

The Strength of Humility

By Sean Wegener

Pre-Session Assignments

One week before the session, participants will take the following assignments.

Assignment One

Read 2 Chronicles 26. Take notes on this overview of Uzziah's story. Consider the location of the story. Prepare to share your answers to the following questions: Where did Uzziah begin? Where did he end? What is the biggest change between verses five and 16? What do people remember about Uzziah when he was young? How about when he was old? What do people remember about him at the end of his life?

Assignment Two

Read 2 Chronicles 26; Isaiah 6; and Philippians 2:3-11. Consider how the two stories go together. Go online and research what the censers at the altar were used for. Prepare to share your answers to the following questions: What is the difference between the angel's and Uzziah's use of the censer? Write down a contrast between Jesus' and Uzziah's characteristics. How are they similar? What is the major difference between them?

Assignment Three

Make a short list of the things you have done that you think people need to know about you. Try to keep it to one concise paragraph. Next, summarize your life in one sentence. Write down how you want people to remember you. Consider what you would put on a tombstone or in an obituary. Prepare to share your writings with your group.

Scripture to Memorize

"When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with the humble is wisdom." Proverbs 11:2

Session Goal

Consistent with God's Word and in the power of the Holy Spirit—by the end of this session, disciples will understand that discipleship requires the discipline of humility, and pride leads to destruction.

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Outside of theological studies, Sean has trained with the British Stage Fighter's Academy in Wales, has written four plays, and enjoys fencing. You can contact Sean on facebook or twitter @seanwegener.

It's in the Book

30 minutes

Real-Life Scenario

Two historic leaders face-off on D-Day, the epic and decisive battle of World War II. Eisenhower sits waiting for news. Initial reports say the army is in disarray. The commanders ask Eisenhower for any new commands. He issues none.

Hitler, safe in his bunker in Germany, hears that D-Day has begun. Ignoring the advice of his councilors, he issues two commands. Hitler commands the V-1 rockets to hit London instead of the beaches. Second, he orders tanks to the wrong location.

Hitler's pride led to defeat. After the war Eisenhower stated, "Humility must always be the portion of any man who receives acclaim."

Read 2 Chronicles 26:1-23 out loud.

Studying the Passage

One of the major themes of Chronicles is God's promise to David. In 1 Chronicles 17:13-14 God promised that David's line will have a great King who will be a Son to God. Who is this man? At the time of Uzziah, people were teaching that this messiah-type character would be a great king and priest. This context helps us understand Uzziah.

Verses 1-5. Uzziah was a teenager who had a heart that sought after God. As long as Uzziah **set himself to seek God . . . God made him prosper**. The Bible emphasizes how great Uzziah was to the people. He succeeded economically, militaristically and nationally.

Verse 16. he grew proud, to his destruction. At some point Uzziah began to believe the headlines. The Hebrew word for *proud* means "to exalt, to be high, and to be lifted up." The picture is of an eagle soaring above the trees. Uzziah was flying above God's rule. While Uzziah was soaring, he began to think, *I can do what the priests do*. Uzziah overextended his grasp and tried to steal the role of a priest. Uzziah tried to take on the role of messiah for his people.

Verse 17. men of valor. The Bible states that the priests who resisted Uzziah were brave. Consider that there were thousands of priests at this time, and only eighty tried to stop Uzziah! While thousands of people looked the other way, these men resisted the proud king. This took bravery, but it also took a strong sense of humility. Azariah the chief priest knew his place, but he also knew what God said was not for the king.

Verses 19. he had a censer in his hand. Uzziah tried to burn incense to God, a task that only could be performed by priests. What does this mean? Uzziah's using the censer meant he was taking the role of priest and trying to create his own forgiveness for the people. The result was a man who went from being a teenage king—to a great king—to a leper in a house outside the palace.

Assignment One Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment One** during the week can now report on the scenes of 2 Chronicles 26.

Read Isaiah 6:1-13 and Philippians 2:3-11 out loud.

Studying the Passage, Isaiah 6

Verse 1. temple. In Isaiah 6, notice that Isaiah was in the same place Uzziah was in 2 Chronicles. Both men had completely different reactions to being in God's temple. Pride withered Uzziah's heart to the point that he became angry when confronted with sin.

Verse 5. I am a man of unclean lips. Isaiah was humble enough to admit his sin.

Studying the Passage, Philippians 2

Verses 3-11. How was Christ incarnate most unlike Uzziah? Isaiah 52:13–53:12 teaches that the Messiah will be exalted because He is humble and gave His life for many. Philippians 2 says that Jesus' humility was the reason God exalted Him. Christ's humility did not permit Him to seek exaltation as Uzziah did.

Assignment Two Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment Two** during the week can now report on what happened with Isaiah's use of the censer.

On Your Own

Humility is a discipline. How hard is it to remain humble when you feel you deserve to be exalted? Read again 2 Chronicles 26:16-21 and Philippians 2:3-11. When you are confronted with pride, how do you tend to react? How do you wish to react? In the space below, write your thoughts.

Assignment Three Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment Three** during the week can now share what they wrote.

Discussion Questions

In 1931, Professor E. L. Sukenik of the University of Jerusalem discovered a tombstone. On it was written, "Uzziah, King of Judah. Beware, do not open." This matches what 2 Chronicles 26:23 says about Uzziah. Everything amazing about Uzziah was forgotten by the people. The only thing someone could say about him was "He is a leper" (2 Chronicles 26:23).

Pride grew in his heart until he was destroyed. The same thing can happen to disciples of Jesus. A discipline of humility requires recognizing that you are powerless to do anything without God.

How do you develop a discipline of humility? Do you exalt God in everything you do, or do you expect people to exalt you? Do you have an attitude that says "I deserve" or "I serve"?

For the disciple, pride is always a temptation. Remember to seek Jesus, be instructed in His Word, and fear Him with awe and reverence. "When pride comes, then comes dishonor, but with the humble is wisdom" (Proverbs 11:2).

Heart and Hands

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven. Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit reveals to you below, and then be ready to share what you have written with the group.

Since Last Week

5 minutes

Give the group this update: "In our last session I made a commitment to . . . I want to let you know how that turned out. On that same issue I think the Holy Spirit now is leading me to . . ."

Grace-Filled Accountability

5 minutes

Disciples can agree on a way to hold one another accountable. Confessing faults with other disciples allows them to offer grace, insights, and encouragement. Even more important is confession to Christ, the source of true forgiveness and cleansing.

Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service

5 minutes

Groups of disciples always are making preparations for evangelism, missions, and service. Use these minutes to work on the next plan.

Prayer

7 minutes

Every disciple will pray aloud, offering praise to Jesus, thanking Him specifically for His gracious acts, making heartfelt confession, committing to actions flowing from the Bible study, praying toward evangelism locally and globally, and interceding for others as prompted by the Holy Spirit.

At Home: Nail It Down

One of the biggest issues for disciples is pride. As soon as disciples start thinking, *I'm doing really well*, or looking at how much they have improved over other people, they are in danger of exalting themselves. The real issue of pride is self-exaltation instead of exalting God.

The memorization verse helps highlight the issue of pride. "When pride comes, then comes dishonor, but with the humble is wisdom." Make sure to go over your memory verse and discuss what it means. Our culture exalts proud people, but God does not. Pride is a worship issue.

In 2 Chronicles 26, we saw one man who went from rags to riches to cursed by God. Read Acts 20:24. Consider how Paul lived his life. Then read Paul's final note in 2 Timothy 4:7. When Paul said he was being poured out as a drink offering, he was saying that his whole life is in God's hands. He finished the race of life strong because of his humility.

The first place a discipline of humility grows is at home. Parents who are humble enough to ask for forgiveness from their own children are an excellent example. This requires constant prayer together where parents and their children can ask God's forgiveness for sin.

1. What do you need to ask God to forgive you for?
2. Do you ever refuse to give God glory? In what?
3. Where do you think you need or deserve recognition? How can God receive glory for that instead of you?

Follow up Question

What tends to keep you humble? What makes humility difficult at times?

The Making Disciples curriculum is a gift from Southwestern Seminary to those who, for the glory of the Father and in the power of the Spirit, will spend a lifetime embracing the full supremacy of the Son, responding to His kingly reign in all of life, inviting Christ to live His life through them, and joining Him in making disciples among all peoples.