

Last Day Events

Matthew 23: 12.



“And whoever
exalts himself will
be humbled, and
he who humbles
himself will be
exalted.”
Matthew 23: 12.



I. Introduction: Leadership and Humility

The true grandeur is not attached to the external effects of piety. Everything has meaning when the heart is totally involved in the transformation of life, provided by the power of the Holy Spirit.



“In a global marketplace where problems are increasingly complex, no one person will ever have all the answers. That’s why Google’s SVP of People Operations, Lazlo Bock, says humility is one of the traits he’s looking for in new hires. “Your end goal,” explained Bock, “is what can we do together to problem-solve. I’ve contributed my piece, and then I step back.” And it is not just humility in creating space for others to contribute, says Bock—it’s “intellectual humility. Without humility, you are unable to learn.”

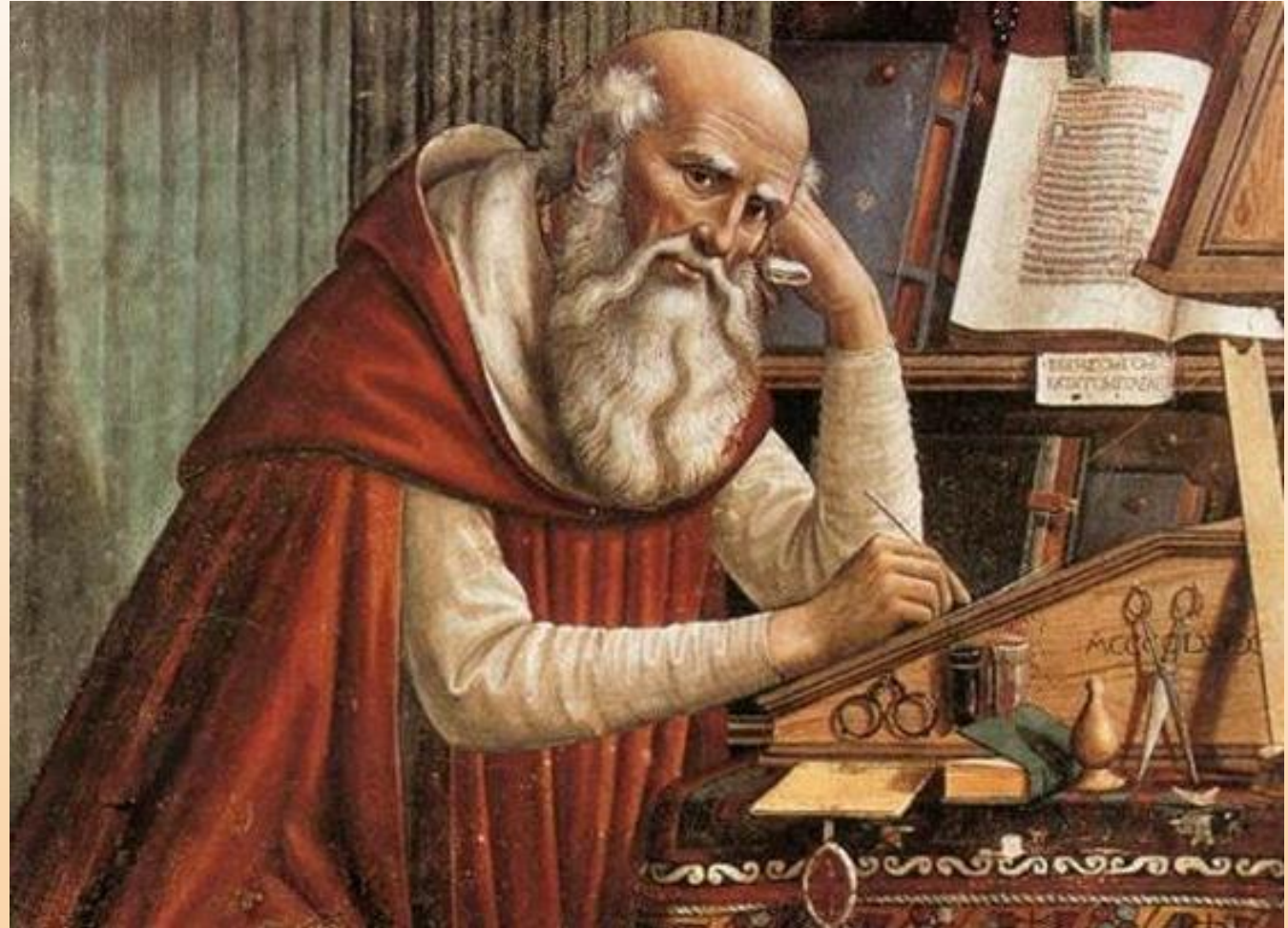
Jeanine Prime and Elizabeth Salib, The Best Leaders Are Humble Leaders, Harvard Business Review, May 2014.

“Entrepreneurs must shift from focusing on the “self” to the “self-less” to keep their companies operating smoothly and effectively.”

Ryan Westwood,
Humility: The Secret
To Confident Leadership,
Forbes, February 5, 2015



"The sufficiency of
my merit is to know
that my merit is not
sufficient."
St. Augustine



"Some persons are always ready to level those above them down to themselves, while they are never willing to level those below them up to their own position. But he that is under the influence of true humility will avoid both these extremes. On the one hand, he will be willing that all should rise just so far as their diligence and worth of character entitle them to; and on the other hand, he will be willing that his superiors should be known and acknowledged in their place, and have rendered to them all the honors that are their due."

Jonathan Edwards



“There are three
essentials to
leadership:
humility, clarity
and courage.”
Fuchan Yuan



"If thou desire the love of God and man, be humble; for the proud heart, as it loves none but itself, so it is believed of none but by itself; the voice of humility is God's music, and the silence of humility is God's rhetoric. Humility enforces where neither virtue nor strength can prevail nor reason."
Francis Quarles



"A great leader needs to love and respect people, and he needs to be comfortable with himself and with the world. He also needs to be able to forgive himself and others. In other words, a leader needs grace."
Leo Hindery J.



“The higher the position a man occupies, the greater the responsibility that he has to bear, the wider will be the influence that he exerts and the greater his need of dependence on God. Ever should he remember that with the call to work comes the call to walk circumspectly before his fellow men. He is to stand before God in the attitude of a learner. Position does not give holiness of character. It is by honoring God and obeying His commands that a man is made truly great.”

Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, p. 30.



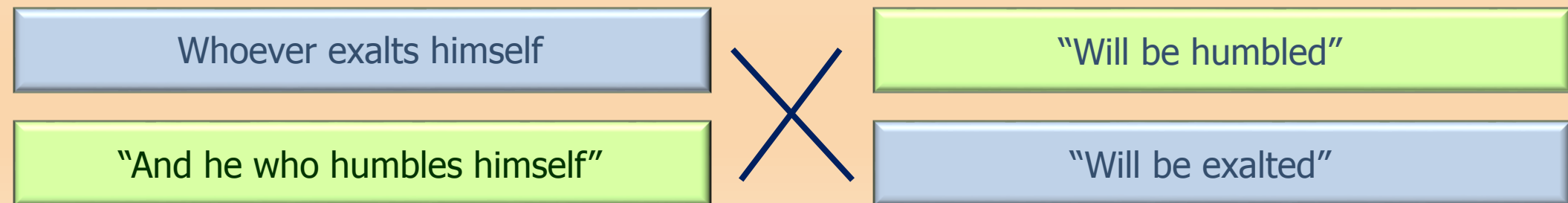
II. Context



“Rather than using the term chiasm, some theologians refer to this structure (Matthew 23: 12.) as a “chiasmus.” A few people refer to it as “inverted parallelism”, and still others use the term “symmetric parallelism.” No matter what it is called, this structure was widely used during Bible times as it appears to add emphasis.

Those who first identified this literary structure chose the word chiasmus because in the Greek, the letter chi looks like an 'X'. In this illustration from Matthew 23:12, we see one line of the 'X' which relates the word "exalt" in the first and last; likewise, the word "humbles" is connected by the other line.”

Thomas B. Clarke



Jesus Christ, Religious Leaders and His kingdom

Matthew 5 & 23

Seven Blessings on the Righteous (chapter 5)

Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven (5: 3 & 10)

They shall be comforted (5: 4)

They shall inherit the land (5: 5)

They shall be filled (5: 6)

They shall obtain mercy (5: 7)

They shall see God (5: 8)

They shall be called Sons of God (5: 9)

Seven Woes on Self-Righteous Leaders (chapter 23)

They kept people out of God's Kingdom (23: 13)

They took advantage of widows (23: 14)

They misled men to eternal destruction (23: 15)

They were covetous of worldly things (23: 16 – 22)

They refused to show compassion (23: 23 - 24)

They were inwardly corrupt (23: 25 – 28)

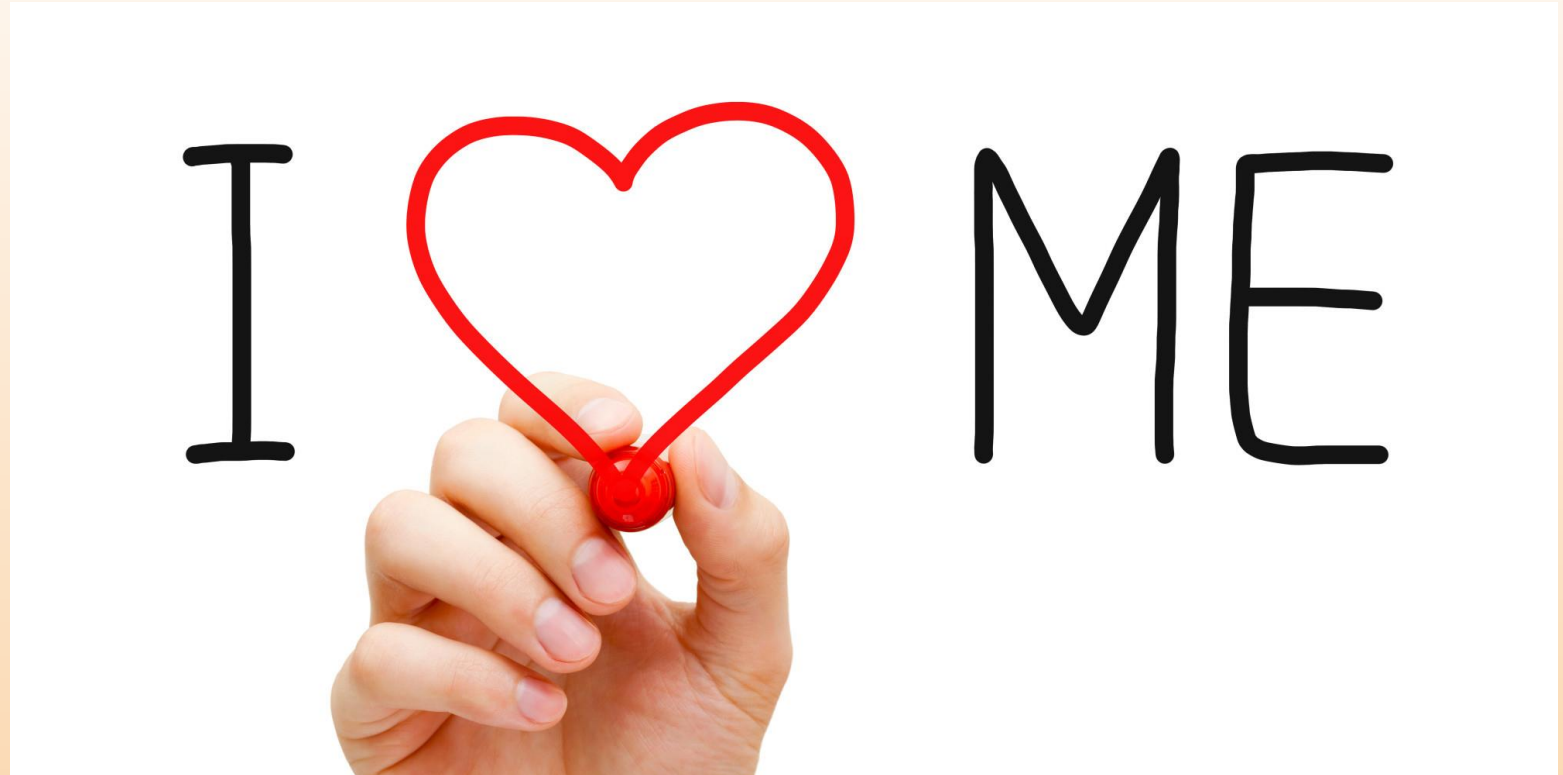
They afflicted the righteous (23: 29 – 31)

III. Two thousand years ago, the spiritual leaders in the Gospel of Matthew forgot their dependence on God and tried to lead people with the limited human wisdom and through the authority of their positions. Their case should inspire us to be prudent and to put God first in all aspects of our life.



1. Pride has
no place in
God's
Kingdom

"And whoever
exalts himself"



“A proud man is always looking down on things and people; and, of course, as long as you are looking down, you cannot see something that is above you.”

C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity



“The proud person
always wants to do the
right thing, the great
thing. But because he
wants to do it in his
own strength, he is
fighting not with man,
but with God.”
Søren Kierkegaard



“Through pride we are
ever deceiving ourselves.
But deep down below the
surface of the average
conscience a still, small
voice says to us,
something is out of tune.”
C.G. Jung



2. The
consequence
of pride is
humiliation
“Will be humbled”



“It is not the pain
and the wounds
that are the worst.
The worst is the
humiliation.”
Pascal Mercier



“Many of those who are humiliated are not humble. Some react to humiliation with anger, others with patience, and others with freedom. The first are culpable, the next harmless, the last just.”
Bernard of Clairvaux,
On the Song of Songs.



"For my own part, my constant prayer is that I may know the worst of my case, whatever the knowledge may cost me. I know that an accurate estimate of my own heart can never be otherwise than lowering to my self-esteem; but God forbid that I should be spared the humiliation which springs from the truth! The sweet red apples of self-esteem are deadly poison; who would wish to be destroyed thereby? The bitter fruits of self-knowledge are always healthful, especially if washed down with the waters of repentance, and sweetened with a draught from the wells of salvation; he who loves his own soul will not despise them."

Charles H. Spurgeon

3. The true success in life
is closely related to the
readiness to be humble
“And he who humbles himself”



“Heaven still prizes those who humble themselves and follow God. "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble" (James 4:6). Humility causes one to stoop low to lift Jesus high. We can not exalt Jesus and ourselves simultaneously.”
Ricardo Graham



“Humility is perfect quietness of heart. It is to expect nothing, to wonder at nothing that is done to me, to feel nothing done against me. It is to be at rest when nobody praises me, and when I am blamed or despised. It is to have a blessed home in the Lord, where I can go in and shut the door, and kneel to my Father in secret, and am at peace as in a deep sea of calmness, when all around and above is trouble.”

Andrew Murray



"Life is a long lesson in humility."
James M. Barrie



4. God wants
to honor
those with a
humble heart
“Will be exalted.”



“The path of men who are placed as leaders is not an easy one. But they are to see in every difficulty a call to prayer. Never are they to fail of consulting the great Source of all wisdom. Strengthened and enlightened by the Master Worker, they will be enabled to stand firm against unholy influences and to discern right from wrong, good from evil. They will approve that which God approves, and will strive earnestly against the introduction of wrong principles into His cause.”
Ellen G. White, Prophets and Kings, p. 31.



“Millions call themselves by His name, it is true, and pay some token homage to Him, but a simple test will show how little He is really honored among them. Let the average man be put to the proof on the question of who or what is ABOVE, and his true position will be exposed. Let him be forced into making a choice between God and money, between God and men, between God and personal ambition, God and self, God and human love, and God will take second place every time. Those other things will be exalted above. However the man may protest, the proof is in the choice he makes day after day throughout his life.”

A.W. Tozer, The Pursuit of God

God exalts human beings better than we can

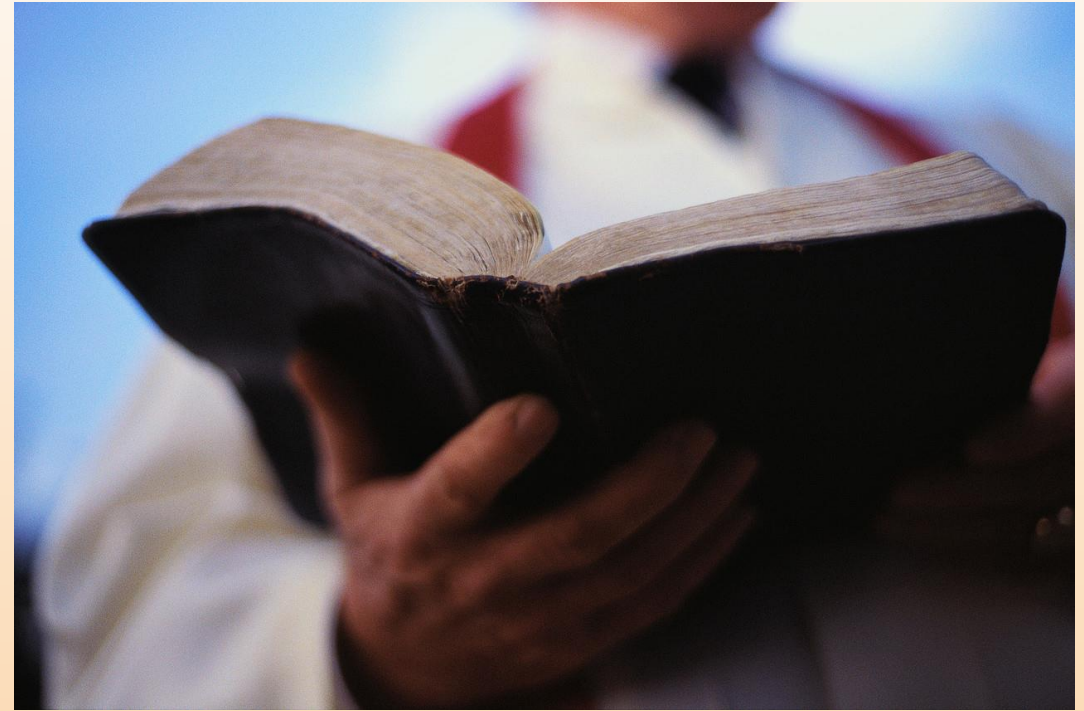
"I would warn my brethren and sisters never to flatter persons because of their ability, for they cannot bear it. Self is easily exalted, and, in consequence, persons lose their balance. I say again to my brethren and sisters: If you would have your souls clean from the blood of all men, never flatter, never praise the efforts of poor mortals; for it may prove their ruin. It is unsafe, by our words and actions, to exalt a brother or sister, however apparently humble may be his or her deportment. If they really possess the meek and lowly spirit which God so highly esteems, help them to retain it. This will not be done by censuring them nor by neglecting to properly appreciate their true worth. But there are few who can bear praise without being injured."

Ellen G. White, 3T p. 185.

V. Conclusion



“The people will seldom rise higher than their minister. A world-loving spirit in him has a tremendous influence upon others. The people make his deficiencies an excuse to cover their own world-loving spirit. They quiet their consciences, thinking that they may be free to love the things of this life and be indifferent to spiritual things, because their ministers are so.”
Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, vol. 2, p. 645, 646.



“Good leaders must first
become good servants.”
Robert Greenleaf, 1904



“We do not need eminent men so much as good, true, and humble men. God calls for those of all classes and all trades to work in his cause. Those are wanted who will begin at the lower rounds of the ladder, who will, if need be, eat their own bread and quietly perform their duty; men who will not shrink from diligent labor to acquire means, or from rigid economy in its expenditure, and who will devote both time and means to work for the Master in their own families and their own neighborhoods.”
Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers*, p. 381.



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