

## John Chapter 13

### **Humility Personified**

Humility. Confucius called it “the solid foundation of all the virtues.” The Greek word means “low” or “to stoop low,” and it carries the idea of serving another person. That is clearly the usage in Matthew 11: 28-29.

“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and You shall find rest for your souls.”

In the shadow of that cross, Jesus spent His last night and last meal with the disciples. There we see Him, not seated at the place of honour, but assuming the lowly position of a servant. And there we see Him exemplifying Servanthood to the disciples—by washing their feet.

### **Background and Setting**

The location for the Last Supper is Jerusalem; the occasion, the night before the Passover. Just before His first miracle, Jesus told His mother that His hour had not yet come (2:4). Now that hour is fast approaching. His life and ministry are winding down to an eleventh-hour climax, and all heaven will stop for the tolling of that mournful bell. This hour doesn't creep up on Christ and overtake Him unaware, yet His eyes never stray to the clock to watch the seconds of His life tick away. Our passage indicates that He knows His time has come (13:1). He knows He has less than fifteen hours to live. But His brow is not knit in anxiety. His eyes do not dart nervously back and forth for a way of escape. He knows death is His destiny. He knows that not only is His death the Father's will (Isaiah 53:10), but even His betrayal is too (John 13:2; compare Luke 22:22).

Jesus [knew] that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God, and was going back to God. (John 13:3).

### **Read John 13: 1-17**

- What does Jesus know that escapes the disciples' attention (vv.1, 3, 11)? Hence what impresses you about Jesus washing their feet?
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- If you were Peter would you have reacted as he did? Why? or Why not?
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- While Peter is taking the washing of his feet literally, what do you think Jesus meant by his statement in verse 8?
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- How does Jesus challenge their idea of what it means to be the chief followers of the Messiah? (vv. 12-17)
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- Specifically, how will you put Jesus' teaching into practice in at least one relationship this week at home, work, or church?
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## John 13: 1-17

## JESUS WASHES HIS DISCIPLES' FEET

1. **What do you look for in a leader? Rank these qualities in order of their importance from 1 to 10. Then go back and put an \* next to those qualities you think Peter would demonstrate as a leader.**

- \_\_\_ toleration: accepts differences of opinion    \_\_\_ task oriented: reaches for goals
- \_\_\_ motivation: able to inspire confidence    \_\_\_ unselfish: puts others first
- \_\_\_ courage: willing to take risks    \_\_\_ flexible: able to make mid course corrections
- \_\_\_ initiative: self-starter    \_\_\_ pragmatic: practical and resourceful
- \_\_\_ intelligence: high I.Q.    \_\_\_ action oriented: try anything once

2. **Assuming the disciples were aware of the custom of footwashing, why didn't they wash their feet when entering the home?**

- a. you can't wash your own feet    c. it was the servant's job  
b. they forgot    d. it would be humiliating

3. **Why do you think Jesus washed his disciples' feet?**

- a. to shame them    d. to give them a new model for their lives together  
b. to show his deep love for them  
c. to show them a lesson in servant hood    e. to show them real leadership

**4. Why was Peter so upset with Jesus?**

- a. he felt guilty
- b. he didn't want to see Jesus degrading himself
- c. he thought one of the disciples should do it
- d. he thought his feet were clean
- e. he didn't understand what Jesus was doing

**5. "A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean ..." What is the point Jesus is making here?**

- a. this is just a ritual to observe
- b. your feet are an important part of the body
- c. if you've taken a bath before starting out, all you need to clean are your feet
- d. spiritually, once you have been cleansed of sin, all you need to have is the feet washed of daily dirt

**6. How did Jesus expect the disciples to follow his example?**

- a. by washing each other's feet
- b. by serving each other and those for whom the message is intended
- c. by counting themselves no better than Jesus
- d. by being willing to suffer all the shame Jesus would suffer

**MY OWN STORY**

**1. If Jesus were to wash your feet today in a new and meaningful way, knowing your needs as he does, what would Jesus do?**

- a. wash my feet
- b. ask "how can I help you?" and do it
- c. say he was proud to have me on the team
- d. put his arms around me and hold me
- e. forgive my sin

**2. Why do you think people in the church do not regularly practice the equivalent of footwashing?**

- a. we don't want to get too close
- b. we're too busy meeting our own needs
- c. It's not really okay to have needs
- d. overwhelmed/don't know where to start
- e. we're too proud to serve one another

**3. In your family relationships, what would it mean to practice foot washing?**

- a. to be available to meet needs
- b. to consider no job too menial
- c. to be sensitive to someone who is having a bad day
- d. to show our affection more
- e. to spend time just listening
- f. to be patient and forgiving

## **REFLECTION (Four principles regarding humility)**

- Humility is unannounced. No. Greatness does not consist of exaltation but self sacrifice (Phil 2: 8-9; 1 Peter 5: 5-6).
- Humility is willing to receive—without embarrassment
- Humility is not a sign of weakness
- Humility does not play favourites - neither selective nor exclusive

## **HOW HIGH IS YOUR AQ**

**Read John 13: 18-30**

The story of Judas and the Last Supper shows us something magnificent about the Saviour and about His ability to accept others in spite of the sin that clings to them. As an I.Q. test measures our minds, indicating our intelligence quotient, an A.Q. test measures our attitudes, indicating our **acceptance quotient**. In this chapter, we'll take a look at the A.Q. of Jesus with regard to Judas, and then we'll take a look at the A.Q. of Jesus with regard to Judas, and then we'll turn the test on our own lives.

- Our acceptance quotient is our ability to receive another person without inner restrictions of prejudice or outer requirements of performance.
- Our acceptance quotient does not nullify discernment; nor does it deny depravity. But it does allow for freedom and individuality. There are few examples better than the Last Supper to help guide our thoughts along these lines. In John 13: 18-30, we find two individuals face-to-face who could not have been more different: Jesus and Judas; the former with an A.Q. of ten, the latter with an A.Q. of zero.

- **How do you feel as you read verses 18-22**

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- **If you knew ahead of time that someone would “stab you in the back” how would you treat that person?**

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- **How does Jesus show a high A.Q., what an “in spite of” type of love is all about?**

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- **Given three years of very intimate fellowship with Jesus, how could Judas turn around and betray him?**

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