



Small Group Notes for The Joy Manual: Humility

Discovering Together

Describe a time or situation where you experienced a clear "pecking order." How did you feel about your place in this order?

What are some of the criteria or factors that establish the pecking order among people?

Sadly, there can even be hierarchy *and* pecking orders in churches. What are some of the unwritten, unspoken factors that establish pecking orders among followers of Christ?

Learning Together

Philippians 2

We can look at the pecking orders in life and see them as harmless and benign. Yet the apostle Paul did not see it this way at all. Paul realised that once the order was set, we tend to treat those who are above us with respect, admiration, cordiality, and honour. However, those who come below us in the order we treat with insensitivity, callousness, and even contempt. This is where things start to get ugly and sinful. Sadly, these patterns don't just exist in the lives of those outside of the church. They can be deeply ingrained in the lifestyle and patterns of followers of Christ. With this in mind, Paul calls us to a radical scrutiny of our pecking order patterns and an intentional reversal of our patterns.

1. Paul lists four "ifs" in verse one of this passage. Each of them reflects something every follower of Christ has experienced. How have you personally experienced one of the "ifs" Paul lists in this passage?
2. What does Paul say will mark the attitudes and lifestyles of those who understand all they have received through their relationship with Christ (w. 2-4)?
3. Describe how one of these attitudes or actions has been growing in your life.
4. In verse three Paul calls us to order our lives in a way that flies in the face of conventional wisdom. If you took this challenge seriously and tried to follow it every day of your life, how would it influence one of the following areas:
 - Your marriage relationship
 - Your role as a parent
 - Your impact as a friend
 - Your witness in the workplace
 - Some other aspect of your life
5. Paul holds up Jesus as the perfect example of humble servanthood (vv. 6-8). What steps of intentional demotion did Jesus take so that He could love and serve us?

6. What do you learn about Jesus' attitude toward service (vv. 5-8) from this passage? What do you learn about who Jesus Christ is (vv. 9-11)?
7. Since Jesus clearly and powerfully modelled an intentional lifestyle of serving, how should this influence our view of the pecking orders that we help uphold?
8. What is one thing you can do to humble yourself and lift up another person in the coming week? How can your group members pray for you and support you in this service?
9. Paul says that followers of Christ are to "shine like stars in the universe" (2:15). What are the attitudes and actions Paul mentions in this passage that will make our lives shine?
11. What is one area of your life where you desire prayer as you seek to let your light shine?

Serving Together

Pray together as a group thanking God for sending his only Son as the sacrifice to pay for our sins. Give praise to Jesus and celebrate his willingness to set everything aside for the sake of his people.

Talk as a group about some of those who have become a follower of Christ in the past year and joined your church (they could be children, youth, or adults). Commit as a group to seek out a few of these new believers and take time to tell them about how God has been an encouragement in your life. Let your stories of faith help fortify and strengthen their trust in God.

Take time in the coming week to read Philippians 2:19-30. How can you develop a more sincere heart for serving others?