

# Practicing Humility

## Lesson 3

Scripture: Matthew 18:1-6; Psalm 25:9

Unit One: Being Real

Power Point: Humility wins! Arrogance loses!

### Arrogance All Around!

Recently in a Philadelphia suburb, a woman placed an order at a fast-food restaurant. After finding the order had not been filled correctly, the woman stormed back into the restaurant. The employee apologized for the error. Still irate, the customer reached across the counter and soundly slapped the worker in the face!

We are astounded by such childish displays of arrogance! How can a person believe that she has the right to abuse a fellow human being in that way?

Perhaps a better question is, "How can I avoid being an arrogant person?" Jesus gave us a picture of humility to remember. A person avoids arrogance by recognizing a need to *grow, greet, and guard*.

Continued on next page. ➤

### Hide It in Your Heart

Therefore, whoever humbles himself like a child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

*-Matthew 18:4*

For a pre-session or take-home activity, memorize this key verse using the puzzle found on your High School Resources CD.

### Matthew 18:1-6

<sup>1</sup>At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

<sup>2</sup>He called a little child and had him stand among them.

<sup>3</sup>And he said: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. <sup>4</sup>Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>5</sup>"And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. <sup>6</sup>But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea."

### Psalm 25:9

<sup>9</sup>He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way.

#### Today's Challenge!

*Live far more fulfilling lives by being humble! Participate in these activities so you can leave arrogance to practice humility and win!*

#### ! Step 1

##### Setting the Stage

*Define arrogance.*

#### Step 2

##### Searching the Word

*Explain the biblical characteristics of a humble person.*

#### Step 3

##### Making it Real

*Evaluate present-day people by these standards.*

#### Step 4

##### Living it Out

*Examine our own lives for humility and arrogance.*

! Special materials or preparation possibly needed.

Permission granted to make enough copies of this lesson scripture and key verse for your class. For ministry use only.

# Encountering God's Word

## GROW (Matthew 18:1-4; Psalm 25:9).

After three years of being in Jesus' inner circle, the disciples showed some symptoms of arrogance. At times they seemed to forget that none of them earned the right to be chosen by Jesus, but that Jesus called each one when he was yet a fisherman or a tax collector!

Jesus answered their arrogance with a simple object lesson. He called a child over to stand among them. Only those who become like children will be in God's kingdom.

Other New Testament writers compare growing believers to small children. None of us was born knowing everything. Like children we must recognize our need to "grow up." Paul told the church at Ephesus that church leaders were empowered by God to take

**Humble people know that they need to change in order to please God.**

"infant" Christians and help them to be built up into maturity in Christ (Ephesians 4:14-16). Peter gave us a list of negative characteristics that we need to abandon as we long for the "spiritual milk" of Christian teaching (1 Peter 2:1, 2). A mark of humility is the acknowledgment that we long to be taught how to live as God desires us to live (Psalm 25:9).

Dr. Karl Barth, a famous theologian of the twentieth century, wrote book after book on the meaning of life and faith. A reporter once asked Dr. Barth if he could summarize what he had said in all those volumes. In response, Dr. Barth quoted this famous children's song: "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so." A humble person, no matter how learned, recognizes that he or she has yet to reach full spiritual maturity. We all can grow.

## GREET (Matthew 18:5).

Jesus continued to describe humility. Not only does the humble person admit that he or she is a child, but he or she invites other "children" to join the fellowship of the saved.

Not everyone has attained the same level of Christian maturity. Therefore, we all must be willing to accept those who are less mature than we are as

**Humble people accept other imperfect people.**

fellow Christians. We may never agree on all "disputable matters," but we must recognize that our job is not to pass final

judgment upon those who seek to be God's servants (Romans 14:1, 4). Such humility brings glory to God. We are called to accept others, "warts and all" recognizing that God has likewise accepted us (Romans 15:7).

In the 1950s, Billy Graham began a crusade in

England. The English press attacked him viciously. They accused him of preaching only for the money and having a condescending attitude toward the British.

After three months of the crusade Graham wanted to meet his most vicious attacker—a man who wrote under the name of "Cassandra." Billy Graham wrote several polite letters, asking to meet with Cassandra. Finally Cassandra agreed—if Graham would meet him in a particularly seedy pub. Cassandra was certain that Billy Graham would never enter such an establishment. But he did. Days later Cassandra wrote that Graham was willing "to make himself completely at home in the spit and sawdust" of that bar. Because of the evangelist's willingness to accept imperfect people, Cassandra concluded that "the bloke means everything he says." Graham's humility won over his harshest critic.

## GUARD (Matthew 18:6).

Jesus finished his object lesson by affirming the value of children and the childlike to the kingdom of God. Anyone endangering one of God's precious children faced the wrath of the Father.

A humble person looks out for the spiritual well-being of others. True, we have freedom in Christ. But if we use that freedom in such a way that injures the faith of a weaker brother, we sin against Christ (1 Corinthians 8:12, 13). While "everything is permissible" for the

**Humble people look out for the best interest of others.**

Christian, the humble person recognizes that it is his or her job to be constructive, to build up other Christians (1 Corinthians 10:23).

A popular minister of the gospel tells about a time he restricted his freedom in Christ for the good of others. One of his favorite places to spend time was a small bookstore. As the neighborhood around that bookstore changed, a shop selling pornography opened next to it. Although he was free to continue to patronize the bookstore, he did not. He believed that being seen walking in the neighborhood of the pornography shop could cause others to stumble. Humility looks out for the good of others.

One doesn't have to be physically aggressive toward a poor restaurant worker to demonstrate a childish arrogance. He or she only needs to show disregard for them. On the other hand, a humble person recognizes a need for personal growth, sees value in others despite their weaknesses, and is willing to sacrifice personal freedom for the greater good. Your students can demonstrate that type of "childish" behavior!

Permission granted to make enough copies of this Scripture commentary for your class. For ministry use only.

**Power Point:** Humility wins! Arrogance loses!

Use one or more of the following activities to help your students define arrogance.

### **QUICK STEP** Definition Competition

After students have arrived, divide the class into two teams for this game. Write the word arrogance on the board. Give the first team 60 seconds to call out synonyms of the word arrogance. Then give the second team 60 seconds to call out antonyms of the word arrogance. Related words are acceptable, as well as brief phrases. Write the teams' answers on the board as they brainstorm. After a few minutes, the side with the most words or phrases wins.

Say: **We've listed phrases of what arrogance is and what it isn't. But what does arrogance look like? Name some actions people do that make you think they are arrogant.**

Lead into Bible study by saying: **Arrogance is an ugly trait. Plus, it can sour relationships. Humility, on the other hand, can heal relationships. Let's take a look at the biblical characteristics of a humble person.**

### License Plate Arrogance

When students arrive, display sheet 2 from the audio/visual pack prominently in the room or project it from the CD. Ask your students, **If you saw cars with these license plates on the road today, what would you think of them?** (The goal is for students to consider those people arrogant. If students don't come up with this word, lead them to it.)

Have the class break into small groups and give them markers and cardboard rectangles. Have them design their own license plates that show arrogance. Allow everyone to share and then ask: **What characteristics do people have that make you define them as arrogant? Have you ever caught yourself acting arrogant? Why is arrogance a negative quality?**

Lead into the Bible study with the final words of the preceding activity.

### The Scene

For an alternative opening activity, check out The Scene™, an activity based on a current headline. Go to <http://forum.standardpub.com/> and click on the "Teaching Methods for Young Teen and High School" forum. A post for The Scene™ for this week will include a free downloadable attachment!



**The Scene**

Time

5 minutes

game

Materials

board, chalk or markers, stopwatch or clock with secondhand

Time

5-7 minutes

art

Materials

*High School Audio/Visuals* sheet 2 or CD, cardboard, markers



news



Special materials or preparation possibly needed.

## Step 2

## Searching the Word

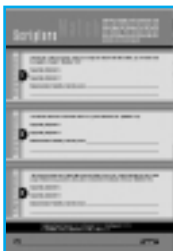
**Power Point:** Humility wins! Arrogance loses!

Use one or more of the following activities to help your students explain the biblical characteristics of a humble person.

Time  
20 minutes

puzzle

Materials  
*High School Student*, Bibles, pens



Time  
20 minutes

write

Materials  
Bibles, paper, pens, copies of page 87 of *High School Teacher*



### Teaching Tip:

Turn this into a discussion activity by making a copy of our sample song for each student. Guitar chords are given if you wish to sing it as a group. Read the Bible texts for each verse and compare them to the lyrics of the song.

### QUICK STEP Scripture Match

Divide the class into groups of three to five students each. Turn with them to page 10 of their student books. Have them complete the Scripture matching exercise found there.

As groups work, move among them to help with their assignments. Explain the background of the text, using the Scripture Commentary as a resource.

Have students reveal their answers when group research is completed. Answers and suggested responses are found in the margin. Comment as necessary to make sure that all main points are made clearly and completely.

Close by saying: **A humble person recognizes a need for personal growth, sees value in others despite their weaknesses, and is willing to sacrifice personal freedom for the greater good. Let's look for those characteristics of humility in modern settings.**

### Song Writing

Divide the class into three groups. Give each group paper and pens and one of these Scripture assignments:

- **Group one: Humble people know that they need to change to please God (Matthew 18:1-4; Psalm 25:9; Ephesians 4:14-16; 1 Peter 2:1, 2).**
- **Group two: Humble people accept other imperfect people (Matthew 18:5; Romans 14:1, 4; Romans 15:7).**
- **Group three: Humble people look out for the best interest of others (Matthew 18:6; 1 Corinthians 8:12, 13; 1 Corinthians 10:32).**

Groups should read their texts and create a song about their characteristic of humility to a familiar tune. Help students with their tasks as groups work. Provide each student with a copy of page 6 of this Teacher's Guide, which gives them a commentary on the lesson passage.

After group work is completed, allow students to read or perform and explain their songs. Comment as necessary to make sure all points are made clearly and completely.

Move to the next section of the lesson with the closing words of the preceding activity.

**Power Point:** Humility wins! Arrogance loses!

Use one or more of the following activities to help your students evaluate present-day people by these standards.

### **QUICK STEP** And the Award Goes to . . .

Have students pick a partner or two and turn to page 11 in their student books. In this activity, the students are challenged to pick out which of the candidates listed on the page should get an award. The winner must display Jesus' humility. Give the groups time to read through the candidates, make their choice, and prepare to defend that choice. Each group should create a skit in which it defends its choice to the youth minister.

As groups work, help them analyze the candidates with what was learned in the Bible lesson. They should consider these factors: Emma does things that cause people to stumble, so she's not looking out for the best interest of others (point #3 of the commentary). Brandee doesn't like being corrected, so she isn't willing to grow (point #1). And Derek doesn't include everyone in the youth group, so he's not accepting of all people (point #2).

Have groups present their final skits and discuss their choices. Ask: **Is there anyone you know personally whom you wish was among the nominees? What qualities of humility does that person have that make you able to give him or her that award?**

Move into the final step of the lesson with these words: **God desires for believers to live humble lives because when we do, we glorify Him. Let's look at how our own humility stacks up against our arrogance.**

### **"Me First"**

Distribute copies of the June 20, 2004 issue of ENCOUNTER™ magazine to your students. Have a volunteer read the story titled "Me First" and have the rest of the class follow along. As they read, write the three main points of the Scripture Commentary on the board. Then lead a class discussion with the following:

- **On the board are the three qualities of humility that Jesus taught in Matthew 18. Does Marie exhibit any of those qualities? Does Trevor? Which ones? Explain.**
- **Was Marie's attitude wrong in the story? Was Trevor against competition? Defend your answer.**
- **Have you ever competed against arrogant people? Have you competed against humble people? What was the difference in their attitudes? Did it change the way they compete? Did their attitudes affect your opinion of them?**

Move to the last lesson step with the final words of the preceding activity.

Time  
15 minutes

drama

#### Materials

High School Student



Time  
15 minutes

report

#### Materials

ENCOUNTER™ magazine for each student



## Step 4

## Living it Out

### Time

5 minutes

pray

### Materials

High School Student,  
pens



### Time

5-10 minutes

art

### Materials

several magazines that have children's pictures in them, pens, paper, scissors (optional glue, construction paper or card stock, and markers)

### Teacher self-evaluation:

1. How did your students define arrogance?
2. Was your class able to explain the biblical characteristics of a humble person?
3. Did your teens evaluate present-day people by these standards?
4. Did you see evidence that your students were able to examine their own lives for humility and arrogance?

**Power Point:** Humility wins! Arrogance loses!

Use one or more of the following activities to help your students examine their own lives for humility and arrogance.

### QUICK STEP The Humility Prayer

Turn with students to page 12 in the student book. Listed there is a prayer that's loosely based on "The Serenity Prayer" with which you may be familiar. There are blanks in each phrase for students to fill in and make the prayer personal. Have students take their books and spread out around the room and spend some time on their own, thinking and praying about their own arrogance and humility.

Close with group prayer. Encourage your students to tear out their prayers and post them in their rooms at home as they continue to strive to become more humble.

Distribute ENCOUNTER™ magazine if you haven't done so already.

### Like Little Children

Say to your students: **Now it's time for us to think about our own lives. Are we living up to Jesus' standards of humility, or is there arrogance evident in our lives? Take some time to think about what areas of your life need some work in order to be more humble, more child-like.**

Hand out paper and pens and have students write down a few personal goals to become more humble and child-like in the coming weeks. Then allow each student to look through the magazines and choose one photo of a child to cut out. The photos should be reminders to students of today's lesson and their personal goals to be more humble.

(Option: Provide construction paper or card stock, markers, and glue so students can make artwork of their photos and goals.)

Allow students to share their photos and close in prayer.

Distribute ENCOUNTER™ magazine if you haven't done so already.



Reiterate your lesson on humility with this week's issue of ENCOUNTER™.

- "Me First"—Marie gets competitive for all the wrong reasons
- tips on how to cultivate humility

Plus, for Father's Day, there is a special tribute from a daughter to her father who died.