In the Gospel of Mark (3:13-19), Jesus chooses the twelve disciples – those into whom He will pour His life. These are the men God would use in a super extraordinary way! In fact, the Book of Acts states these are those who would “turn the world upside down” (17:6).

What do you suppose Jesus was looking for when He determined those whom He would choose? In a similar sense, what quality must characterize you for God to determine to use you mightily?

Our country desperately needs Public Servants who will turn America upside down! So what is Jesus looking for in you? What character quality does He most desire to be present? Are you the type of person He can use mightily and extraordinarily?

The following study reveals one essential ingredient God demands from those whom He chooses to use in ways unimaginable!

Read on my friend.

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**Weekly Bible Study During Session**
Wednesday Mornings 8:00 AM Sharp. Capitol Building Family Room H324
Hot Breakfast Served.
I. INTRODUCTION

In Mark 3:13-19 Jesus chooses the 12 disciples. They are ordinary men with vastly different personalities, temperaments, affiliations and proclivities. Here highlighted are six of them in paired contrasts: Peter was bold and brash, aggressive and opinionated. He was an up-front guy who led thousands to Christ through his preaching; Andrew on the other hand liked being behind the scenes. Inconspicuous, thoughtful and reflective, he was all about winning individuals to Christ versus the masses. Matthew was a politically traitorous tax collector, an ally of the Romans; Simon on the other hand was a political Zealot, a rebel who outwardly opposed the occupying Roman forces! (Imagine those two getting along on the same team?) James was very passionate; on the other hand Phillip was a pessimistic bean-counter! Astute to all these differences, Jesus nonetheless recruited each one to be a part of His team – because they all possessed something in common that was essential!

THOUGH THEY HAD LITTLE IN COMMON OUTWARDLY, JESUS NOTED SOMETHING IN COMMON INWARDLY AMONGST THOSE HE CHOSE

Calling the twelve to His side, in just 18 short months of discipleship and training He effectively molded these disparate individuals into world-changing leaders! A word is in order as to how He could accomplish such a feat? Save He was God incarnate, Jesus was a peripatetic instructor. Peripatetic means “movements or journeyings hither and thither” (M&W). Jesus strongly believed in field trips! That is to say (unlike much of the model of Western Education) Jesus spent little time teaching and training in a classroom. In fact, to be taught by Jesus meant you were on a perpetual field trip! Such a method creates a whole lot more one-on-one interaction, motivation, understanding and inculcation. As one author puts it, “[Jesus] graciously encouraged them, lovingly corrected them, and patiently instructed them…” For sure moral instruction was a part of His mix. This is how the best learning always occurs! It isn’t just cold, hard information that is passed on; it’s one life invested in another! The success of His 18-month cram-session speaks well for the effectiveness of peripatetic instruction. When you think about it, their learning curve was utterly fascinating!

Obviously, on the God-side of the equation they were empowered by the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, 40 days after Jesus’ ascension. But on the human side, what overarching characteristic did Jesus deem mandatory in the first place? What did He see or foresee when choosing them? Noting Mark 3:13-19 (below) wherein Jesus is choosing the 12, this characteristic is not readily evident….

And He went up to the mountain and summoned those whom He Himself wanted, and they came to Him. And He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him, and that He might send them out to preach, and to have authority to cast out the demons. And He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom He gave the name Peter), and James, the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James (to them He gave the name Boanerges, which means, "Sons of Thunder "); and Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Zealot; and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him.

As is the case in the other three similar selection listings in the NT, notice that Simon-Peter is first on the list. He is the most naturally gifted leader of them all. But with that raw talent often comes much pride – pride that the Savior will need to prune; and prune He did and does in all twelve, you and me. Significantly, by the time Peter later pens his two epistles in the New Testament, he writes from personal experience, and in the context of effective leadership, “…God is opposed to the
proud, but gives grace to the humble” (1Peter 5:5b). Peter had learned humility the hard way.

II. THE NECESSITY OF HUMILITY

The essential characteristic that God requires relative to people whom He greatly empowers for use in this world is humility: emptied of self, contrite of heart individuals. 2Chronicles 16:9 serves to incorporate this essential character quality with heavenly usefulness….

For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His.

Paul – the later arriving Apostle of Jesus Christ – best defines what possessing a heart that is emptied of self and completely His means. He stated to the Church of Galatia….

I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life, which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

A humble person is therefore a dead-to-self person. Only people who are vacuous of self possess room for Christ to become all in and through them; they view themselves as God’s vehicle in want of nothing for “me” during life’s journey. Humility tapeinos is a word found 11 times in the NT. It means “low in spirit.” In Jesus’ beatitudes, found at the front end of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:3) the same Greek word is translated, “Blessed are the poor in spirit.” Being meek or poor in spirit stands in biblical juxtaposition to the idea of self-sufficiency. It is the realization of one’s utter failure and doom apart from God’s intervention of grace – not only in an eventual, eternal sense – but in the present. The necessity of humility is even more essential for the Public Servant when he or she takes into consideration the following biblical truth as is discovered in 1Corinthians 1:26-29….

For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and strong, and the base things of the world and the despised, God has chosen, the things that are not, that He might nullify the things that are, that no man should boast before God.

This passage underscores the principle that God primarily uses ordinary people to build His Kingdom and to change the world – more apt to be humble people. This is why Jesus chose the common folks He did, those more apt to possess this quality. But there are some, states this passage, whom He calls and desires to use who are in the world’s eyes wise, mighty and noble – so long as they too are humble (which is more unlikely); verse 26 does state three times not many versus “not any.”

Like Paul who was an outstanding, highly visible leader in his day (cf. Phil. 3), elected officials are, in the eyes of the world, wise, mighty and noble. This passage then, in part, represents an exception clause: As a follower of Christ who is elected to high office, you are one of those exceptions – one of the not many! It is therefore requisite of yourself to be worthy of your unique status by being careful to be humble!

In choosing the twelve, Jesus did not select men of stature. Instead He chose fishermen, a tax collector, a political zealot and common folks. Galileans were low-class, uneducated rural people, far from the elite of society. Accordingly and as God would have it, He received all the glory from what was accomplished through them. With each disciple it was easy to see that….
Becoming More Like The 12 Amongst The 535

IT WAS NOT THE MAN –
IT WAS GOD INDWELLING THE MAN!
IT WAS NOT HIS SPEECH –
IT WAS GOD’S WORD!
IT WAS NOT HIS PERSONALITY –
IT WAS GOD’S POWER!

Can this be said of you? Compare the above contrasts to someone already possessing worldly stature, rhetorical skills and salesmanship: the contrast is not as great, God’s glory is not the marvel as much as is the man’s – unless of course that man is characterized by vast humility! This helps to explain why this character quality is so important to God. It is why Christ-honoring humility needs to be ever so present in the life of someone like you who possesses public stature! If you want God to use you as He did His disciples then your character must evince heartfelt, genuine, overwhelming humility. This is absolutely necessary in order to compensate for your public standing! In your case God’s glory is not as easily seen over the brow of personal presence. Those who have public prominence are much more apt to be overtaken with a sense of personal importance, which God will not empower, but rather will oppose.

THE LACK OF HUMILITY IN AMERICA’S POLITICAL LEADERS IS ONE OF OUR NATION’S GREATEST PROBLEMS

We must all beseech God to give us Public Servants who are humble. Public Servants must always be striving to grow in humility. The main reason America has declined is because most of its present leaders (especially compared to past leaders) are not regularly devoted and deeply committed to His Word – the study of which breeds humility. Only by the indwelling Holy Spirit that occurs at conversion and the profound devotion to His Word after conversion, can one possibly grow in humility while simultaneously being in the limelight.

Your usefulness to the Master is directly proportional to your humility quotient. This is summarily evidenced in Acts 4:13….

Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John, and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were marveling, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus.

When you are in front of people do they see your ego or do they see the humility of someone possessed by their Savior?

III. THE EXAMPLE OF HUMILITY IN THE SAVIOR

If Jesus prioritizes humility amongst His disciples, then it follows He would model it. Washing the feet of a guest was one of the most menial tasks reserved for the lowest of servants. With this in mind note John 13:4-5:

He rose from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself about. Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.

States one commentator regarding this and the negative reaction of the disciples that follows,

The reluctance of Jesus’ disciples to volunteer for such a task is, to say the least, culturally understandable; their shock at his volunteering is not merely the result of being shamefaced, it is their response to finding their sense of the fitness of things shattered. But here Jesus reverses normal roles. His act of humility is as unnecessary as it is stunning, and is simultaneously a display of love, a symbol of saving cleansing (vv. 6-9) and a model of Christian conduct (vv. 12-17).1

Young Peter resisted Jesus serving him in this way (vss. 6-13). His pride opposed Jesus’ gesture. But again, contrast Peter with the greatly-used, Holy
Spirit-filled Peter. Note in his epistle (1Pe.5:6), where he says to believers….

*Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time.*

Even further in the aforementioned passage (v. 15) Jesus states ostensibly for all believers, “If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet.” One cannot overlook this insightful example regarding humility that Jesus provides, a virtue He modeled not only for His disciples, but also for you and me.

To perform the most menial or else difficult task in order to serve the needs of others is often the best way to manifest humility in the moment.

**IV. THE NECESSITY OF HUMILITY IN GOVERNMENT LEADERS**

Notice Jesus’ teachings that follow in Luke 14:8-11, especially the conclusion….

*When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, lest someone more distinguished than you may have been invited by him, and he who invited you both shall come and say to you, 'Give place to this man,' and then in disgrace you proceed to occupy the last place. "But when you are invited, go and recline at the last place, so that when the one who has invited you comes, he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher'; then you will have honor in the sight of all who are at the table with you. "For everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, and he who humbles himself shall be exalted."*

This storied principle of self-imposed humility parallels somewhat Solomon’s teaching of his son Rehoboam in Proverbs 25:6-7….

*Do not claim honor in the presence of the King, And do not stand in the place of great men; For it is better that it be said of you, “Come up here,” than that you should be put lower in the presence of the prince, who your eyes have not seen.*

In that Rehoboam was being prepared for the civil leadership of Israel; those presently in governmental leadership must give special attention to this principle. Notice what Luke is saying in the primary passage: The elevating of the humble is honorable whereas the humbling of the proud is disgraceful. James 4:10 expands this Solomonic wisdom from the horizontal to the vertical in language previously seen in 1Peter 5:6

*Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.*

One form of exalting self is the use of the mouth. A mantra around our home when we raised our children was the memorization, meditation and oft mention of Proverbs 27:2….

*Let another praise you and not your own mouth, a stranger and not your own lips.*

Such catechizing in this and all other aspects of humility lead to a good family culture – and capitol culture as well. Humble yourself (versus God having to do that) and you will be exalted in His time. What a great promise from the Word of God!

**V. THE NECESSITY OF HUMILITY IN A NATION**

In the OT books of Zechariah, Haggai and Nehemiah, Scripture records that the Babylonians had set Israel free from captivity. It is in this context that Zechariah 4:6 was written, a passage that contains an overarching principle related to the effective rebuilding of any country….
Becoming More Like The 12 Amongst The 535

This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel saying, 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD of hosts.

Likened to Israel’s basic problem of spiritual apathy is America’s. In resettling their homeland Israel wanted to rebuild the temple, but most everyone was more interested in building their own homes and pursuing their own selfish affairs than they were taking care of and reconstructing the nation! After sixteen years of apathy, the work was begun and completed in another four. Zerubbabel was the civic leader of Jerusalem who led the rebuilding campaign. States one sage commentator relative to best understanding the meaning of this passage….

Might and power are quite interesting. ‘Might’ is a general [Hebrew] word for human resources such as physical strength, human ability or efficiency or wealth. ‘Power’ also denotes mere human strength—physical, material and includes mental strength. Therefore let me give you my translation of this verse: ‘It is not by brawn nor by brain, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.’…The message is simply this: It will not be by your cleverness, your ability, or your physical strength that the temple will be rebuilt, but by the spirit of God.

This is great insight for anyone desiring a formula for effective national reformation: More important than man’s physical strength or mental brilliance, which would include political acumen, is his humility and dependence on God! Echoing the idea of this passage and this principle is the metaphoric meaning of Psalm 33:17-18b and Psalm 147:10-11b respectively."

A horse is a false hope for victory; Nor does it deliver anyone by its great strength. Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him...

He does not delight in the strength of the horse; He does not take pleasure in the legs of a man. The LORD favors those who fear Him...

God’s admonition to Zerubbabel shouts out today. Properly analyzed, America’s problems are not primarily political, they are first spiritual! Foremost Americans need to humble themselves and turn to God; effective political solutions will only follow when that is first the case.

VI. THE NECESSITY OF HUMILITY IN SUMMATION

In James 4:6 Scripture says, “God is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble.” Notice the Greek meaning of these words. Opposed antitasso means “to range in battle against.” God is not neutral against the proud; He battles against the proud huperephanos i.e. those “showing ones self above others.” Accordingly, don’t find yourself in a battle with God over who gets the glory. Rather be characterized by humility and dependence on the Savior. In so doing you will be likened by Him to the 12 as He empowers you to minister amongst the 535!

2 Foot washing in itself, without a broken and contrite heart can be a mere parody of Jesus’ intention. Since the act is only mentioned here, careful expositors have been reluctant to place it on par with communion or baptism, i.e. a sacrament, ordinance or ecclesiastical rite.
3 McGee, J. Vernon Zechariah (Pasadena: Thru The Bible Books, 1979) p. 59