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TEACHER BECOMES STUDENT

We could all use some help

QUALITY OF LIFE

An interview with God

THE STUFF HEAVEN IS MADE OF

The humble have it

PERSONALLY SPEAKING



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Pride is one of those character traits that can work for us or against us, depending on which kind of pride we have. In the positive sense, pride is a sign of healthy self-esteem, which is important to our overall happiness. It's good when we can take pride in a job well done, for example. It also inspires us to keep going in the right direction when others tell us they are proud of us for our good qualities or some good we have done. In the negative sense, pride is an often unjustified or exaggerated feeling of superiority. That kind of pride is arguably the cause of most of our problems.

Pride—the wrong kind—plays a major part in most conflicts, from sibling rivalries and marital problems to strife in the workplace and wars between nations. Pride's egotistic, know-it-all attitude keeps us from reaching our full potential because it says to those we could learn from that we don't need their help. Pride is a leading cause of loneliness because it throws up walls between us and others. Pride makes us fear failure, which often leads to actual failure. Pride makes us critical, intolerant, and impatient. In short, pride is the enemy of happiness. It's also part of our human nature.

There is hope, though, and an antidote—humility. That quality is usually a bit harder to come by, but it is available to all of us and is within our reach. We just need to want it and cultivate it. Like anything else that doesn't come naturally, that takes conscious and consistent effort, but God will help us if we try. "This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will"—and He would much rather see us humble and happy than proud problem cases—"He hears and answers us" (1 John 5:14-15).

KEITH PHILLIPS
Keith Phillips
FOR THE ACTIVATED FAMILY

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BY CURTIS PETER VAN GORDER

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN TO A PARTY WHERE EVERYONE FISHED QUESTIONS OUT OF A HAT? I have been to a few, and twice the question I drew was: “Tell about one of the most humbling experiences you’ve ever had”. The first time, I panicked and my mind went blank. The second time, I could think of quite a few but none that I dared tell.

After that last party, thinking back on *that* humbling experience, I decided it was time for some soul-searching. What was it about being humbled that put me under such a cloud? It wasn’t just the momentary embarrassment. Recalling those experiences, even years later, was nearly as bad. Why was I so afraid of others seeing that I was imperfect, vulnerable, perhaps even dumb? Was I taking myself too seriously, out of pride?

As I pondered those questions, I remembered that the Bible has a lot to say about the good effects of being humble. It says that God dwells with the humble, and that He loves a humble spirit. Jesus was humble. I was also reminded of something I’d read once: “God does some things to humble you, other things to *keep* you humble, and yet other things to see if you’re *still* humble.” If that was true, I reasoned, and if “all things work together for good to those who love God,” as the Bible says, then even those humbling experiences must somehow be good for me.

With that thought in mind, I decided to try to stop fighting God’s humbling process. In fact, I would take it a step further and help Him along. I would do the humble thing and tell people about my past humblings. All of them. Starting at the beginning.

My first humbling experience happened even before I was born, believe it or not, although I didn’t hear about it until much later, of course. I was named by the family dog. That’s right, a dog. It happened like this: My parents couldn’t agree on what to name me. My mom wanted to name me after her father, and my father wanted to name me after himself. The obvious compromise was to give me both names, but which name should come first? How did they resolve that dilemma? Simple. They let the dog decide. In one corner of the room they put a dish of dog treats and a sign with my father’s name next to it, and in the opposite corner they put a dish of dog treats with my grandfather’s name next to it. The dog fancied the treats on my mother’s side, and I’ve been Curtis Peter ever since.

There. I’ve told it like it was. That wasn’t as hard as I thought it was going to be.

My next humbling experience happened when I was about a week old. ... ■

CURTIS PETER VAN GORDER IS A FULL-TIME MEMBER OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL IN THE MIDDLE EAST.



QUALITY **of LIFE**

AN EXCERPT OF AN INTERVIEW WITH GOD

By Scott MacGregor

INTERVIEWER: MOST PEOPLE WANT TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN LIFE, EVEN THOUGH THEIR DEFINITIONS OF SUCCESS VARY. LOTS OF PEOPLE WOULD LIKE TO BE RICH OR TO ACHIEVE FAME SO THAT THEY ARE ADMIRER BY OTHERS, PERHAPS EVEN IDOLIZED. WHAT DO YOU REGARD AS SUCCESS?

GOD: To find and achieve your purpose for existence.

IN AN EARLIER INTERVIEW YOU DEFINED THIS AS LOVING YOU AND LOVING OTHERS. IS THAT IT? If you do those two things, you will be a success. However, every individual has his own personal destiny which, if fulfilled, would make him even more successful.

THAT IS INTERESTING. WE COME PRE-PROGRAMMED TO PERFORM SOME GREAT TASK, REACH SOME GREAT GOAL? It depends on what you mean by "great."

BECOMING PRESIDENT OR PRIME MINISTER OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT. I pity anyone wanting to become a head of state. No, that is greatness in man's eyes, which does not necessarily correspond with My idea of greatness.

WHICH IS? To be of great service to mankind.

BUT BEING A WORLD OR NATIONAL LEADER WOULD BE OF GREAT SERVICE TO MANKIND, WOULDN'T IT? I think that most people tend to think that politicians are more likely to be of great service to themselves or to the political system. Even

the most idealistic politician is soon forced into compromise, and some are even corrupted by the political system. I think everyone is more likely to agree that someone like Mother Teresa is truly great.

SHE WAS A SAINT IN EVERY SENSE OF THE WORD, BUT YOU DON'T EXPECT US ALL TO ATTAIN THAT LEVEL OF SERVICE AND DEDICATION, DO YOU? What a wonderful world it would be if everyone would, don't you think?

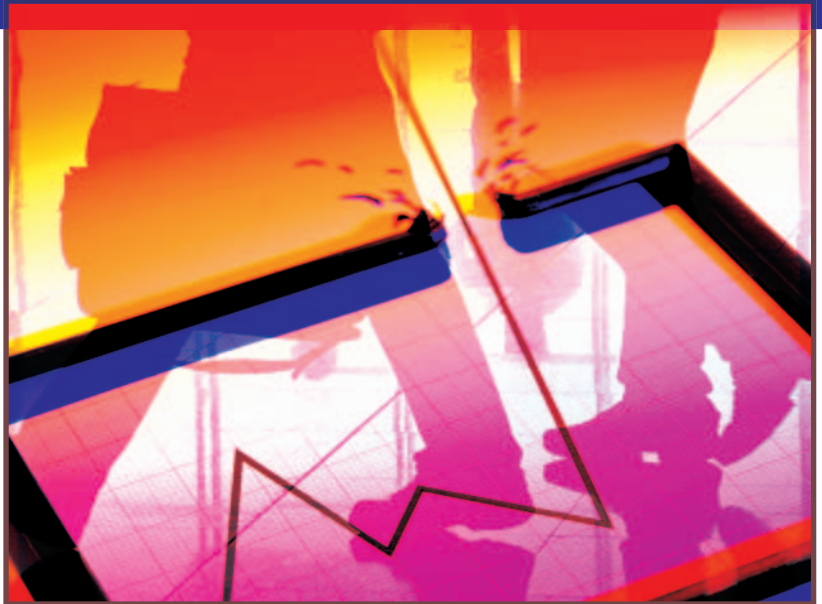
SO YOU WOULD HAVE US ALL BE LIKE THAT? If all were like that, then there would be no need for all to be like that. I am not expecting such heroics of everyone, but it would be wonderful if more were like her.

SO SHE IS YOUR IDEA OF SUCCESS. She succeeded in

her calling. She would not be persuaded from it, but pursued it with every ounce of spiritual and physical vigor that she could muster. I know that all people will not and could not do what she did, but they can do something to make the world around them a better place for others. I have designed mankind so that the giving of themselves to help others is the most satisfying thing that people can do. It makes every other measure of success pale by comparison.

IF THAT IS THE CASE, WHY AREN'T MORE OF US DOING IT? Many do—a few in great ways, most in small ways. The thing that holds people back is selfishness.

BUT WE ARE ALL SELFISH TO SOME DEGREE OR ANOTHER. IT IS HUMAN NATURE, THE INSTINCT FOR SURVIVAL. IF YOU INTENDED US TO BE ALTRUISTIC, WHY DID YOU PROGRAM MANKIND WITH SELFISHNESS? This world is a proving ground. Although there is selfishness inherent within man, there is also the ability to rise above it. Every individual has within him the potential to be a great force for good, if he only would.



VERY INTERESTING! ANOTHER AREA THAT MOST OF US LIKE TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN IS IN RELATIONSHIPS. RELATIONSHIPS ARE MYRIAD, OF COURSE, BUT IS THERE A GENERAL RULE FOR SUCCESS? Yes! Humility!

I THOUGHT YOU WOULD SAY LOVE. Humility is love put into action. It regards the well-being and happiness of others as more important than one's own. Therefore humility is the key.

BY DEFINITION, THE OPPOSITE OF HUMILITY IS PRIDE [CONCEIT]. DOES IT THEN STAND TO REASON THAT PRIDE IS WHAT WILL CAUSE A RELATIONSHIP TO FAIL? Exactly!

BUT A SENSE OF PRIDE IS ENGRAINED IN US SINCE BIRTH. Pride builds walls between

people. Humility builds bridges. It reaches out to others.

BUT SHOULDN'T WE TAKE PRIDE IN OUR ACHIEVEMENTS, ABILITIES AND TALENTS, ETC.? There is a fine line. You, of course, have a sense of satisfaction when you have done or made something worthwhile. But when people begin feeling that they are superior to others because of what they have done, then they are heading for disaster. Quite frankly, if you are hoping to be successful in a relationship, a swelled head is just about the last thing you need.

WHAT DO YOU SEE, THEN, AS A SUCCESSFUL RELATIONSHIP? People in partnership with one or more others to achieve a greater good. People in partnership with others create synergy.

SYNERGY BEING DEFINED AS THE COMBINED EFFECT OF TWO OR MORE BEING GREATER THAN THE SUM OF THEIR INDIVIDUAL EFFECTS? Yes. It is again part of the basic design. People working in combination with others can do more than they could have if they had all worked on their own. But in order for a relationship of any kind to truly prosper, there must be humility on the part of the participants.

I THINK I AM NOT THAT CLEAR ON WHAT YOU MEAN BY HUMILITY. Esteeming the other person better than yourself.

BUT WHAT IF THE OTHER PERSON ISN'T AS ACCOMPLISHED AT THINGS AS I AM? Then that takes more humility. Every person is different, so look for what you can admire in someone. Humility does not lift up self—it lifts up others.

WELL, THIS IS SOMETHING WE ARE NOT ACCUSTOMED TO

DOING NATURALLY, BECAUSE MANY OF US FEEL OUR OPINIONS ARE THE BEST, OUR METHODS ARE PROBABLY THE BEST, AND SO FORTH. People's tendency is to be proud, but pride never pays off, whereas humility always does.

IT SEEMS TO ME THAT YOU PUT ALL THE WRONG TENDENCIES IN MAN, LIKE PRIDE AND SELFISHNESS. WHY? So man would need Me. The world is a giant demonstration to show that even a being as clever as man needs Me to be truly successful.

IS THAT FAIR? WHY WOULD YOU CREATE US AND THEN HOBBLE US WITH TRAITS THAT GUARANTEE OUR ULTIMATE FAILURE? Remember that I said I would help you to do whatever I ask you to. I did not make you perfect, that is true. But I did create in you the ability to choose the way that would lead to what will be the most

perfect existence that you could imagine. Man also was created with the freedom of choice—to choose to follow Me or not.

I have tried to make the bad effects of pride extremely obvious. Pride promotes love of self more than love of Me or others, and thus it wars against choosing My way. I am demonstrating to everyone the rewards of following Me in humility, rather than following oneself in pride.

THAT IS A LOT TO GRASP. Yes, but it is again a matter of faith. If you believe what I am saying and then do it, you will find success in relationships, as in other areas of life.

Excerpted from God on God, from Aurora Production AG. Write to one of the addresses on page 2 to order your copy. ■

HUMILITY IS...

True humility is not an abject, groveling, self-despising spirit; it is but a right estimate of ourselves as God sees us.
—Tryon Edwards

Humility does not mean thinking less of yourself than of other people, nor does it mean having a low opinion of your own gifts. It means freedom from thinking about yourself at all.
—William Temple, Sr.

We come nearest to the great when we are great in humility.
—Rabindranath Tagore

Humility leads to strength and not to weakness. It is the highest form of self-respect to admit mistakes and to make amends for them.
—John J. McCloy

8 GREAT WAYS TO A HUMBLER YOU



Most of us wouldn't mind being a little more humble, but oh how we hate to be humbled! That hurts our pride, but that kind of pain is good for us if we can welcome it and let it accomplish its purpose. Remember the mantra of Olympians: No pain, no gain!

LOOK FOR THE BEST IN PEOPLE. Everyone has had some experience you haven't and is your superior in that respect. Albert Einstein, who is largely regarded as one of the greatest minds ever, said, "I have never met a man so ignorant that I couldn't learn something from him."

GIVE SINCERE COMPLIMENTS. It's hard to look down on others while telling them what you admire about them. The more you put positive thoughts about others into words, the more good you'll see in them and the less likely you will be to fall into the egotism trap.

BE QUICK TO ADMIT YOUR MISTAKES. It's been said that the hardest words to say in any language are "I was wrong." Those who refuse to do so out of pride are likely to keep making the same mistakes and alienate people in the process.

BE THE FIRST TO APOLOGIZE FOR AN ARGUMENT. If "I was wrong" are the hardest words to say, "I'm sorry" have to be the next hardest. It will kill your pride, as well as the argument—two evil birds with one small stone of humility.

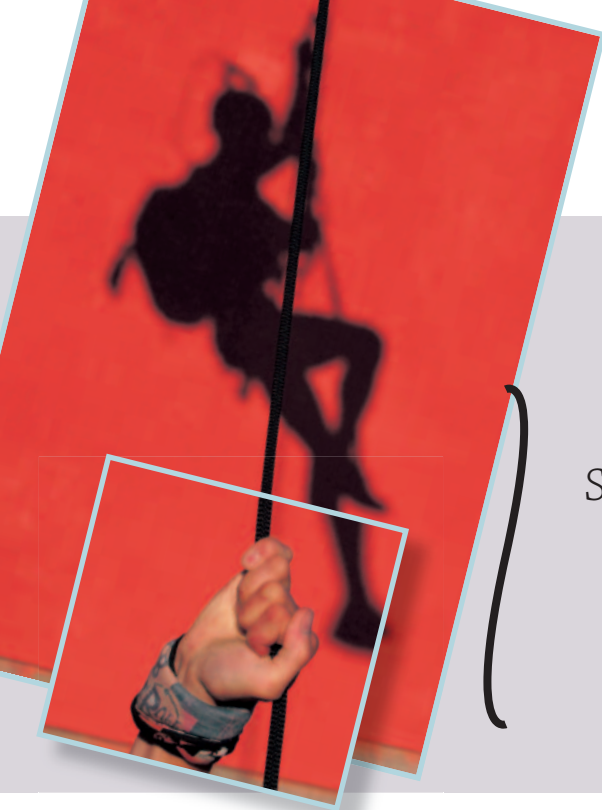
ADMIT YOUR LIMITATIONS AND NEEDS. It's human nature to want to appear strong and self-sufficient, out

of pride, but that usually only makes things harder. Humble yourself and ask for and accept the help of others, and you'll come out miles ahead.

SERVE OTHERS. Volunteer to help the elderly, the infirm, or children, or do some other form of community service. You'll gain more than you give, both in humility and loving thanks.

LEARN SOMETHING NEW—A NEW SKILL, LANGUAGE, SPORT, OR HOBBY. Starting from scratch is nearly always humbling, but the rewards are manifold: You'll come out of the experience a little more humble; your example of "doing the humble thing" will encourage others and, contrary to what your pride tells you, win their admiration and respect.

GIVE GOD THE CREDIT FOR ANYTHING GOOD ABOUT YOU AND ANYTHING GOOD THAT HE HELPS YOU DO. "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches. But let him that glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord!" (Jeremiah 9:23–24). Or as David Brandt Berg put it, "Give God all the glory for anything good about you, and yourself all the blame for anything bad. That's a pretty good rule, because it's usually right." ■



SERVE ONE ANOTHER

in love

By Maria Fontaine

“THROUGH LOVE SERVE ONE ANOTHER” (Galatians 5:13).

That phrase from the Bible is food for thought, especially when you consider that the Greek word translated here as “serve” is *douleuo*, which means “to be a slave to.” So to serve one another in love is to be a slave to one another in love, to yield to, to obey, to do someone’s bidding, and to do so in love.

That’s a pretty tall order! Most people don’t like to be thought of as servants, let alone slaves. They may not mind serving some people up to a certain point—their employer, for example—but it’s a little hard for them to think of anyone being their master, especially a peer. How does it

make *you* feel to think of being someone else’s slave? Even if that person is willing to be your servant in return, it’s still probably difficult to imagine yourself as a servant, with no power to exercise your own will.

It’s probably easier to think about serving God, because He is so high and mighty and so obviously superior in every way. It’s a little bit easier to say, “Lord, I serve You” to an all-seeing, all-knowing, and all-powerful God than it is to say that to someone we consider our equal or perhaps even our lesser in some respects.

Some other good verses about serving one another are, “Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than

himself” (Philippians 2:3), “Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another” (Romans 12:10), “Submitting to one another in the fear of God” (Ephesians 5:21), and “Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ” (Galatians 6:2).

It’s a little easier if it’s voluntary. If we decide to serve someone a meal, for example, we’re serving, but it’s our own idea. The idea of “through love serve one another” is more like doing the bidding of another. When it comes to that, then we have to have quite a bit more grace and humility and yieldedness.

And if we’re bearing in mind this “through love serve one another” principle, we’re of

LOVE and HUMILITY

By David Brandt Berg

You've got to admit, a big part of love is humility. It takes humility to be affectionate and to receive affection. If you want to fall in love and accept real love, you have to be humble enough to let go of your pride and receive that love.

This is true even of our relationship with the Lord. When we first hear that God loves us so much that He sent His only Son, Jesus, to die in our place, we have to humble ourselves to receive God's love. Receiving salvation is a humbling experience. Those who humble themselves receive not only forgiveness, but also an infilling of love they could never have imagined. But those who are too proud miss out on both, for "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (James 4:6).

Humility and love are inseparable. The truly loving are truly humble, and the truly humble are truly loving. You cannot have real love and not be humble, and you cannot have genuine humility without a lot of love. Pride's fear of failure or refusal also prevents us from reaching out to and loving others as much as we should. Not so with humility. Humility has love and faith without fear (1 John 4:18). Love doesn't care what other people think; it just loves in spite of what they think. So be humble—and love! ■

course not going to ask others to do anything that is hurtful or harmful. Whether we're doing the serving or others are serving us, it's all going to be loving and we're all going to benefit. What we ask of others may sometimes be a sacrifice for them, but by the same token, we will be serving them too and sometimes sacrificing for them, so it will be a two-way street.

Jesus said He "came not to be served, but to serve" (Mark 10:45). So what does that make Jesus?—A servant. Jesus "made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant" (Philippians 2:7).

So Jesus was a servant, and He is still our servant. He is waiting to do our bidding. He says, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find;

knock, and it will be opened to you" (Matthew 7:7). In other words, He says, "I'll do your bidding. What do you want? I'm your servant and I will do whatever you want." So if Jesus loves us so much that He is willing to be our servant, how much more should we follow His example and serve each other in His love?

The Bible says that "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow in His steps" (1 Peter 2:21), and Jesus also said, "As the Father has sent Me, I also send you" (John 20:21). His Father sent Him as a servant. Jesus had the love and humility to do that for us, and He asks that we follow His example. That takes a lot of humility, but with such sacrifices come great rewards. ■

FEEDING READING

Humility with one another

FOLLOW JESUS' EXAMPLE OF HUMILITY.

Matthew 21:5
John 13:5,12–15
Luke 22:27
Philippians 2:5–8

OTHER EXAMPLES OF HUMILITY:

1 Samuel 25:40–41
Mark 7:25–30
Luke 7:2–7
John 1:27

LOVE AND HONOR OTHERS.

Romans 12:10
Romans 12:16
Philippians 2:3

SUBMIT HUMBLY TO ONE ANOTHER.

Luke 22:25–26
Ephesians 5:21
1 Peter 5:5

BE HUMBLE WHEN POINTING OUT OTHERS' ERRORS.

Luke 6:42
Galatians 6:1
2 Timothy 2:25



teacher

becomes

student

IT HAPPENED TO ME

By Charlotte Hopper

THIS SHOULD BE EASY, I thought as I prepared to make the switch from teaching elementary-school-aged children to teaching teenagers. *After all, I have been a teacher all my adult life.* Was I in for a surprise!

Younger children are generally quite trusting and respectful of adults, and nearly all of those I had worked with over the years had accepted my word as “law,” no questions asked. The teens, on the other hand, seemed to question *everything*. Respect and obedience—things I had long considered every teacher’s due—were no longer guaranteed. It wasn’t that I was always right and the teens were always wrong; they just wanted to do things differently. They wanted to spread their wings, and never seemed to be content to do things the way I or their parents or others of our generation had.

If I had known then what I know now, I probably could have succeeded at that job. Instead, I tried to hold on to my “tried and proven” ways of doing things. My relationship with my students became strained, and I became frustrated, critical, and unhappy.

A little later, I was offered and accepted the job of director of a small but potential social welfare project in a slum area of

São Paulo. I had never set foot in a slum before and had no idea what to expect or where to start, but God gave me a coworker who did—Paulo, a 20-year-old Brazilian who had grown up with his missionary parents and had already been working with underprivileged youth for a couple of years. We started our little mission together, and my schooling began!

The basic plan was to combine physical help and practical training with spiritual counseling in order to better the lives of about 100 families living on a city dump. It seemed that every conceivable health, hygiene, and public services problem was present in this area of about 20 hectares (roughly 50 acres)—open sewers, contaminated water, rats and other vermin, unpaved roads, a grossly inadequate jerry-rigged electrical system, you name it.

Fortunately, Paulo had some talents and insight that I lacked. As he helped me interview the families we had come

to help, his experience kicked in and my own obvious lack of experience put me in the humble seat.

I had come from an upper-middle-class American family and had never seen such poverty in my life. The physical conditions in the slum overwhelmed me mentally and emotionally. I also didn't know how to relate to the people we had come to help, or understand how their entire way of thinking had been formed by their suffering, poverty, and day-to-day struggle for basic necessities. I said things that weren't appropriate, and even made jokes about things that to them weren't laughing matters. I felt embarrassed whenever Paulo would take me aside and clue me in, but little by little I learned.

Paulo also shared his insights about the needs and attitudes of the various people we interviewed or offered help to, how a certain family wasn't as needy or as committed to do what they could to improve their living conditions as another family, and so on. He could tell who would prove reliable and worthy of our help; I couldn't. They all seemed needy and sincere to me. Paulo also knew when some comment would hurt their feelings, or when some action would offend them. He knew how they felt; I didn't.

The young people there—everyone, in fact—loved Paulo! He got on their level, but only to bring them up. He could talk their language, but then turn the conversation to more positive and constructive subjects in the blink of an eye. One minute he was exhorting, the next minute playing football with them. It all seemed to come naturally to Paulo. How could I not be grateful for his leadership or the suggestions he offered about how I could do things better?



**ONE MINUTE
HE WAS
EXHORTING,
THE NEXT
MINUTE
PLAYING
FOOTBALL
WITH THEM.**

And guess what?—Paulo and I got along marvelously, and our efforts paid off. We have both moved on to other projects, but the work we began together seven years ago flourishes to this day. Why?—I'm sure it's in part because we learned to work as a team. I was open to Paulo's advice and followed his capable instruction, and when something came up that I was better suited for, he let me take the lead. When something went wrong, we could talk it out. I respected his talents and opinions, so he respected mine. It really worked!

I learned so much from that experience! For one, I saw that if I had approached teaching teenagers the same way I had the slum project with Paulo, with the attitude that I had much to learn, all of us would have been much happier. If I had encouraged, respected, and trusted them more, they probably would have respected and appreciated me more. Instead of being a know-it-all, I should have let them experiment and then helped them pick up the pieces when things went wrong. We could have grown together.

Thank God for second chances! He certainly knew what He was doing when He led me to leave my teaching job so I could learn the way to young people's hearts. ■

CHARLOTTE HOPPER IS A FULL-TIME VOLUNTEER WITH THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL IN BRAZIL.



WHAT IS GREATNESS?

Do not confuse notoriety and fame with greatness. Many of the titled in today's world obtained their fame and fortune outside their own merit. On the other hand, I have met great people in the most obscure roles. Greatness is a measure of one's spirit, not a result of one's rank in human affairs. Nobody, least of all mere human beings, confers greatness upon another, for it is not a prize but an achievement. Greatness can crown the head of a janitor just as readily as it can come to someone of high rank.

—*Sherman G. Finesilver*

No one is useless in this world who lightens the burden of it for anyone else.

—*Charles Dickens*

I long to accomplish great and noble tasks, but it is my chief duty to accomplish humble tasks as though they were great and noble. The world is moved along, not only by the mighty shoves of its heroes, but also by the aggregate of the tiny pushes of each honest worker.

—*Helen Keller*

True greatness, true leadership, is achieved not by reducing men to one's service, but by giving oneself in selfless service to them.

—*Author unknown*

The world measures greatness by money, or eloquence, or intellectual skill, or even by prowess on the field of battle. But here is the Lord's standard: "Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven."

—*J.H. Jowett*

What a surprise we're going to get when the Lord hands out the rewards, as to who was *really* greatest! Some people serve unselfishly, sacrificially, utterly giving themselves to the utmost, and yet never get the credit for it, and are virtually unknown! But God has a great big Book, and it's known to Him, and He's writing it all down! And He'll reward everyone according to their works, whether they be good, or whether they be evil.

Remember what Jesus said about the dear woman who anointed Him before His death? He said, "She hath done what she could!" (Mark 14:8)

Maybe you feel you can't do very much, but at least you can do what you *can*! If you're faithful, God is going to greatly reward you one of these days soon when you stand before Jesus at "the judgment seat of Christ" (Romans 14:10).

So be sure you're doing a good work, so that when you pass on to be with the Lord you will know you have done your job the best you can! Then you can look forward to eternal rewards and everlasting glory, with a feeling of genuine permanent accomplishment!

—*David Brandt Berg*



OUR HUMBLE SAVIOR

BORN IN A BARN: “She brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn” (Luke 2:7).

REJECTED BY MANY OF THOSE HE CAME TO SAVE: “He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him” (John 1:10–11).

SERVANT OF ALL: “Who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves” (Luke 22:27).

HIS TRIUMPHANT ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM: “Behold, your King is coming to you, lowly, and sitting on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey” (Matthew 21:5).

THE FOOT-WASHING: “After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe them

with the towel with which He was girded. ... So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, ‘Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you’” (John 13:5,12–15).

SILENT IN THE FACE OF HIS ACCUSERS: “He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth” (Isaiah 53:7).

MOCKED BY EVIL MEN: “Then they spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head. And when they had mocked Him, they took the robe off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him away to be crucified. ... And those who passed by blasphemed Him,

wagging their heads” (Matthew 27:30–31,39).

CRUCIFIED WITH COMMON CRIMINALS: “Then two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left” (Matthew 27:38).

STOOPING TO OUR LEVEL: “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:5–8).

If you haven’t met the humble Savior, you can right now. He stands meekly at your heart’s door, waiting for you to invite Him in. Simply pray, “Jesus, please come in, forgive me my sins, fill me with Your love, and give me Your gift of eternal life. Amen.” ■

THE STUFF HEAVEN
IS MADE OF

A Tribute to My Father

By Marina Gruenhage



PAPA AND MARINA 1955

I DON'T WANT TO PUT MY FATHER ON A PEDESTAL. He wouldn't have wanted that. Always self-effacing, I can't remember him ever seeking honor for himself. When someone would praise him, he'd point heavenward, to his Creator, and give God the glory.

Now, many years after his death, I realize what a jewel of a dad I had. When he was still around—and especially during my adolescent years—I didn't treasure him as I should have. I assumed that all dads were as kind and sacrificial as mine. I didn't appreciate his meek, long-suffering nature, nor did I respect his convictions. Instead, I

put him down many times, insensitive to the pain I caused him.

Papa, now you know how sorry I am for hurting you so. Now you know how proud I am of you and how immensely grateful I am for the way you affected my life.

Papa was born in Germany in 1893, and was old enough to have been my grandfather by the time I came along.

When he was 17, he received Jesus as his Savior and decided to share His love with everyone he met. He entered World War I as a young soldier, reluctantly. He would have much preferred to save lives than take lives. Despite frequent opposition, he talked

about Jesus at every opportunity. A few of the men had made a sport of mocking him and his faith, and sometimes they were quite mean.

"On one occasion," Papa recounted, "one of the officers grabbed my Bible to look for a certain verse that he and his companions wanted to tease me with. They weren't able to find the verse, but they did find my prayer list tucked between the pages, and read it eagerly. To their astonishment, they also found their names written there." Those rough, proud men humbly returned his Bible and apologized. From that moment on, they didn't tease him again.

Papa also told us about one of his superior officers who had been part of the mocking crowd and often cracked jokes at my dad's expense. On the battlefield, however, he seemed to look for shelter close to my father. "Why are you always hiding behind me?" Papa asked him once. "I'm not bulletproof!"

This time the officer spoke sincerely and without scorn. "There is just so much peace around you. For some reason, when I'm near you, I feel safe."

Papa's voice would fill with emotion as he talked about a 19-year-old soldier who had

panicked and was caught deserting before a major battle. He was to be immediately executed, but Papa begged for his life.

“Please give me a little time to talk to him, sir,” Papa said, reasoning with the officer in charge. Papa’s request was finally granted.

Papa told the boy about Jesus—the One who faced His fears and gave His life for us—and they prayed together. The young soldier then marched bravely into the battle, knowing it would probably cost his life. When they found his body later, his face bore the most peaceful expression. Clutched to his chest was the tract Papa had given to him. The text concluded with this verse from the Bible: “The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms” (Deuteronomy 33:27).

After the war, Papa began studying to become a pastor, but had to give up his dream in order to rescue his parents from a financial crisis. With a family to support, he was never able to resume his studies. This didn’t hinder him from continuing to share God’s love wherever he went, however. He founded a Sunday school, and regularly led Christian fellowships at his local church, standing in for the pastor on many occasions. Visiting the sick and lonely was one of his favorite pastimes.

I was the youngest of six children. When I was small, Papa and I adored one another and spent countless precious moments together. But when I grew older and turned my back on God’s love and the faith of my parents, it broke Papa’s heart. I barely

communicated with him during my teen years, as I didn’t want to hear any of the sermons I expected him to preach to me. My mother already preached enough—or so it seemed.

So Papa opted to remain silent, while Mom and I argued a lot. “Why do you talk so much *with* our daughter?” Papa would ask her. “It might be better to talk with God *about* her!” Sometimes my heart cringed at the way he would look at me, his eyes full of sorrow. Our sweet father-daughter relationship had faded, and he found the hurt hard to bear. I felt miserable too, but didn’t want to admit it, so I put on a tough front.

Papa talked to God about me, and God listened. At the age of 21, I experienced a miraculous transformation. Like a prodigal daughter, I returned to Jesus and asked Him to take care of me. He answered my cry and gave me the love and fulfillment I was longing for.

Papa was so glad! What a joyful reunion we had! Mom told me how over the years he had not ceased to pray desperately and with strong determination, “Lord, help her to find You, no matter what the price!” Thank you, Papa, for holding on for me and for helping me to find true happiness!



WWI: MY FATHER AND HIS SISTERS



PAPA AND MARINA 1958

When Father went to Heaven a few years later, a short article about him appeared in a local newspaper. In part, it read: “It’s a rare thing to encounter such heartfelt kindness and patience as Mr. Gruenhagen showed to others. Those who met him could feel that ‘he had been with Jesus’ (Acts 4:13).”

In his own humble way, Papa was a saint—the sort of stuff that Heaven is made of. ■

MARINA GRUENHAGE (1947–2005) WAS A FULL-TIME VOLUNTEER WITH THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL FOR OVER 30 YEARS, MUCH OF THAT TIME SPENT IN JAPAN.



TAKE A LOAD OFF

FROM JESUS WITH LOVE

It takes a big man to let go of his ego.

Many people carry around “loads” of ego. They want to be well thought of, and sometimes they think this has to come at the cost of putting others down. This is sad and not the way it should be, especially if you’re in a position of seniority.

When people look up to you, you have a great opportunity to help unlock their potential. But you can’t make others feel important, capable, or respected if you insist on calling all the shots and being right all the time. Sure, you want to make right decisions and be successful, but it doesn’t need to come at the expense of others. If you consistently dominate company meetings and push your own ideas, you’re going to find that it will discourage creativity and effort in your colleagues, as well as make them unenthusiastic about seeing your ideas through.

Take a load off of everyone. Lay down your ego.