

HTPC Sunday School

July 18, 2021

“Charity and Its Fruits” by Jonathan Edwards

Lecture 7: The Spirit of Charity is an Humble Spirit

“(Love does not) Boast; It is not arrogant or rude.” –1 Corinthians 13:4b, 5a ESV

Backdrop:

- “Love suffers long (is patient) and is kind”
- “Love does not envy”

Presently:

- Love is not proud

Outline:

- I. What Humility Is
 - II. How a Christian spirit, or the spirit of Charity, is a humble spirit
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- I. What Humility Is
 - “A habit of mind and heart corresponding to our comparative unworthiness and vileness before God, or a sense of our comparative meanness (lowness) in His sight, with the disposition to a behavior answerable thereto”
 - A. A sense of our comparative meanness
 - Saints and angels in heaven
 - The man Jesus Christ
 1. A sense of our meanness as compared with God
 2. A sense of our own meanness as compared with many of our fellow-creatures
 3. The truly humble man since the Fall is also sensible of his moral meanness and vileness.
 - B. A disposition to a corresponding behavior and conduct
 1. Things worthy of notice in reference to God:
 - A) Humility disposes a person heartily and freely to acknowledge his meanness (lowness) or littleness before God.
 - B) Humility disposes one to be distrustful of himself, and to depend only on God.
 - C) The humble man is further disposed to remove all the glory of the good he has or does, and to give it all to God.
 2. It disposes to a behavior toward men answerable to our comparative meanness (lowness).
 - A) It prevents an aspiring or ambitious behavior among men
 - B) It tends to prevent an ostentatious behavior
 - C) It tends to prevent an arrogant or assuming behavior
 - D) It tends to prevent a scornful behavior.
 - E) It tends to prevent a willful and stubborn behavior.
 - F) It tends to prevent a levelling behavior.
 - G) It tends to prevent a self-justifying behavior.

II. How a Christian Spirit, or the spirit of charity, is a humble spirit

Exercise 1: Read the following excerpt from p. 153:

“In the application of this subject we may see,

1. The excellency of a Christian spirit.—*“The righteous,” it is said (Prov. xii. 26), “is more excellent than his neighbor.” And much of this excellence in the true Christian consists in his meek and lowly spirit, which makes him so like his Saviour. This spirit the apostle speaks of (1 Peter iii. 4) as the richest of all ornaments, “even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.” The subject should lead us,*

2. To examine ourselves, and see if we are indeed of an humble spirit.—*“His soul,” says the prophet (Hab. ii. 4), “which is lifted up, is not upright in him;” and the fact that “God resisteth the proud” (James iv. 6), or, as in the original, “sets himself in battle array against him,” shews how he abhors a proud spirit. And it is not every show and appearance of humility that will stand the test of the gospel. There are various imitations of it that fall short of the reality. Some put on an affected humility; others have a natural low-spiritedness, and are wanting in manliness of character; others are melancholy or despondent; others, under the convictions of conscience, by which, for the time, they are depressed, seem broken in spirit; others seem greatly abased while in adversity and affliction, or have a natural melting of the heart under the common illuminations of the truth; in others, there is a counterfeit kind of humility, wrought by the delusions of Satan: and all of these may be mistaken for true humility. Examine yourself, then, and see what is the nature of your humility, whether it be of these superficial kinds, or whether it be indeed wrought by the Holy Spirit in your hearts; and do not rest satisfied, till you find that the spirit and behaviour of those whom the gospel accounts humble, are yours.”*

- Examine yourself as Edwards encourages. What “imitations” of humility do you honestly recognize in your life?
- Spend time in prayer as a group in confession and prayer for one another that God will give grace to see genuine humility begin to be formed in each of you.

Exercise 2: Read the following excerpt from p. 155:

“Let all be exhorted earnestly to seek much of an humble spirit, and to endeavour to be humble in all their behaviour toward God and men.—Seek for a deep and abiding sense of your comparative meanness before God and man. Know God. Confess your nothingness and ill-desert before him. Distrust yourself. Rely only on God. Renounce all glory except from him. Yield yourself heartily to his will and service. Avoid an aspiring, ambitious, ostentatious, assuming, arrogant, scornful, stubborn, willful, levelling, self-justifying behaviour; and strive for more and more of the humble spirit that Christ manifested while he was on earth. Consider the many motives to such a spirit. Humility is a most essential and distinguishing trait in all true piety. It is the attendant of every grace, and in a peculiar manner tends to the purity of Christian feeling. It is the ornament of the spirit; the source of some of the sweetest exercises of Christian experience; the most acceptable sacrifice we can offer to God; the subject of the richest of his promises; the spirit with which he will dwell on earth, and which he will crown with glory in heaven hereafter. Earnestly seek, then, and diligently and prayerfully cherish, an humble spirit, and God shall walk with you here below; and when a few more days shall have passed, he will receive you to the honours bestowed on his people at Christ’s right hand.”

- What is one practical step to which you will commit to “earnestly seek, then, and diligently and prayerfully cherish” a humble spirit? Will you share this with your group?