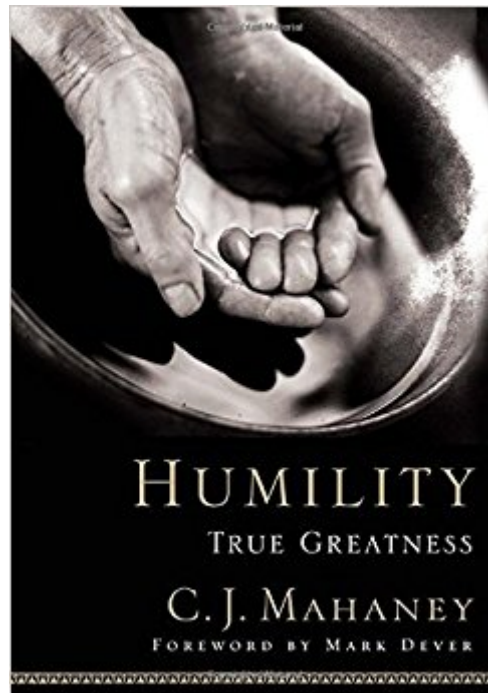




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# Humility: True Greatness



## Synopsis

Be Transformed by Christ—Example—“God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” 1 Peter 5:5 A battle rages within every one of us every day. It’s the clash between our sense of stubborn self-sufficiency and God’s call to recognize that we’re really nothing without Him. It’s pride versus humility. And it’s a fight we can’t win without looking repeatedly to Christ and the cross. C. J. Mahaney raises a battle cry to daily, diligently, and deliberately weaken our greatest enemy (pride) and cultivate our greatest friend (humility). His thorough examination clarifies misconceptions, revealing the truth about why God detests pride and turns His active attention to the humble. Because pride is never passive, defeating it demands an intentional attack. The blessing that follows is God’s abundant favor. “This is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit.” Isaiah 66:2, ESV God clearly states that He is drawn to the humble. He’s also clear that He opposes the proud. These two, humility and pride, cannot coexist. Where one is fostered, the other is defeated. Which will you pursue? C. J. Mahaney paints a striking picture of the daily battle quietly raging within every Christian and asks whether you will passively accommodate the enemy of your soul, pride, or actively cultivate your best friend, humility. When you acknowledge the deception of pride and intentionally humble yourself, you become free to savor abundant mercies and unlikely graces. You will find a new life is yours—a life God richly favors. A God-glorifying life you don’t want to miss.

“C. J. Mahaney is not humble. At least, that’s what he’ll tell you. And that’s one reason he’s so well qualified to write this book.”—Mark E. Dever, Senior pastor, Capitol Hill Baptist Church, Author, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*

“A much-needed wake-up call on this important subject. I highly recommend this book.”—Jerry Bridges, Author of *The Pursuit of Holiness*

“This is the right book from the right man at the right time.”—R. Albert Mohler, Jr., President, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

*Story Behind the Book*—“Given pride’s pervasive presence in my life, I come to this book in holy fear, yet inspired by God’s promises to be humble and sobered by his warnings to the proud (Isaiah 66:2b, 1 Peter 5:5b). Scripture reveals to us that, while pride was the first and most serious sin, God is decisively drawn to humility and is specifically supportive of the humble. Only Christ has fully obeyed Isaiah 66:2b (“This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word”), yet He did so as our representative! How marvelous that in our daily battle against pride we can rely on God’s grace, through the gospel, and thus bring honor and glory to God.”

•C. J. Mahaney

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

C. J. Mahaney leads Sovereign Grace Ministries in its mission to establish and support local churches. He served as pastor of Covenant Life Church in a Maryland suburb of Washington , D.C. , for twenty-seven years and is author of The Cross- Centered Life, Christ Our Mediator, and Sex, Romance, and the Glory of God: What Every Christian Husband Needs to Know. C. J. and his wife, Carolyn, have three married daughters and one son. They make their home in Gaithersburg , Maryland .

Wonderful book! I enjoyed reading this and could hardly put it down. C.J. Mahaney shared some wonderful insight on pride and how we can weaken our pride and strengthen humility. I read this book to prepare for a presentation that I gave to a women's group. I used some of the suggestions C.J. Mahaney gave on strengthening and cultivating humility. I would recommend this book to everyone. We all battle with pride!

Only in the past two years have I known much about C. J. Mahaney. Much of what I have learned is a result of the wiki leaks this last year and the controversy surrounding his leave of absence from Sovereign Grace Ministries. These events played a role in me reading this book. I figured the guy who wrote a book on the subject of humility then stepped down to have his character examined,

specifically the matter of humility, must take this characteristic and his character extremely seriously. After having read this book, I really feel like I've had a window into this man's heart. If you've gotten caught up in this controversial discussion about C. J. Mahaney, I encourage you to read this book before being swept away by a torrent of media that might bias your views of this man. Before deciding what we think of Mahaney, we need to see the presupposition under which he operates his Christian life. It is clear that the virtue of humility is cherished by him as it ought to be by us all. It is also clear that when this character attribute of his is challenged, he does not take the challenge lightly. I appreciate the lengths at which he took in order to be tested and restored rightly. I actually read *Humility* in February just after my recent surgery. I was cooped up in bed for a couple of days, and it seemed like good timing to give this book a read. After having read the book, I heartily recommend this book to every Christian who desires to understand the attribute of humility and the role that it ought to play in each of our lives. According to Mahaney, "Humility is honestly assessing ourselves in light of God's holiness and our sinfulness." In contrast to humility, Mahaney explains, "Pride is when sinful human beings aspire to the status and position of God and refuse to acknowledge their dependence upon Him." Basically, Mahaney says that our pride is strong when we forget our place before God and try to usurp that place from Him. Mahaney continues, "That's the motive and ultimate purpose of pride - to rob God of legitimate glory and to pursue self-glorification, contending for supremacy with Him." Humility is when we see ourselves the way God sees us, warts and all. The beauty of it all is that God loves through our sinfulness. We know this because God the Father sent God the Son, who willingly subjected Himself to death on the cross. Mahaney elaborates on the value of Christ's death in respect to the subject of humility, "Here's an essential truth: To learn true humility, we need more than a redefinition of greatness; we need even more than Jesus' personal example of humble service. What we need is His death..." Why was the death of Jesus necessary? Because all of humanity is corrupt and condemned, and we all have an acute tendency to deny the reality of our lost state before God. Without first being confronted by Christ's death and encountering the wonder of salvation we cannot walk in humility. Humility requires us to emulate and sacrifice like Christ did when he died, according to Mahaney this is true greatness. What I've just shared covers the material from Parts One and Two of this book. Those two parts help the reader have context for understanding the links between pride, greatness, and humility. Part Three is where Mahaney provides encouragement and methods for practicing humility. This section includes principles to practice at the beginning of the day, the end of the day, and also some special principles. As each day begins Mahaney challenges the reader to reflect on the wonder of the cross, to acknowledge our need for God, to give gratitude

to God, and to practice spiritual disciplines. As an aside he recommends Don Whitney's book, *Spiritual Discipline for the Christian Life*, a book I am reading at present. Mahaney encourages those who wish to practice humility to take advantage of their commute and make it purposeful time with God. He also challenges the reader to cast their cares upon God. As the day ends Mahaney cautions the reader from committing cosmic plagiarism. This is when we take credit for what God does in our lives. He also encourages us to accept the gift of sleep, then close the day with expressing gratefulness for Christ's death and resurrection. As a special focus Mahaney encourages the reader to study the attributes of God, study the doctrine of grace, and study the doctrine of sin. There are a bunch of nuggets to take away from this book. One of the most precious ones that I found was in Mahaney's chapter on encouraging others. This nugget has to do with correcting others. Mahaney says, "Never correct without reminding the individual, at some point, of the gospel. Any conversation including correction must also include the gospel, because biblical correction is incomplete apart from the gospel." This observation of his is absolutely the best snapshot of this book. Always at the center of humility is a message, action, or lifestyle centered on the gospel. This is how it should be. When we rise Christ's resurrection is on our hearts and in our morning prayers. When we walk we proclaim the fulfilled promise of our Savior. When we lay our head down, we rest peacefully in the hands that were pierced for our transgressions, remembering the cost he paid for so great a salvation. Once again, I recommend reading this book. Then a couple of months after having read it, re-acquaint yourself with the book and review your notes. That is what I did this evening, and it refreshed my soul. View more book reviews by Joey Cochran at [jtcochran.com](http://jtcochran.com).

C.J. Mahaney, popular author, pastor, and president of Sovereign Grace Ministries, states that the most important characteristic of "true greatness" is humility. In his book *Humility*, published in 2005, Mahaney reminds his readers of what it means to be truly great in the sight of God. Every Christian knows that humility is important. But far too few actively pursue humility in their own life. This book helps us to put our belief about humility into practice. The main point of *Humility* is that "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Mahaney then expands on this theme throughout the 12 chapters in the book. The first four chapters are more theological in nature. Mahaney examines various verses in the Bible, reminding his readers of the promises of humility and the perils of pride. He also defines greatness according to the scriptures and gives biblical examples of what it means to be truly great in God's sight. Mahaney spends the last eight chapters giving practical advice on how to work on being truly great by growing your humility. He mentions various ways to start off your day that will help you grow in humility. He also gives advice on how to

end each day being focused on true greatness. A very helpful exercise he mentions is to "identify the evidences of grace" in other people. This has been a very rewarding application in my own life. And he even adds humor, by telling his readers to spend time doing some things you're not good at just to encourage yourself to stay humble. I've found this book to be personally convicting in my life and leadership. I've recently had my leadership team read through the book. We spent time discussing Mahaney's insights on humility and how we should pursue true greatness together. If you're looking for a short, yet convicting book on the subject of true greatness, be sure to read Humility by C. J. Mahaney. Thanks to Waterbrook/Multnomah for publishing such a great book.

Unmasks and examines the many faces of pride and gives kind and concrete advice about how to lay them down day by day and hour by hour. Just what I needed to challenge and encourage me.

Incredible perspective on the one quality that God says catches his attention (Isa 66:2). Mahaney writes in a very humble and relatable manner. Although the book is rather "compact" compared to others on similar topics, it's absolutely jam-packed with deep thoughts on how to fight pride and grow closer in your relationships with God and man as we strive for humility.

Ten years prior to reading this book I asked God for humility. First, I suggest you never pray that prayer unless you mean business. If you're even half full of the pride I had poured into myself you're in for hard times when you ask for change. Anyway, this book is very easy to read. It's what I call friendly. I like books when the author is humble (appropriate in this case). It reads easy. It has a lot of great suggestions. I have actually read it once and intend on reading it again. I have begun some of the practices the author suggests and plan to pick up more the second time around. Although this is a Christian book, It's not a snobby theologian book and I like that (again, appropriate). The only thing I didn't care for was that the book has an awful lot of suggested reading throughout the pages and I found that kind of awkward.

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