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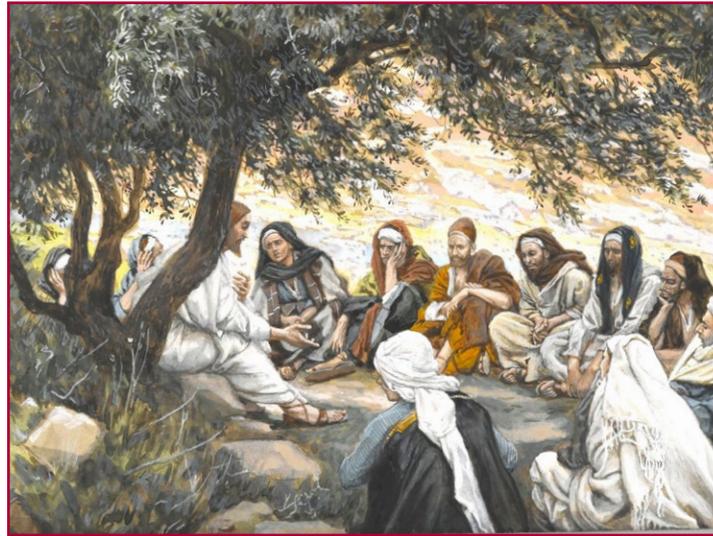
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Becoming More Like the 12 Amongst the 535 in 2021



The Exhortation to the Apostles, James Tissot, Brooklyn Museum.

In the Gospel of Mark (3:13–19), Jesus chooses twelve disciples 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, KJV).

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!

Ralph Drollinger

WEEKLY BIBLE STUDIES

- White House Senior Staff:* Thursdays 7am, OMB Conference Room, hot breakfast served.
- Cabinet Members:* Wednesdays 7am, location undisclosed, refreshments served.
- Senate Members:* Tuesdays 8am, rotating offices, hot breakfast served.
- House Members:* Thursdays 7:45am, The Capitol Hill Club, hot breakfast served.

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■ MINISTRY UPDATE

Greg Wooldridge

*Ministry Leader
State of Washington*



After a distinguished military career that includes leading the U.S. Navy's precision aerobatic team the Blue Angels and a run for a high political office, Captain Greg Wooldridge has turned his attention to teaching the Word of God to political leaders.

Capitol Ministries has named Captain Wooldridge the ministry leader for legislators and other elected and appointed public servants in the state of Washington.

"We are so excited to have Greg on the CapMin team!" said Ralph Drollinger, President and Founder of Capitol Ministries. "Greg is a proven leader with a passion for Christ. I am confident that the ethos he brings to the Washington state capitol ministry will reap great spiritual dividends in the lives of the state's leaders now and in the years ahead."

Captain Wooldridge enjoyed a successful military career as a naval officer and fighter

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I. INTRODUCTION

The necessity of any governing authority's proper understanding of sin cannot be over-emphasized. Not only does the teaching of Scripture regarding this subject relate specifically to one's personal life, but it is foundational to one's professional understanding as a policy maker and law enforcer. Can you clearly think through the biblical answers to the following?

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 versus the masses to Christ. Matthew was a politically traitorous tax collector, an ally of the Romans. Simon was a political Zealot, a rebel who outwardly opposed the occupying Roman forces! (Imagine Matthew and Simon getting along on the same team.) James was very passionate, while 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 among those he chose.

Calling the twelve to His side, and 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" (*Merriam-Webster*). 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, learning while walking about in the world must have been utterly fascinating!

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 back to 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 on the mountain and summoned those whom He Himself wanted, and they came to Him. And He appointed twelve, so that they would be with Him and that He could 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 betrayed Him.”

As is the case in the other three similar selection listings in the New Testament (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, in you and in me. Significantly, by the time Peter later pens his two epistles in the NT, he writes from personal experience, and in the context of effective leadership, **GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE** (1 Peter 5:5). 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.

Second Chronicles 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 whom God used mightily—best defines what possessing a heart that is “emptied of self and completely His” means. He stated to the Church of Galatia (Galatians 2:20):

“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.”

What kind of people does God use the most? Those who continually view themselves as God’s vehicle in want of nothing for “me” during this life’s journey. A humble person is a dead-to-self person.

Only people who are empty of self have room for Christ to become all in and through them.

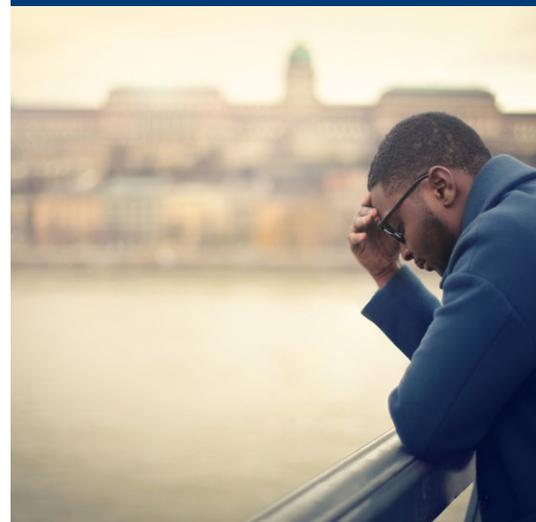
Humility (in Greek, *tapeinos*) is a word found 11 times in the NT. It means “low in spirit.” In Jesus’ beatitudes, found at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:3), the same Greek word is translated, “*poor in spirit*” in the beatitude, “*Blessed are the poor in spirit.*” Being meek or 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 fol-

♥ VERSE OF THE WEEK

James 4:10

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



Be characterized by humility and dependence on the Savior.





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pilot. He was selected to lead the Blue Angels a record three times—including on the only international trip that scheduled a stop in Moscow. While leading a major Navy jet base, his team was awarded the President’s Installation of Excellence award.

After retiring from the military, Captain Wooldridge was employed by FedEx as a pilot for 15 years. After leaving the corporate world, he was encouraged to run for governor of Oregon in 2018, earning the coveted endorsement from Oregon Right to Life. Disadvantaged by a late arrival to the race and a number of other complicating factors, that effort was unsuccessful.

Captain Wooldridge believes ministering to political leaders is a vital calling, especially at a time of much divisiveness.

“There is a rejection of the Lord’s Word in so many corners of the His world, and especially in the political realm, there are great uniform misunderstandings of what the Word says,” he said. “My objective is to drill deep on the books of the Bible and teach that these are precepts God wants us to live by.”

lowing biblical truth found in 1 Corinthians 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 God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He might nullify the things that are, so that no man may boast before God.”

This passage underscores the principle that God primarily uses ordinary people—those who are more apt to be humble—to build His Kingdom and to change the world. This keen insight serves to explain and illustrate why Jesus chose the common folks, those more apt to possess the character trait. Very important however, 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). Underscoring this keen insight is verse 26, which states three times *not many* rather than “not any.” (I might add here that there are believers who will point to this passage to justify the Christian’s supposed non-involvement in government, as if God’s economy for changing the world and fulfilling the Great Commission is, to use the foolish, the weak, the base, and the despised only. It is important that the Christian public servant be able to point to the fact that the passage reads *not many* rather than “not any” when challenged with this way of thinking.) Paul is a good example of a person who is one of *not many*: he was an outstanding, highly visible leader in his day (cf. Philippians 3).

Similarly, today elected officials are, in the eyes of the world, wise, mighty, and noble. As a follower of Christ who is elected to high office, you are one of those exceptions spoken of in 1 Corinthians 1:26–29—you are one of the *not many*! It is therefore requisite of yourself to be worthy of your unique status by being especially 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. He chose the foolish, the weak, the base, the despised. 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 plain to see that:

**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 an 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 (1 Peter 5:5).

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. It is this particular quality that leads to effectiveness in office. It is this particular quality that God is most looking for! It is this particular quality that portends His empowerment! Public servants must always be striving to grow in humility; and it is when you think you've got it that you've lost it!

The main reason America has declined is because many of its present leaders (especially compared to past leaders) are not regularly devoted and deeply committed to His Word—the study of it—which breeds humility. Only by the indwelling Holy Spirit that occurs at conversion and the continuing profound devotion to His Word after conversion, can one possibly grow in humility while simultaneously being in the limelight. Make no mistake here my beloved friend! If you do not attend the Members Bible Studies in the capital, or go to church when you are home, is it because you don't think it's all that important? By not being faithful to delve into the Word and by not obeying the fourth commandment (Exodus 20:8), are you telegraphing a sense of self sufficiency and lack of dependence, aka humility?

Your usefulness to the Master is directly

proportional to your humility quotient. This is further 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 amazed, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus.”

When you are in front of people do others see your ego or do they see the humility of someone possessed by his Savior? Do you give God the glory for His enabling your successes or is it all because of you? How arrogant! You wouldn't even be alive if it weren't for His hand and continuing enablement! At the end of the day is it all about your glory or God's glory?

III. THE EXAMPLE OF HUMILITY IN THE SAVIOR

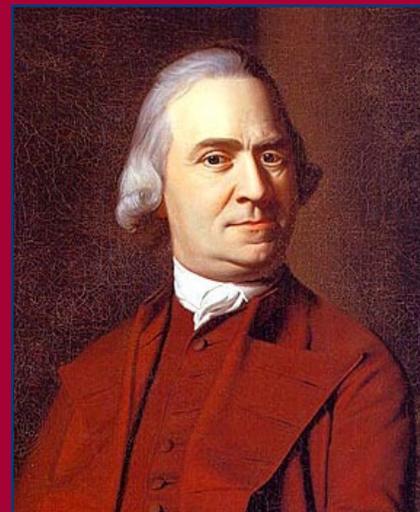
If Jesus demands humility with all of His disciples, then it follows He too would model it. Washing the feet of a guest was one of the most menial tasks reserved for the lowest of servants. With this in mind note John 13:3–5:

“Jesus ... got up from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself. 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

Samuel Adams



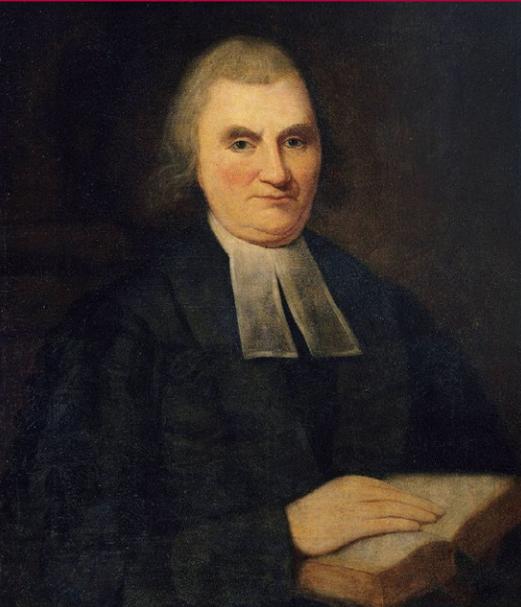
“I conceive we cannot better express ourselves than by humbly supplicating the Supreme Ruler of the world ... that the confusions that are and have been among the nations may be overruled by the promoting and speedily bringing in the holy and happy period when the kingdoms of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ may be everywhere established, and the people willingly bow to the scepter of Him who is the Prince of Peace.”

— Samuel Adams, signer of the Declaration of Independence, “Father of the American Revolution,” ratifier of the U.S. Constitution, governor of Massachusetts.

From a *Fast Day Proclamation* issued by Governor Samuel Adams, Massachusetts, March 20, 1797; see also Samuel Adams, *The Writings of Samuel Adams*, Harry Alonzo Cushing, editor (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1908), Vol. IV, p. 407, from his proclamation of March 20, 1797.



John Witherspoon



“It is very evident that both the prophets in the Old Testament and the apostles in the New are at great pains to give us a view of the glory and dignity of the person of Christ. With what magnificent titles is He adorned! What glorious attributes are ascribed to him! ... All these conspire to teach us that He is truly and properly God—God over all, blessed forever!”

— John Witherspoon, signer of the Declaration of Independence, ratifier of the U.S. Constitution, member of the Continental Congress, president of Princeton.

John Witherspoon, *The Works of John Witherspoon* (Edinburgh: J. Ogle, 1815), Vol. V, p. 267, Sermon 15, “The Absolute Necessity of Salvation Through Christ,” January 2, 1758.

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’ humble gesture. But again, contrast proud Peter with the greatly used, Holy Spirit-filled humble Peter. Note in his epistle (1 Peter 5:6), what the spiritually mature Peter says to believers:

“Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time.”

Even further in the aforementioned passage (v. 14) 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.”*² One cannot overlook this insightful example, a virtue He modeled not only for His disciples, but also for you and me.

To perform the most menial or 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, for someone more distinguished than you may have been invited by him, and he who invited you both will come and say to you, ‘Give your 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 will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will 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 for you to be placed lower in the presence of the prince, whom your eyes have 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 1 Peter 5:6:

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

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 Old Testament (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:

“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 resetting their homeland Israel wanted to rebuild the temple, but most everyone was more interested in building their own homes and pursuing their selfish interests than they were taking care of and reconstructing the nation! (Keep in mind today the parallel of how self-centered Evangelicals have been apathetic to reconstruct our nation: 60 million of them have failed to even vote in the 2012 and 2016 presidential elections.) Finally, after sixteen years of apathy in

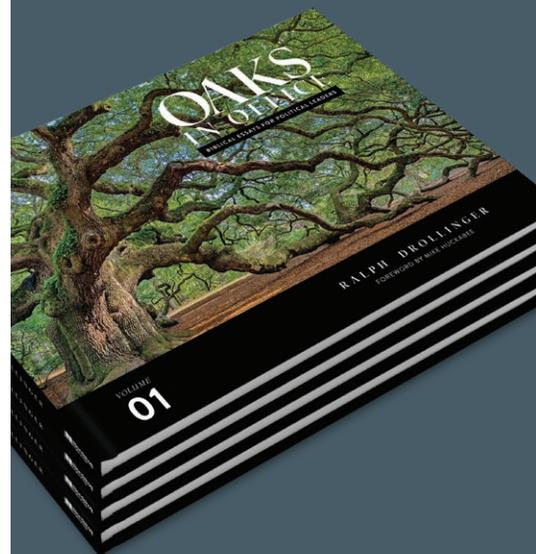
Israel, the symbolic work of rebuilding the Temple was begun and completed in another four. It was Zerubbabel who led the reformation: he was the civic leader of Jerusalem who first addressed the spiritual problem of self-centeredness, aka pride, and consequentially led the successful rebuilding campaign. States one sage commentator relative to best understanding the meaning of Zechariah 4:6:

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.³

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 as illustrated by and manifested in his utter dependence on God!

**It is a spirit of
God-dependence that
is the seedbed of a
nation’s reformation.**

Echoing the idea of this passage and this principle is the metaphoric meaning of Psalm 33:17–18 and Psalm 147:10–11 respectively:



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“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 apathy, which is a synonym for self-dependence, or pride! 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 rage in battle against.” God is not neutral against the proud; He battles against the proud (huperephanos) i.e., those “showing one’s 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!

- 1. D.A. Carson, The Gospel According to John, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991) p. 462-3.
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. J. Vernon McGee, Zechariah (Pasadena: Thru The Bible Books, 1979) p. 59.

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