cast all our cares upon God? What do we need to understand to do so?
It means giving all our problems to Him, big or small. This requires a heart of trust, which means understanding that He is all-powerful and loving. We cannot solve all our own problems, but God will always take care of us when we give our problems to Him.
2. Reflect on yourself and share a time when you could have put more trust in God than in yourself.
Personal answers.
3. Pick an example of a proud person in the Bible and explain how they could have done better.
Personal answers. For example: King Nebuchadnezzar was arrogant with his achievements; Haman esteemed himself higher than Mordecai; Jonah thought that Nineveh didn't deserve forgiveness.
4. What are four characteristics of a prideful person?
Impatience, boasting, false humility, and seeking validation.
5. Pick one of the above characteristics that you have shown in the past and describe what happened. Then, write down how you can show trust or humility in the future if faced with a similar situation.
Personal answers.