

STEP OF BENJAMIN

WEEK 14

BENJAMIN - בנימין

"Son of the Right Hand"

THE WEAKNESS WE ARE STRENGTHENING

All of us Christians struggle with a variety of sins or negative traits that are ego based. Pursuing humility will not only allow us to overcome those, but it will truly allow us to uplift Jesus as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

FOCUS

Pursuing humility.

KEY VERSE

He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?

(Micah 6:8)

KEY POINTS

- Humble yourself before God.
- Lift Jesus up by decreasing yourself.
- ALL of us struggle with some type of ego issue because we are human.
- Embracing your true value in God will diminish negative ego issues.
- Pride cannot survive sincere gratitude.

The Step of Benjamin is about walking humbly with our God.

ICE BREAKER

How did it go this last week with the homework? How many prayer partners does everyone have now?

GROUP DISCUSSION

Welcome to the last lesson of the Path2Strength course! We've had some amazing conversations on this journey.

1.) *How has this course helped you and your walk with God? How has your relationship with God deepened? In what ways do you feel spiritually stronger?*

At the end of this lesson, we're going to talk about how to keep this group going, how to not lose the progress we've made, and how to expand the movement to help other Christians grow strong!

But first we need to talk about the Step of Benjamin

The FOURTEENTH Step in the Path 2 Strength is the **STEP OF BENJAMIN**.

The name Benjamin means "Son of the Right Hand," and it is pointing to Jesus as King of Kings and Ruler of the Universe.

Cultural Note: In ancient times, the right hand was considered the "good hand" and the left hand was considered the "dirty hand." This was not an attack on left-handed people . . . it was simply before the existence of toilet paper. The right hand was used for everything clean, eating, shaking hands with people, etc., and the left hand was used for . . . well, for cleaning oneself and other dirty tasks. Therefore, whoever sat at the king's right hand was the top official, whoever sat at the left side of the king was the #3 official of the kingdom.

Jesus being called the "Son of the Right Hand" means He rules at the right hand of God the Father.

The **STEP OF BENJAMIN** is about honoring Jesus as King and lifting Him up. This is done by humbling ourselves before Him.

The best and easiest way to lift someone up is to lower yourself. **To lift yourself up is to compete with them for "glory."**

Thus, when speaking about Jesus, John the Baptist said,

He must increase, but I must decrease.
(John 3:30)

So, this is what we must do as well. We must decrease so that Christ can increase.

This will benefit our relationship with God in many ways, for as we know, He opposes the proud. Therefore, He is drawn to the humble.

James 4:6 says:

“God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

The whole of Scripture teaches that humility is a condition for not only approaching God but staying close to Him.

This will also allow the Kingdom of God to expand faster among men because Jesus said that when He is lifted up, He will draw all men unto Himself.

So, this lesson is simply about pursuing humility. It’s a very simple concept, but it’s hard for us to do.

2.) *What are some of the typical signs of a person struggling with pride?*

It may surprise you to know that the following are *also* signs we may have a pride/ego problem and need to pursue greater humility:

- You feel certain tasks are beneath you.
- The topic of most conversations is “you” or what’s going on in your life, rather than the other person
- You say things like, “That’s just how I am” when confronted with a flaw.
- Overly independent and relying on self
- An unteachable spirit
- Defensiveness
- Never willing to apologize
- In need of constant praise, attention, or admiration
- Envious of others
- Overly obsessed with physical appearance.
- Overly concerned with what others think.
- Oversensitive
- Entitled
- Ungrateful
- Self-righteous
- Condescending

Rather than think about friends or family (or even enemies) we know who struggle with these things, we should focus on whether or not we recognize any of these signs in ourselves.

3.) *Did any of those signs surprise you? Which of those did you recognize in yourself?*

Truly, when you think about it, since all sin is a form of selfishness and/or rebelliousness, **then all sin is rooted in an ego problem of some kind.**

If we want God's favor, we must pursue humility.

4.) **READ** the following passages:

Proverbs 11:2 – *“When pride comes, then comes shame; but with the humble is wisdom.”*

Romans 12:16 – *“Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.” (NIV)*

1 Peter 3:3-4 – *“Do not let your adornment be merely outward —arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel — rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.*

James 4:10 – *“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.”*

Colossians 3:12 – *“Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering.”*

Proverbs 29:23 – *“A man's pride will bring him low, but the humble in spirit will retain honor.”*

Proverbs 22:4 – *“Humility is the fear of the Lord; its wages are riches and honor and life.” (NIV)*

1 Peter 5:6 – *“Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.” (NIV)*

2 Chronicles 7:14 – *“If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”*

When people are arrogant, or bragging and boastful, it's easy to see their pride. Yet, here are some unexpected ways ego problems can be seen in our lives:

A.) Severe insecurity. A person who overly berates themselves, or feels they have no real significance to the Kingdom of God has an ego problem, albeit a negative version of it and opposite that of the boastful person.

A believer who feels this level of worthlessness is not recognizing how valuable they are in God's eyes and the gifts He has put into them. **This is an ego problem because they are valuing their own opinion of themselves more than God's words about them.**

Boastful people have an overinflated view of their value and importance, insecure people underestimate their value and importance. Both are defining themselves with their own thoughts rather than God's.

B.) Depression is also often an ego issue. (*NOTE: we don't mean "feeling wounded" or "hurt", we mean depression.*) When we are depressed, our minds experience an unceasing whirlwind of negative thoughts *about ourselves*.

This is a self-centered state, though it's a negative form of self-centeredness. The best solution to depression is usually to get out of our own heads, to stop thinking about ourselves *at all*, and begin focusing on loving others.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Severe clinical depression and/or suicidal thoughts are serious and can be caused by a chemical imbalance which is a physical imbalance. *We are not talking about that level of depression, or severe spiritual trauma. In such cases, a believer should immediately seek the help of a qualified pastor or licensed counselor.*

C.) Fear is also an issue of ego. Fear and anxiety are rooted in a conscious or subconscious belief that the only one we can trust is ourselves.

When we successfully learn to not lean on ourselves, but to trust in God for our needs and protection, fear and anxiety fall away.

Therefore, as we learn to lift Jesus up by decreasing ourselves, we not only become spiritually more attractive, but things like fear, anger, and depression dissipate.

5.) *Does it surprise you that negative emotions like insecurity, depressions, and fear can be rooted in ego?*

So, how do we overcome these ego issues? *How do we pursue humility while retaining joy?*

There are two practices you can do regularly to keep yourself on the right track with humility:

Embrace Your True Value

Accepting your true value in God is an identity issue and it will solve the negative ego issues like anxiety, fear, depression, and insecurity.

You are a son or daughter of God. He took a lot of time to weave you together in your mother's womb and He loves you dearly. You are of immense value to Him. Jesus would have still chosen to die on the cross even if it was just for you.

Practice **disbelieving** all the negativity that has been spoken into you over the years and instead **embrace in faith** all that God has promised and said about you and your value. Practice this daily. Remind yourself of it.

Don't just believe it in your head, let the truth of your value sink into your heart.

To not believe that you are valuable to Him, is to *disbelieve God*, which is a sin. To accept His words about your value, is to *believe Him*, it is **Faith, which the Bible says is credited to us as righteousness.**

Gratitude

This one is pretty simple. Expressing gratitude to God as a daily practice during our prayer time will keep you off the path of arrogance, boasting, and self-righteousness.

The more grateful to Him you are, the more humble before Him you will be. Practice **expressing** gratitude to Him for everything from the country you were born in, the talents and gifts you have, your daily food and provision, and even every time you have successfully obeyed Him.

Pride cannot survive sincere gratitude.

The Step of Benjamin is about pursuing humility to lift Jesus up.

CONCLUSION

You have now finished the Path2Strength course!

It is our hope at Path2Hope that you not only feel significantly stronger after completing this course, but that you will invite others into it and help keep the movement going.

We would like you to consider doing the following:

1.) Continue to meet as a group. Many of you have probably grown close over the last 14 weeks. Let's not let that sense of community go! Choose a book of the Bible or another study topic and keep going!

2.) Commit to keep doing outreach. There are too many broken people in the world. We can't reach them all with the Gospel without you!

Path2Hope has launched these groups not only to strengthen believers, but also to expand greatly the amount of outreach happening. Let's build the Kingdom together!

It's up to your group to choose how many times per month (we usually recommend 1 - 2 times per month) and what day and time you go out.

3.) Disciple others. Be intentional about teaching others the steps of the Path2Strength. You will love seeing them grow stronger and feel more joy as they walk with you.

4.) Invite other small group leaders to consider taking their group members through the Path2Strength.

We at Path2Hope are very grateful for you and pray that His favor and grace and peace will be upon you always.