

DAY 17

Humility Produces Servant-Heartedness

Whoever wants to become great among you will be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you will be a slave to all.

Mark 10:43–44

Leadership Affirmation

I look for and seize opportunities to serve in ways that no one will notice or, if so, think noteworthy.

This teachable moment with the disciples was precipitated by the natural impulse for recognition and status. James and John approached Jesus with a desire to sit in positions of prominence (Mark 10:37). This passage reveals several things about pride.

Pride manifests itself in *selfish ambition*. In Matthew's account of this incident, James and John have their mother with them, too (Matthew 20:20–21). Their mother, Salome, is the sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus.^{xiv} As Jesus' cousins and aunt, they don't hesitate to exploit a familial connection for their own benefit.

Pride manifests itself in *arrogant overconfidence*. Jesus asked the two brothers, *Do you really think you can do what I'm about to do?* James and John arrogantly replied, *We are able*.

Pride manifests itself in *bitter rivalry*. The other ten weren't about to let this slide. They got angry because they felt like James and John were trying to usurp them (Mark 10:41). This rivalry among the disciples continued to fester up and even during the Last Supper, where they disputed among themselves which of them was considered the greatest (Luke 22:24).

By contrast, Jesus' attribute of humility produces the attitude of servant-heartedness. He used this teachable moment to flip their cultural understanding of leadership. If you want to be a leader, He said, you must become a slave by serving those around you. Humble leaders are not prideful. They recognize that true leadership is about serving others, not promoting the leader's personal wants and desires.

In summary, Jesus both declared and modelled that humble leaders have an attitude of servant-heartedness that manifests itself in sacrificial service. A humble leader stoops the lowest and elevates the highest.

Prayer for Protection

Father, with chagrin, I confess my tendency to secretly look over my shoulder to see if others noticed my service.