Humility

November 28, 2017

Work is an institution established by God before the Fall. God saw that His work was ‘very good’ in forming Creation (Genesis 1). God assigned Adam work by tasking him to name all the animals. After blessing the union of Adam and Eve, God assigns them work, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth” (Gen 1:28). Work is to be viewed as a part of God’s created and good purpose.

Post-fall, work comes with toil, thistles, and thorns. That has changed the nature of our vocation in a way that allows for sanctification. God uses work as a means to teach us humility. He uses our relationships at work to hold us more accountable and to make us holy.

I often define humility in this way, “You don’t know everything. AND even the things you think you know could be distorted or wrong.” It is very easy for people to nonchalantly or even flippantly accept the first terms. However, the reality is that people usually add, “But I know a whole lot more than ‘you’ do.” Everyone works with, comes across, or is related to a person who places too much confidence in the things they think they know. Most of the time, these people are unaware of or excuse their pretentiousness, pridefulness, and self-righteousness. Conversely, no one ever thinks they are this person.

Nonetheless, here are a couple of symptoms to self-evaluate in your next social setting:

- Do you feel obligated to speak up every time a situation permits?
- Do you rarely (if ever) apologize publicly but take the opportunity to make ‘harmless’ jokes about others publicly?
- Can someone misinterpret your words, affiliations, or decisions publicly without you ensuring your position is clarified to everyone?
- Do you gossip?
- Are you a hypocrite when it comes to treating others as you want to be treated?
- Do you dominate attention with your words, actions, or drama (most likely because, “You have so much to offer.”)?
- Are you easily offended?
- Do you use most opportunities and/or conversations to prove your worth, competence, or existence?

Partly, I have described our sinful condition. I (dare I suggest we) know this person so well because I am this person. Masked underneath it all is insecurity, self-centeredness, and selfishness. Self-Awareness: A Christian Perspective takes on additional meaning and responsibility. We live life on earth in tension. We are fallen short, nevertheless we have hope eternally.

As leaders, let us take the lead on vulnerability, humility, and God’s grace throughout it all:

Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on
a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:3-11)