

Daily Devotionals: With Jesus and His Wisdom | February 20, 2022

Day 1: Devotions

*Humility, that low, sweet root
From which all heavenly virtues shoot.
—Thomas More*

Imagine it. You've been invited to dinner with the Queen of England. You arrive and it's a banquet feast like you've never seen before. You're looking through the place cards for your seat and there's just a guy moving the seating assignments. You finally realize he's moved his own seat to be right next to the Queen. The audacity! Does anyone but you even see what he's doing? He's vying for the highest seat of honor and you're the only one who notices.

Humility is a tricky thing, isn't it? It's so easy to notice a lack of humility in others, but so often difficult to see in ourselves. Jesus had something to say about growing in humility. We're going to learn about humility from him in the classroom this week.

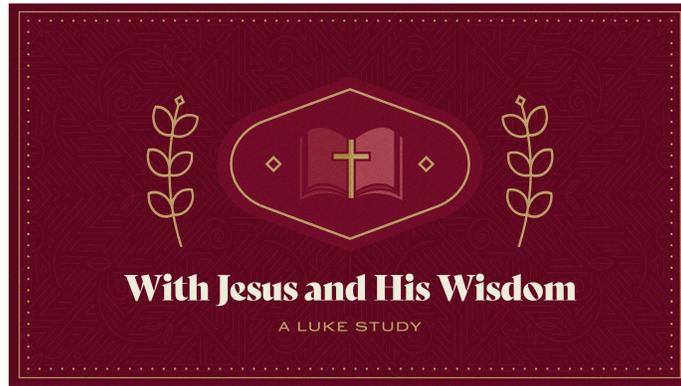
Read Luke 14:7-11.

Reflection Questions:

- Jesus describes a moment of humiliation in verse 9 where the host asks you to move seats. When have you experienced this kind of humiliation in your life? What was that like?
- Who have you known who has demonstrated this type of humility in their life? What was it like to witness?
- Have you ever had a time when you chose humility and were given a seat of honor instead?

Read through this quote by Andrew Murray:

Humility is perfect quietness of heart. It is to expect nothing, to wonder at nothing that is done to me, to feel nothing done against me. It is to be at rest when nobody praises me, and when I am blamed or despised. It is to have a blessed home in the Lord, where I can go in and shut the door, and kneel to my Father in secret, and am at peace as in a deep sea of calmness, when all around and above is trouble.



- How do you think humility is connected to expecting nothing or letting go of offenses? How is humility connected to being ok when you're not recognized or praised? Are these things easy or hard for you?
- How is doing good deeds in secret connected to humility?

Read this short poem by F. B. Meyer. Take a few moments to reflect on the words.

I used to think, that God's gifts were on shelves
 one
 above
 another
and the taller we grow,
The easier we can reach them.

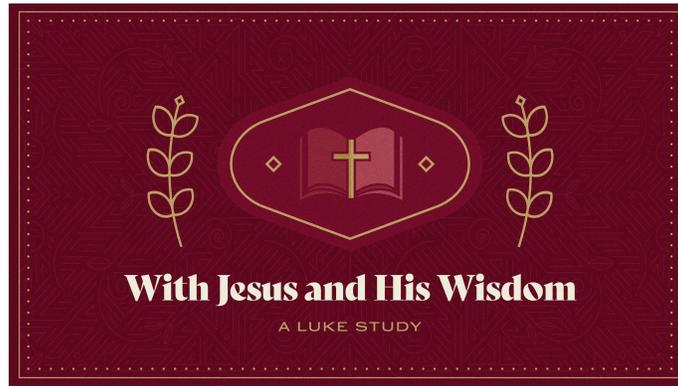
Now I find, that
God's gifts are on shelves
 one
 beneath
 another
and the lower we stoop,
The more we get.
 —F. B. Meyer

- When have you tried to climb the shelves instead of stooping beneath? Where specifically right now do you need to flip the script from advancing or exalting yourself to choosing the lower position?

Prayer for today:

God, I am far too often influenced by what others think of me. I am always pretending to be either richer or smarter or nicer than I really am. Please prevent me from trying to attract attention. Don't let me gloat over praise on one hand or be discouraged by criticism on the other. Nor let me waste time weaving imaginary situations in which the most heroic, charming, witty person present is myself. Show me how to be humble of heart, like you.

- *Author Unknown*



Day 2: Bible Study Breakdown

There is no better teacher on humility besides Jesus. As we sit in the classroom with him this week, we're going to look at two passages that demonstrate his humility. We're going to allow these texts about Jesus' humble actions toward us to shape our own invitation to humility.

Read Philippians 2:6-11 in The Passion Translation. Mark any words or phrases that stand out.

The Example of Jesus Christ

⁶ He existed in the form of God, yet he gave no thought to seizing equality with God as his supreme prize. ⁷ Instead he emptied himself of his outward glory by reducing himself to the form of a lowly servant. He became human! ⁸ He humbled himself and became vulnerable, choosing to be revealed as a man and was obedient. He was a perfect example, even in his death—a criminal's death by crucifixion!

⁹ Because of that obedience, God exalted him and multiplied his greatness! He has now been given the greatest of all names!

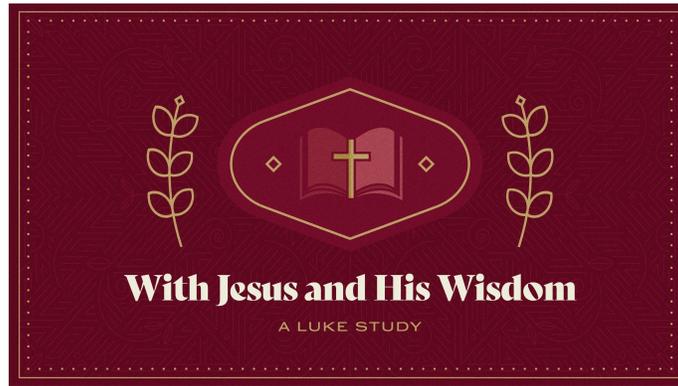
¹⁰ The authority of the name of Jesus causes every knee to bow in reverence! Everything and everyone will one day submit to this name—in the heavenly realm, in the earthly realm, and in the demonic realm. ¹¹ And every tongue will proclaim in every language: "Jesus Christ is Lord Yahweh," bringing glory and honor to God, his Father!

Jesus made himself nothing. The Greek word for "humbled" in verse 8 is **tapēinōō**, (*tap-i-nō'-o*) meaning "to *depress*; to *humiliate* (in condition or heart):—abase, bring low, humble (self)." Jesus made himself low. He laid down all of his rights and submitted to the will of the Father in obedience. The NASB translation of verse 7 says Jesus "emptied Himself." This Greek word **kenōō** means "to completely remove or eliminate elements of high status or rank by eliminating all privileges or prerogatives associated with such status or rank—'to empty oneself, to divest oneself of position.'" This type of emptying is like turning a bucket of water upside down and shaking out every last drop until there is not a single bit of water left.

Jesus laid it all down. Whatever privileges or rights he held, he set them aside. For the sake of the world's salvation.

Reflection Questions:

- What do you notice about the way Jesus displayed humility from this passage?
- How do you think Jesus' humility brought glory to God?



- What does Jesus' example teach you about humility?

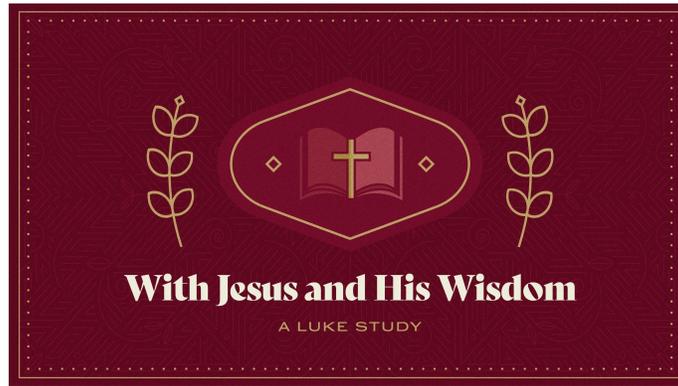
If we back up in the text, we see we're invited to display the same type of humility. We are invited to let Jesus' mindset become our motivation. Paul shows us Jesus' mindset, but also gives us some tangible ways to allow humility to grow in us.

Read Philippians 2:3-5 in The Passion Translation.

Be free from pride-filled opinions, for they will only harm your cherished unity. Don't allow self-promotion to hide in your hearts, but in authentic humility put others first and view others as more important than yourselves. ⁴ Abandon every display of selfishness. Possess a greater concern for what matters to others instead of your own interests. ⁵ And consider the example that Jesus, the Anointed One, has set before us. Let his mindset become your motivation.

Reflection Questions:

- What stands out in this passage? What do you think "authentic humility" looks like in action?
- How would allowing Jesus' mindset to be your motivation change the way you live?
- Where are some clear places you could "abandon every display of selfishness" or "possess a greater concern for what matters to others"? Take a few moments to ask God to search your heart and show you where humility needs to be cultivated in your life. Ask Jesus to teach you how to choose humility.



Day 3: Scripture Survey

Dr. Bonar once said that he could tell when a Christian was growing. In proportion to his growth in grace he would elevate his Master, talk less of what he himself was doing, and become smaller and smaller in his own esteem, until, like the morning star, he faded away before the rising sun.

—D. L. Moody

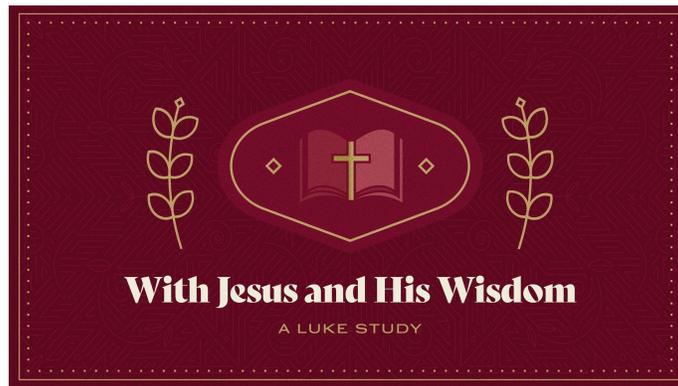
As we have already seen this week, humility is a quality Christ displayed so evidently and an attribute he desires for all of his disciples. As we take a look at the way humility is displayed and talked about throughout the scriptures, pay attention to the call to humility for those who follow Christ.

Take a few moments to quiet yourself before God. As you read through this list of verses, think of how you saw humility displayed through Jesus in yesterday's passage from Philippians 2.

Take a moment to pray this prayer:

*Lord Jesus, when you walked the earth,
Your humility obscured your Kingship.
Your meekness confused the arrogant,
Hindering them from grasping your purpose,
Your nobleness attending to the destitute.
Teach me to model after your eminence,
To subject my human nature to humility.
Grant me with a natural inclination
To never view myself greater than anyone.
Banish all lingering sparks of self-importance
That could elevate me greater than you.
Let my heart always imitate your humility.
- Author Unknown*

As you read through each short verse, notice which ones catch your attention and circle them.



...if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land (2 Chronicles 7:14).

When pride comes, then comes disgrace,
but with humility comes wisdom (Proverbs 11:2).

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.
And what does the LORD require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with your God (Micah 6:8).

For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted (Matthew 23:12).

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls (Matthew 11:29).

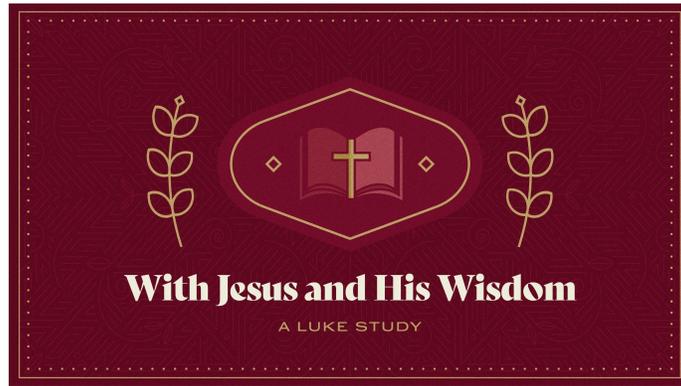
For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you (Romans 12:3).

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love (Ephesians 4:2).

Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom (James 3:13).

Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up (James 4:10).

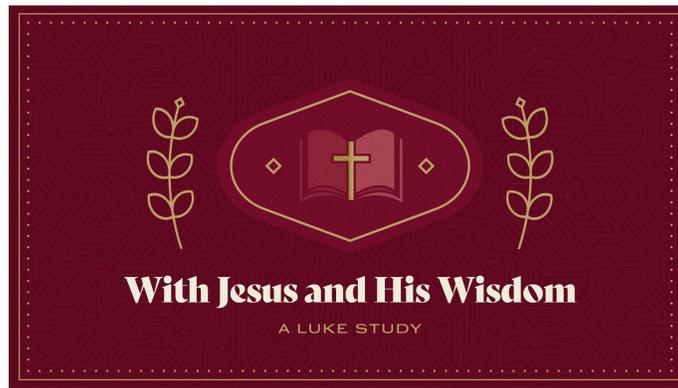
In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because,
“God opposes the proud
but shows favor to the humble” (I Peter 5:5).



Choose one of these passages to write out in the space below. After you have written the Scripture, turn the passage into a prayer for humility. Ask Jesus to teach you, as his disciple, what it looks like to live out the text you wrote down.

Scripture:

Prayer:



Day 4: Story Work

This week we've been looking at Jesus' call to humility in Luke 14. As Jesus saw how the guests were choosing places of honor at the table, he invited them to choose humility instead.

In his book, *From Pride to Humility*, Scott lists a simple assessment of what he calls the "manifestations of humility." Today we're going to take an honest look at our current lives to see where we are choosing humility and where we need to grow by using an excerpt from Scott's assessment.

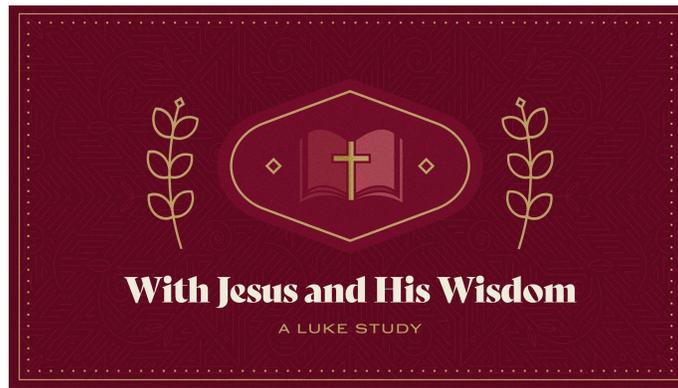
Read each statement slowly. Think of where you would like these characteristics to show up in your story. Assess the level you reflect that particular characteristic of humility in your life. Use the following scale:

- 0-This aspect of humility is **not** present in my life at this time.
- 1-This aspect of humility is **seldom** present in my life at this time.
- 2-This aspect of humility is **sometimes** present in my life at this time.
- 3-This aspect of humility is **often** present in my life at this time.
- 4-This aspect of humility is **regularly** present in my life at this time.
- 5-This aspect of humility is **predominantly** present in my life at this time.

_____ 1. *Recognizing and trusting God's character.* A humble person acknowledges Who God is and rehearses God's character often. Because he does this, he trusts God much more than the proud person. In trials, he will even thank God for the reminder of how much he needs Him and for all the good He is doing through the trial (Psalm 119:66).

_____ 2. *Seeing yourself as having no right to question or judge an Almighty and Perfect God.* Humble people think of God as their Creator and themselves as God's creation. They do not see themselves as even remotely qualified to pass judgement on God or what God does. They know that the perfect and all-wise God can do whatever He pleases, and it will be the best (Psalm 145:17; Romans 9:19-23).

_____ 3. *Being thankful and grateful in general toward others.* Humble people thank God and others often. They expect nothing, so anything that is received is greatly appreciated (I Thessalonians 5:18).



_____ 4. *Being gentle and patient.* Humble people want to act like God, and they are not focused on what they want. They also want to love others the way God loves them. They are willing to wait and are not easily irritated (Colossians 3:12-14).

_____ 5. *Being a good listener.* Humble people consider what others have to say as more important than what they have to say. They take an interest in others by asking questions and listening. Self is not their primary focus (James 1:19; Philippians 2:3-4).

_____ 6. *Talking about others only if it is good or for their good.* A humble person will speak well of others, not negatively. He or she will convey something negative about someone only if he must do so in order to help that person (Proverbs 11:13).

_____ 7. *Preferring others over yourself.* Humble people are willing to put others before self without first considering their own rights (Romans 12:10).

_____ 8. *Having a teachable spirit.* Humble people realize they don't know everything, and even when they think they are right are willing to consider that they might be wrong (I Corinthians 4:7). They also know that God can use anyone to teach them, since He was even able to use a donkey to teach Balaam in Numbers 22:22-35. They have many people they admire and respect.

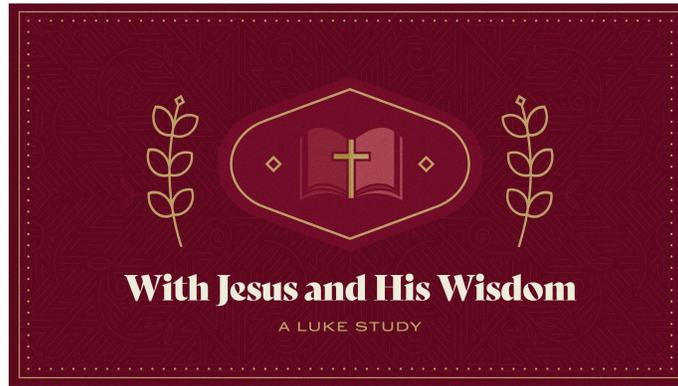
_____ 9. *Seeking always to build up others.* Humble people encourage others. They use only words that build up and say what is necessary for the edification of others. They never cut others down (Ephesians 4:29).

_____ 10. *Serving.* Humble people are on the lookout for ways to serve and assist others. They are the first to volunteer for jobs no one else wants. They take the initiative and reach out to serve others (Galatians 5:13).

_____ 11. *A quickness in admitting when you are wrong.* Humble people have no problem with saying, "I was wrong. You are right. Thank you for telling me." (Proverbs 29:23).

_____ 12. *A quickness in granting and asking for forgiveness.* Humble people are eager to forgive because they know how much they have been forgiven. They have no trouble asking for forgiveness because they want to be peacemakers (Colossians 3:12-14).

_____ 13. *Repenting of sin as a way of life.* A humble person asks God daily for forgiveness and works toward real change (I John 1:9; I Timothy 4:7-9).

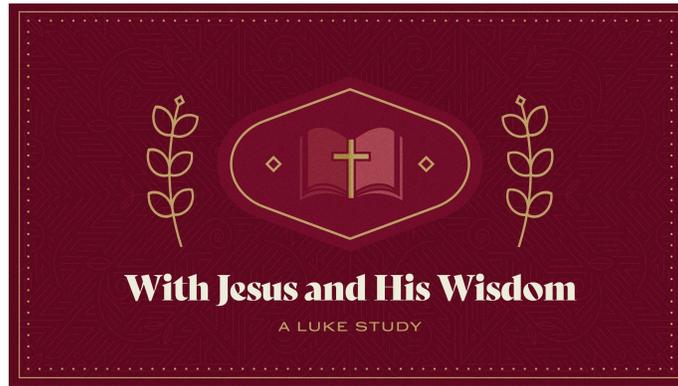


_____ 14. *Being honest and open about who they are and the areas in which they need growth.* Humble people are open and honest about their growth in the Lord. They ask for help and accountability in the repentance process, knowing they need their brothers and sisters (Philippians 3:12-14; Galatians 6:2).

Notice which statements stand out to you. Look up the scriptures associated with those.

Reflection Questions:

- Where do you need God's help and grace to grow?
- What growth has God given that you can already celebrate? Take a few moments to pray through what God has revealed today.



Day 5: Reflection and Action

Sitting in the classroom with Jesus this week, we've learned what Scripture says about humility as well as watched how Jesus modeled humility. Today we want to slow down and see what exactly Jesus has been teaching us and lean into some specific ways we can grow in humility, something *everyone* can benefit from doing.

Read through Luke 14:7-11.

Reflection Questions:

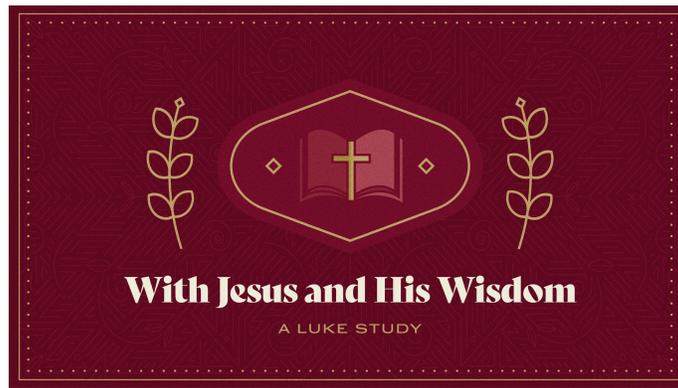
- As you read this text again today, what is different after your time with Jesus this week?
- As you look back through each day's devotions and scriptures, what is God inviting you to notice?:
to do?:
to change?:
to celebrate?:

Humility is both a posture toward God as well as a heart attitude. It's not something God just gives us, but it's something that *can* be cultivated. Below are four specific spiritual practices you can do to help grow a heart of humility. We see Jesus demonstrating these throughout the gospels. This week choose one of these practices to do daily. Take note of what happens in your heart over time as you lean into these.

Service

Serving others is a building block of the Kingdom of God. Jesus sets the example for serving (Luke 22:27). We will never really serve others until we see their needs as important as our own. Consider various ways you can serve someone consistently this week. Here are some ideas:

- Every morning for the next two weeks ask your spouse, roommate, or a colleague, "What can I do for you today?" Then simply do it. Talk to God about what this is like for you. What do you realize about yourself?
- If you're already serving at church, ask your ministry leader if there is any other way you can help. Do the task that no one wants to do. If you're not currently serving, consider ways you can get involved.
- Pray, asking God who it is you could serve this week and then find out what they need. Ask them how you could serve or help them.



Submission

Adele Calhoun says, “Submission is an unpopular, repugnant concept these days. The notion of giving away power conjures up images of becoming a doormat...But this perception is miles away from the biblical model of submission.” Submission requires humility. We see Jesus submitting to the Father in all of his ministry, but especially when he sat in the garden just before he was arrested. He submitted his own will to God. Jesus teaches us a lot about the connection between humility and submission. Consider the ways you can practice submission this week. Here are some ideas:

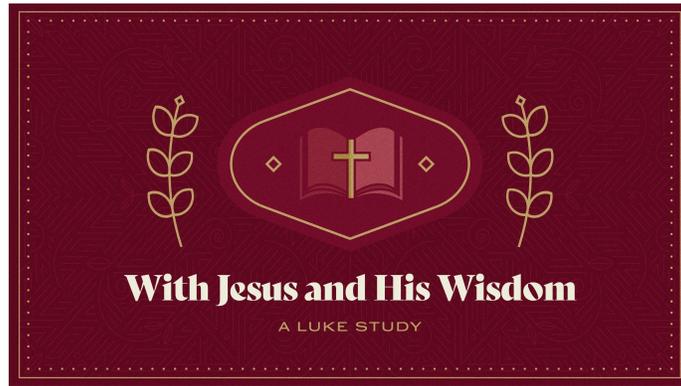
- Consider taking time this week to “give way” to others. Whether it’s in traffic, the grocery store line, allowing someone else to have the last bite—anything that would give your power away to another in humility. Notice what that does in your spirit as you submit to someone else.
- Think about who you submit to in the normal events of your life—boss, teachers, parents, colleagues, friends, spouse. Pray through what healthy submission looks like in each of these relationships. Ask God for the grace to see where you need to practice humility in these relationships.

Gratitude Toward God and Others

If you want to cultivate humility, gratitude works like a garden tool, tilling the soil. When we practice gratitude, praising God for what He’s done and the gifts He’s given, we battle entitlement and pride. Sagepub.com published an article with the results of a scientific research project on the connection between gratitude in humility. Check out what they discovered:

In two experiments and one diary study, we examined the relationship between self- and other-oriented processes by considering how gratitude can influence humility and vice versa. Humility is characterized by low self-focus, secure sense of self, and increased valuation of others. Gratitude is marked by a sense that one has benefited from the actions of another...Our results suggest that humility and gratitude are mutually reinforcing.

Science has even proven the relationship between humility and gratitude. Consider finding a way every day to practice gratitude both to God and to others. Here are some ideas:



- Keep a gratitude journal by your bed. Take 5 minutes each evening to write a gratitude prayer to God, listing several of the good gifts of the day. Tell God what those good gifts meant to you.
- Write a letter of thanks to someone who has touched your life in the past year, the past month, or the past week. Take time to pray over them before you mail the card.
- Hold a thank you party. Invite the people you want to honor with a thank you. Spend time at the party or dinner speaking your gratitude out loud.
- Notice your tendency to make comparisons that result in feelings of dissatisfaction or entitlement. Practice abstaining from comparative statements about what you don't have. Instead give thanks for what you do have.