

Peter's 'Downward Mobility' as a Path to Healthy Humility

False notions of humility in the Greco-Roman and in the contemporary, Western world tend to shape our view of humility. Self-abasing misconceptions of humility are, likewise, misleading. As a follower of Christ, Peter endures a progressive, 'downward mobility', in the course of which he discovers a robust, healthy, and God-centered humility (1 Peter 5:5b–7).

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I. What is biblical humility?

A. Humility in the Greco-Roman world

B. Deficient Christian views of humility

C. Towards a biblical view of humility

II. Peter's 'downward mobility' into healthy humility: a case study

A. Peter's stages of 'downward mobility'

1. Mk 9:33–37 Capernaum

a. Children

b. Childlike faith

2. Mk 10:42–45 Galilee (and Rome)

a. Suppressive leadership, vs.

b. Jesus' footwashing (Jn 13:1-17)

3. Mk 14-16 Jerusalem
 - a. Innocence vs. guilt: Jesus' last glance at Peter (Lk 22:61)
 - b. Experiencing Christ's death and resurrection
4. Acts 10-11, Joppa and Caesarea (Acts 10:23–24)
 - a. Peter's "defiling" vision
 - b. The gospel for the enemy (i.e., a Roman centurion), Acts 10:22
5. Gal 2:11-14 Antioch (Gal 2:11)
 - a. Peter on a "mission trip"
 - b. The hypocrisy of avoiding fellowship with Gentile believers
6. 1 Pet 5:5b-7 Cappadocia
 - a. A changed man (1 Pet. 2:21-25)
 - b. Servant-leadership
7. Martyrdom of Peter in Rome (Clement of Rome)

B. The fruit of Peter's transformation

III. The importance and purpose of humility

A. The importance of humility

1. The young David as a case study for a healthy, humble self-assessment, steadying his character

B. The purpose of humility

1. The use of gifts and privileges in humble service
2. Humility in Christian leadership

IV. Summary

Suggested Readings:

H.F. Bayer, *Apostolic Bedrock: Christology, Identity, and Character Formation According to Peter's Canonical Testimony*. Crownhill, Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster Press, 2016

Henri J. M. Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership*. The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1992.