

## What is the Chief Christian Virtue?

[1 Peter 5:5-7](#)

1 Peter, Day 26

*Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."*

*Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.*

- 1 Peter 5:5-7, ESV

What is the chief or root sin? We might think of sins like lust or anger as flashy and dangerous, and they are. But throughout the ages, Christians have understood that pride is the root sin, the core of our sinfulness and the fountainhead of our sinful activity.

In *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis put it this way:

*"According to Christian teachers, the essential vice, the utmost evil, is Pride. Un-chastity, anger, greed, drunkenness, and all that, are mere flea bites in comparison: it was through Pride that the devil became the devil: Pride leads to every other vice: it is the complete anti-God state of mind . . . it is Pride which has been the chief cause of misery in every nation and every family since the world began."*

Well, if that's true, and I believe it is, then what is the chief Christian virtue? Is it heroic faith? No, it is quiet, simple and strong humility. Humility is the virtue that cuts at the very root of pride. But what is humility, and what does it look like, and why is it so important? We have misconceptions about what humility looks like, and here C.S. Lewis is helpful again:

*"Do not imagine that if you meet a really humble man he will be what most people call 'humble' nowadays: he will not be a sort of greasy, smarmy person, who is always telling you that, of course, he is nobody. Probably all you will think about him is that he seemed a cheerful, intelligent chap who took a real interest in what you said to him. If you do dislike him it will be because you feel a little envious of anyone who seems to enjoy life so easily. He will not be thinking about humility: he will not be thinking about himself at all."*

1 Peter 5 helps us see why humility is so important: Humility changes the way we treat one another and the way we approach God in the most fundamental way. Peter tells us to clothe ourselves with humility toward one another. Humility treats others with respect, consideration, and genuine loving interest.

Humility also deeply shapes how we approach God. We humble ourselves under His mighty hand. We lovingly acknowledge that He alone is God and we are not, and we cast our cares and concerns on Him. We approach Him in loving fear and humble adoration.

Humility is so key, and the key to beginning to cultivate more humility is to recognize and confess our pride. We are not God, but too often we act like we are. We need to confess that dark reality and ask God to forgive us and change us. Only then can we begin to walk in the freedom and joy of true humility.