



THE WAY Sermon Study Guide

Week 8: The Way of the Humble

Lance Blythe

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Imagine, for a moment, that your heart is an empty photo frame. If you could take everything you're carrying this Christmas season—your emotions, memories and hopes—and place them inside that frame, what would it look like? There might be relief at having made it through another year, or excitement about what lies ahead. For others, the picture may be very different. There may be loss, unanswered prayers, or the quiet ache of another Christmas that doesn't quite feel complete.

God is passionately invested in the contents of your heart. As we come to this Christmas you are invited to wrap it all in humility and bring it to God, because whatever you see inside that frame, it matters to Him.

Read Luke 1:46-55

In this passage, often called *Mary's Song* or *the Magnificat*, a young woman gives voice to the contents of her heart. Mary has just received the astonishing news that she will carry God's Son. Overwhelmed with wonder, fear and joy, she responds with worship, and her song captures the very essence of Christmas. It speaks of God's faithfulness, His mercy, His justice, and His care for those who are overlooked and forgotten. Mary's song beautifully articulates the profound truth of God's kingdom: He brings down the powerful and lifts up the humble (verse 52).

God's kingdom does not operate the way the world expects. Power is redefined. Success is reframed. What makes this even more remarkable is that Mary is not looking back on Jesus' teachings or reflecting on His ministry. She hasn't yet heard about loving enemies, serving others, or the first becoming last. She is simply responding to what God has done for her and in doing so, she becomes the first person in Luke's Gospel to articulate the upside-down kingdom of God.



1. Mary brought the contents of her heart before God. When you consider the "photo frame" of your heart, what specific images or feelings are you carrying right now that you sense God is inviting you to share with Him more openly?
2. Where do you find yourself clinging to worldly ideas of power or success, and how might God be inviting you to embrace His "upside-down" kingdom instead?

Read Luke 2:1-7 and Philippians 2:5-8

Mary does not claim worthiness. She recognises her humble state and marvels that God would work through her. Likewise, the Christmas story shows that humility is not just something God values. It is something He embodies. The Creator of the universe humbles Himself to become a baby. Not a child born into wealth or influence, but one wrapped in cloth and laid in a feeding trough.

Throughout the life of Jesus, this upside-down kingdom is lived out again and again. A King who serves rather than demands. A Messiah who washes feet. A Saviour who lays down His life. God's ways are marked by humility.

1. When you consider the profound humility of God becoming a baby in a manger, how does this image challenge or deepen your understanding of His power and love for you personally?
2. What would it mean for humility to shape the way you move into the year ahead?

Read James 4:10

God is not primarily interested in status, achievement or wealth. Those things are often outside human control anyway. What God is after is the one thing every person *can* influence—the contents of the heart.

A humble heart creates space. Space for others. Space for grace. Space for God to work. Yet, the more self-sufficient we become, the easier it is to centre life around ourselves. When that happens, humility struggles to find space.

True humility is about thinking *of yourself less*—not about thinking *less of yourself*. It's not about self-criticism or low self-esteem, but a posture of surrender that lets God's mercy, forgiveness and peace flow.



1. What does true humility—not thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less—look like for you right now?
2. Are there areas where comfort, success or self-reliance may be crowding out humility?

Closing Group or Take Home Activity

Christmas is an invitation to let humility become the lens through which life is seen. To allow it to reshape how joy and sorrow, success and struggle, are understood. To open the heart to the embrace of a God who comes not with force, but with love, gentleness and true humility.

So once more, the question remains: *What's in the frame?* What stories, images and emotions are you carrying this Christmas? And what might it look like to bring them before God and allow humility to gently reframe them?

Invite the group to silently reflect or journal for a few minutes. You may like to provide blank paper and encourage people to draw or write words that describe their “frame”.

- What image would best represent the current state of your heart?
- What would it look like for humility to become the lens through which you see that image?

Suggested Closing Prayer

Gracious God, We thank you that you draw near to us in humility and love. As we reflect on the gift of Jesus, would you shape our hearts to reflect His ways. Help us to release pride, self-reliance and fear, and make space for humility, grace and trust. May the frame of our hearts be filled with your character, and may our lives reflect the upside-down kingdom of Jesus. We pray this in His name. Amen.