



## HUMILITY BY C.J. MAHANEY

Mahaney, C.J.. Humility: True Greatness. Multnomah Books, Colorado Springs, 2005.

Humility is a book by C.J. Mahaney. The author has served as pastor of Covenant Life Church in Washington DC for twenty-seven years and also leads Sovereign Grace Ministries. The book ponders and dissects a biblical perspective on humility and its two main opponents: pride and a rejection of the gospel of Jesus. The book is broken up into three parts. Part one discusses the battle of humility verses pride. Part two is entitled “the great reversal, our savior and the secret of true greatness.” And the author spends a majority of the book in the third part describing with great detail the practice of humility. C.J. Mahaney is not some monk who is second cousin to Mother Theresa and has a PHD in humility, quite the opposite he openly admits his constant struggle with pride and longing to be noticed. He mentions that many who know him were surprised that he of all people was writing a book on humility. The author admits his struggle with pride and the aggressive steps he takes to be victorious servant of Christ.

### Summary

Part one gives the biblical definitions of humility and the dangers of pride. Chapter one gives some great definitions of humility and many verses that God discusses the subject. For example, “Humility is honestly assessing ourselves in light of God’s holiness and our sinfulness” (22). Isaiah 66:2 says “This is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.” James 4:6 says “God... gives grace to the humble.” Contrasting the definition of humility the author takes a short chapter to describe the “Perils of Pride.” “Why does God hate pride so passionately? Pride is when sinful human beings aspire to the status and position of God and refuse to acknowledge their dependence upon him” (31).

Part two is entitled “The Great Reversal: Our Savior and the Secret of True Greatness.” It is the most theologically deep third of the book because it effectively bridges the gap between the problem of pride and the practical road to living a genuine life of humility. He begins chapter three with a redefinition of greatness. Mark 9:35 says “If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.” The author continues with this REdefinition in the following chapter to declare an essential truth; “To learn true humility, we need more than a redefinition of greatness we need even more than Jesus’ personal example of humble service. What we need is His death” (47). Jesus’ death and resurrection are described to be the essential link in taking a naturally prideful person and transforming their life to a passionate servant of Christ and others.

Part three is where the author spends a majority of time. It is here where the practice of humility is explained in a number of ways. Strategies such as beginning each day reflecting on the cross, acknowledging your need for God, and expressing gratitude for God. Intentional habits such as reading good pieces of Christian literature on God’s grace, the doctrine of sin, and the attributes of God are encouraged. The author gives several recommendations of books that cover these topics such as Sin and Temptation by John Owen, The Enemy Within: Straight Talk About the Power and Defeat of Sin by Kris Lundgaard, and Systematic Theology Systematic Theology by Wayne Grudem. Accountability was a key concept explained as a method to maintain and grow in your humility. The author encouraged the reader to find close friends and family members to ask personal questions on a regular basis to stay mindful of being humble. Questions such as, “Do I confess my sin consistently? Do I confess specific instances of sin and not just general categories or general references to sin?” (130).

### Conclusion

Overall, this was one my favorite books I have read a good while. I have found a new favorite author and have already started another one of his books. C.J. Mahaney is practical, and uses plenty of bible verses to give ample credibility to his opinions. It is a short book and easy to read, which is good for anyone on the go. The reader will walk away with a greater awareness of Satan’s desire to destroy us with pride and realistic tools to slowly change our hearts from selfishness to selflessness. Be aware that you will be convicted from the author’s standards, but resist the urge to think that they are unrealistic or radical, because they are all straight from the bible. And God does not suggest humility, He demands it.