

THREADS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, LESSON 8: HUMBLE SELVES

Yet you, LORD, are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand. (Isaiah 64:8, NIV)

WHEN I WAS GROWING UP AROUND THE GAME, I learned to recognize the various types of players who hung around the club. One of those was the great range player, the golfer whose swing was fluid and who sent pure iron after pure iron out into the field of practice. But what made this golfer a range player only was that he couldn't turn that beautiful, repetitious swing into notable scores when he went to the course.

What the range player reminds us is that the center of the game is not the golfer but the cup. You'll find all shapes, sizes, ages, and swings on the range at a scratch tournament. But take a guess at what each will shoot on a given day, and you're sure to miss several times over.

The cup is the great leveler. The question for every golfer is the same: how many does it take you to get the ball in the hole? Which means something else as well—that the center, the standard, puts us all in our place. It keeps us humble.

In our study on the threads of righteousness that run throughout the Bible, we have been led to humility. Presented in humility, our witness is respected. Lived in humility, our lives bless others. Preached in humility, the Gospel exalts its center: Christ our Savior.

In today's accompanying video, Links Players president Jeffrey Cranford defines humility as "a right perspective on reality." We move toward humility when we remember that we are the created and God is the Creator. We are most humble when the center of *the* universe is the center of *our* universe—when God is God and we are not. Among other things, this enables us to relate to others as those God has loved with the same grace and love he has offered to us.

Humility is demonstrated well by those who do not overrate, overpresent, or oversell themselves. This is accomplished when we first stand reminded that our sin has disqualified us from the beautiful perfection God had planned for humanity. It is then advanced when we see the work of Christ in his death and resurrection with the eyes of our mind and the eyes of our heart. And it is finally secured when we praise God for his Lordship and thank him for his redemption, both privately and in public.

Opening questions How do silly mistakes, a loss of focus, or wrong goals keep you from thinking too highly of yourself? How fine is the line between humiliation and humility?

READING Job 10:8-17; 2 Samuel 12:1-25; Psalm 3

Job and God
What words of Job carry great weight for you? How do they serve to remind you of how powerful God is?

David's remorse and return
In what ways did David demonstrate an understanding of God's sovereignty in the conviction of Nathan and the death of his son?

The blessings of a strong God
David wrote Psalm 3 some years after the Bathsheba incident. How do his words show an understanding of the God who can raise us up from despair?

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2014 Links Players International. A 5-minute video accompanies today's study at <http://youtu.be/qP5GpUQcsYc>