

Here we have Christ himself, who had every reason in heaven and earth to be superior, yet he purposefully refused to do so. He emptied himself of his position.

Earlier in our text Paul cautions the Philippians when he says “let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit.” Simply put, he challenges each of us to not have an exaggerated belief in one’s importance. Once when I was struggling with my grandiose beliefs and thinking quite highly of myself, someone directly spoke life into me with the following; “Forgive my bluntness but you’re not that special.” That statement freed me.

Jesus spoke to the Romans similarly when he stated in Romans 11:19-21: “You will say then, branches were broken off that I might be grafted in. Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty but fear. For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either.” We do well to remember our position – sinners saved only by the grace of God.

To Be Continued...

## Respect in Families

By Brenda Spina, M.S., LMFT, LPC

As I sit to write this article, I am very aware of how much work I need in the area of respect. The longer I walk with the Lord and the more he touches my sinful thinking and acting, the greater the realization of what I do not know about my own mental and emotional processes. A feeling of humility floods my being. It is from this repeated experience that the following thoughts are put onto paper.

John W. Miller, who wrote *The Christian Way*, defines humility in this manner: “Humility is not a matter of thinking low thoughts about ourselves. It is not a matter of groveling in the dust. It is simply a matter of knowing ourselves as we really are. And when we see ourselves as we really are, we will see that we are poor” (*John W. Miller, The Christian Way*).

In Philippians 2:1-13 the phrase “...but in humility consider others better than yourselves” is used. It is followed by; “Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus...” and goes on to describe what that attitude looks like. May I suggest the following premise: humility, as defined above, is the basis of true respect.

As we turn to look at the three things that describe Christ’s attitude, please allow me to provide my own definition of respect. Based on study of the word and its uses in Scripture, it is:

**“To see intently with scrutiny, admiration, and compassion the (direct or implied) value of another and oneself.”**

I don’t know of anyone who does not want or desire to experience encouragement, comfort, fellowship, tenderness, or compassion in their lives. These are qualities we receive by being united with Christ, receiving His love and fellowship with the Holy Spirit. In families, these qualities are expected and longed for but not always received. The lack thereof is often the beginnings of distorted beliefs and choices. These distortions can create battles that have the tendency to divide and conquer, rather than unite. It is here where Paul is addressing the church family. Paul focuses on the qualities of Jesus that make all of us the same in the family of God. These qualities are rooted in humility and are the basis of the language and behavior of respect.

**1. MINDSET: Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped.**

There is a distorted belief system in families because of sin. This belief is that someone is to be ‘good’ or ‘right’ and someone is to be ‘bad’ or ‘wrong’.