

## Practically applying the character quality of

# humility

vs. Pride

*"Acknowledging that achievement results from the investment of others in my life."*

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### It's a good thing

What comes to your mind when you hear the word humility? For many, it is one of two images: either someone very poor or someone very pious. Somehow our culture attaches negative connotations to both. However, if we contrast these with their opposites, it becomes clear that they are, in reality, positive and worthy of our consideration. Do you know anyone who is financially wealthy and acts like they are? Do you find them difficult to tolerate? How about someone who, instead of pious, is arrogant and egotistical? Is he or she someone you desire to emulate? It would appear then that the visuals that come to mind when we think of humility are actually lifestyle concepts to which we should aspire.

### Humble on top of the world

*I found the following story in an online sermon by a minister from Australia.*

The year is 1953, the month is May and the British Commonwealth is preparing to crown a new Queen. The newspapers and radio are focused on the coronation when the news flashes around the world that the highest mountain on earth has been conquered.

Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay have stood on the top of Mt. Everest.

At that point, Ed Hillary had the world at his feet, both literally and figuratively. He was an overnight hero, a sporting superstar. Life for him would never be the same again.

Large, multinational companies would not have hesitated to employ him. To an advertising company he would have been a dream come true. He could have been

wined and dined by the rich and famous the world over. For them, being able to say, "come to my party, Ed Hillary will be there, you know" was great for their status.

But he chose not to do any of those things. What he chose to do was to go back to Nepal and give of his own time, money and energy to build schools and hospitals for the Nepalese people. Bear in mind that he was and is one of the most famous people of his generation. He was what Jonah Lomu, Michael Jordan, Tiger Woods, Beatrice Faumuina and Andre Agassi are to our generation.

### Commitment to Humility

- I will not think too highly of myself
- I will take responsibility for my actions
- I will credit those who have made me successful
- I will praise my family and coworkers
- I will try again after each defeat

He still has his phone number in the telephone book and young climbers from around the world occasionally turn up on his doorstep, more-often-than-not to be invited in for a cup of tea. School children ring him up to ask him questions for school projects and he politely spends time answering them.

Can you imagine turning up on Oprah Winfrey's or Martina Navratolova's doorstep and being asked in for

coffee? Can you imagine phoning up Greg Norman or Tom Cruise and having them answer questions for your school project? When you see Ed Hillary being interviewed about Everest he is always quick to stress the team effort of all those involved and how the final ascent was Tenzing and himself. He takes very little credit for himself, but rather gives credit where credit is due.

So there we have it, the actions of a humble man. Someone who, though very famous, kept his feet firmly on the ground. What sets him apart is not so much what he did to become famous, but rather the things that he did afterwards.

### Specific Ways to Humble Ourselves

- Welcome critics
- Volunteer for menial tasks
- Ask others about blind spots
- Express gratefulness
- Be a listener
- Admit when you are wrong
- Ask forgiveness when you are wrong
- Deflect praise to those who help you
- Be a servant

### How HUMBLE are you?

- Do you seek ways to humble yourself?
- Do you tend to cut off those who ignore you?
- Do you find it difficult to admit you are wrong?
- Are you quick to correct when others make mistakes?
- Do you do things just for praise and compliments?
- Do you give your opinion before being asked for it?