

The University of Moses— The Humility Principle

Numbers 11:16-17;
24-30; 12:1-13
Dr. Barry McCarty



Numbers 11:16–17

¹⁶ Then the Lord said to Moses, “Gather for me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them, and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you. ¹⁷ And I will come down and talk with you there. And I will take some of the Spirit that is on you and put it on them, and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, so that you may not bear it yourself alone. . . .

⁶ ²⁴ So Moses went out and told the people the words of the Lord. And he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people and placed them around the tent. ²⁵ Then the Lord came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the Spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders. And as soon as the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied. But they did not continue doing it.

²⁶ Now two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad, and the other named Medad, and the Spirit rested on them. They were among those registered, but they had not gone out to the tent, and so they prophesied in the camp. ²⁷ And a young man ran and told Moses, “Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.” ²⁸ And Joshua the son of Nun, the assistant of Moses from his youth, said, “My lord Moses, stop them.” ²⁹ But Moses said to him, “Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the Lord’s people were prophets, that the Lord would put his Spirit on them!” ³⁰ And Moses and the elders of Israel returned to the camp.

Numbers 12:3

³ Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all people who were on the face of the earth.

In the first story, at God's instruction, Moses selected 70 elders to help him govern the people of Israel and gathered them about the tabernacle.

Then the LORD appeared in the cloud and took of the Spirit that was on Moses, and placed that Spirit on the 70.

As a result they began to prophesy. God publicly authenticated their ministry so the whole community could see that they possessed the same spiritual qualifications and authority as Moses himself.



To show that the bestowal of the Spirit was an act of God unrelated to Moses' presence, the LORD placed the Spirit on two men, Eldad and Medad, who had not joined the others at the tabernacle.

They began to prophesy which so surprised the assembly in the camp that the people sent a messenger to Moses to inform him of it.

Joshua became greatly disturbed and asked Moses to forbid this “unofficial” prophesying.



Although Joshua was Moses's close friend and confidant, and he said this out of a respect to Moses, whose honor he was loth to see lessened by the call of those elders, yet Moses reproves him.



In the second story,
Aaron and Miriam
begin complaining about
Moses's leadership. Yet
Moses **doesn't answer
these personal attacks
against himself**, but allows
God to vindicate him.

In both instances,
Moses teaches us some
valuable lessons about
biblical humility.



In these two stories . . .

Moses teaches us that humility is the secret ingredient of greatness.

1. Humility cares more for God's glory than for our own status.

- Moses had a spirit of lowliness that enabled God to give him the blessing of advancement.
- They are most fit for leadership who are least ambitious of it.

Known the world over for her work among the poor in India, Mother Teresa decided that after winning the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979 she would not go to accept any more awards or recognition because it interfered with her work.

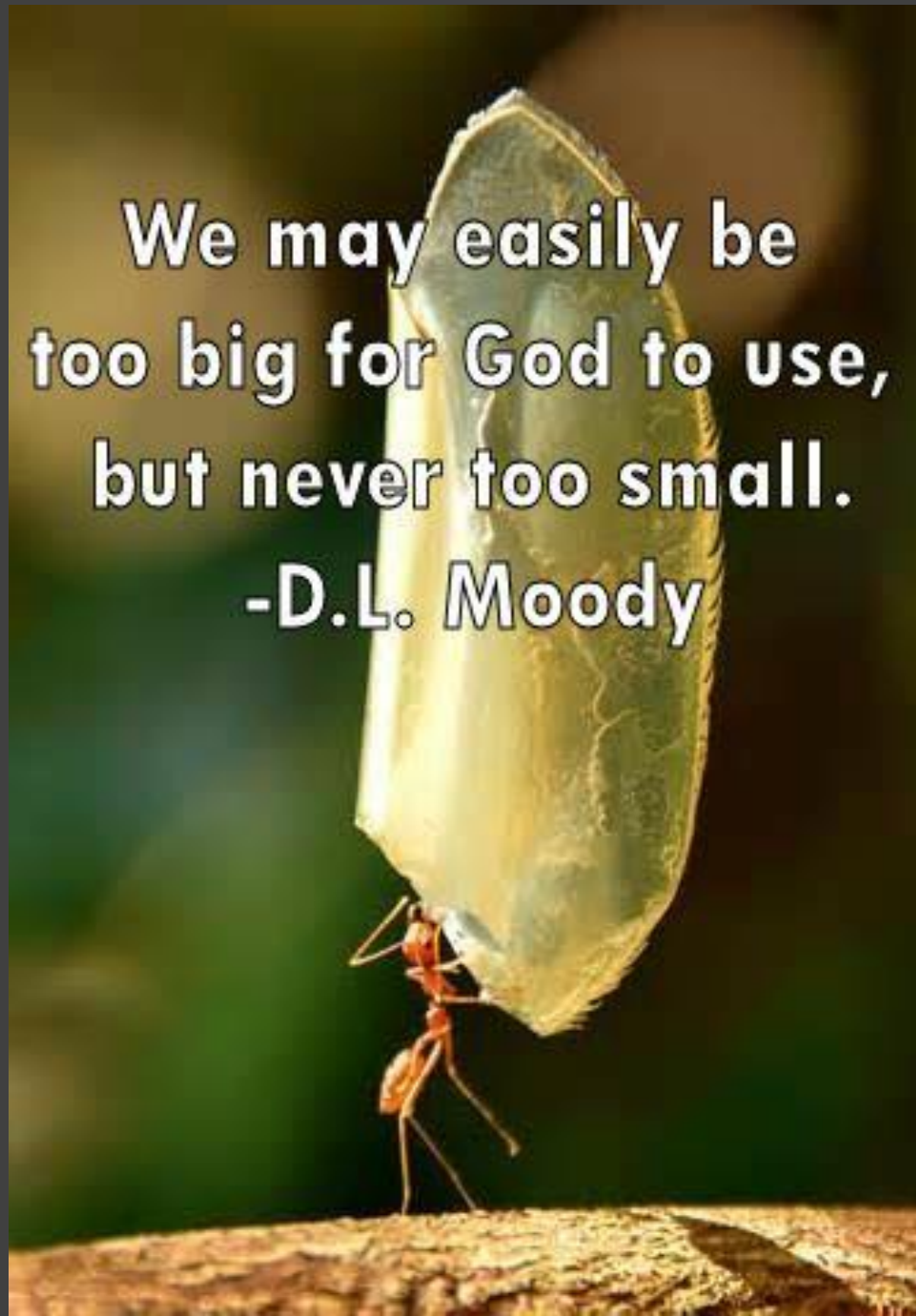
She said she was not in the business of accepting prizes; she was in the business of serving the poor of Calcutta.



“We must not drift away from the humble works, because these are the works nobody will do. . . . Even if you write a letter for the blind man, or just go and sit and listen, or you take the mail for them, or you visit somebody—small things—or wash clothes for somebody or clean the house. Very humble work, that is where you and I must be. **For there are many people who can do big things. But there are very few people who will do the small things.**”



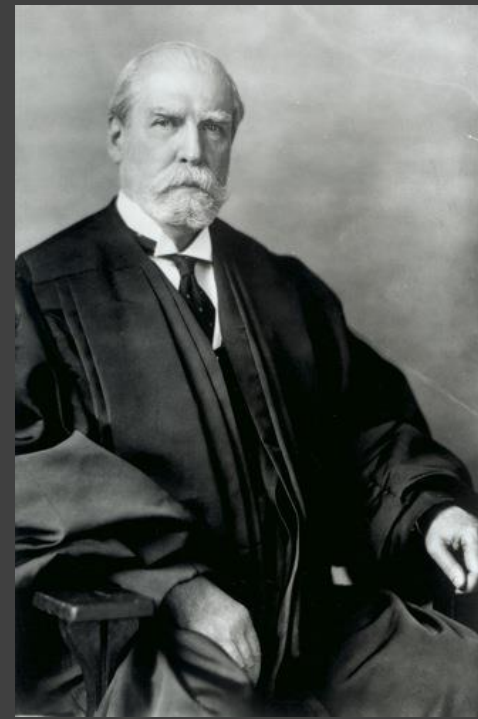
**We may easily be
too big for God to use,
but never too small.
-D.L. Moody**



2. Humility never challenges the rights or honors God gives to others.

- Moses never sought his own advancement at the expense of others.
- He was pleased when God blessed the 70 elders with his Spirit.

Charles Evans Hughes was one of the most influential people in public life during the first half of the 20th century. When President Hoover appointed him as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in 1930, Hughes had already been Governor of New York, an associate justice of the Supreme Court, a presidential candidate, and Secretary of State.



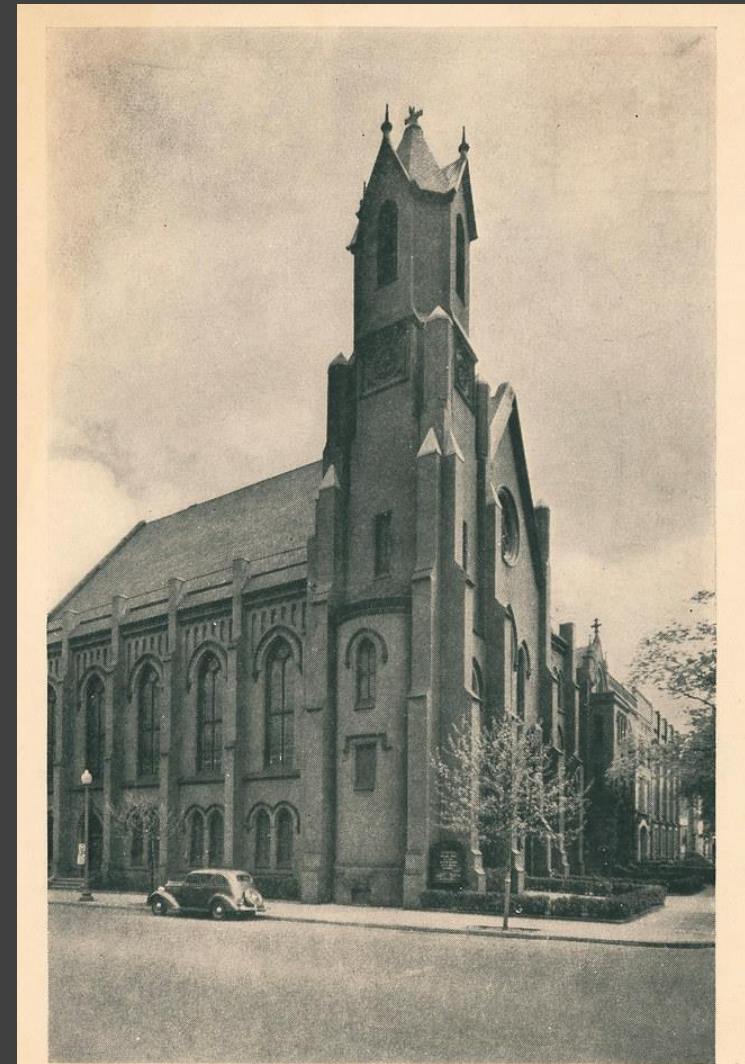
Justice Hughes was also a faithful Baptist. His father had been a Baptist minister and he had grown up in a parsonage.

When he moved to Washington to take up his duties on the court, Hughes transferred his membership to Calvary Baptist Church.



It was the custom for all new members to come to the front of the sanctuary at the close of the worship service. The first to walk the aisle that morning was a Chinese laundryman named Ah Sing who had moved to the capital from the West Coast. He took his place at the far side of the church. But the dozen or so other people who came forward stood at the opposite side of the church, leaving Ah Sing standing alone.

But when Chief Justice Hughes came forward, he took his place beside the laundryman. By taking his place beside Ah Sing, Hughes prevented embarrassment to his humble Chinese brother and proved that at the foot of the cross the ground is level.



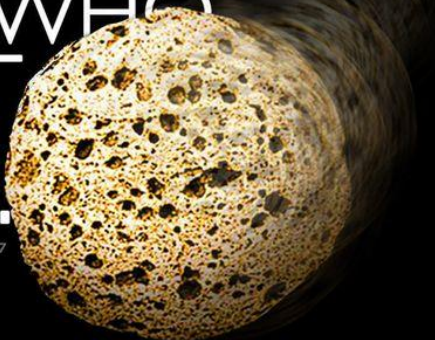
CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH
WASHINGTON, D. C.

3. Humility never seeks revenge, but trusts God to vindicate us.

- Moses left it to God to deal with those who opposed him.
- Imagine how Aaron and Miriam felt when God rebuked them for opposing Moses!

HE WHO DIGS A PIT
WILL FALL
INTO IT,
AND A STONE
WILL COME BACK
UPON HIM WHO
STARTS IT
ROLLING.

— PROVERBS 26:27



**Do not say,
"I'll pay you
back for this
wrong!" Wait
for the LORD,
and he will
deliver you.**

- Proverbs 20:22 -



3. Humility is not a sign of weakness, but of great strength.

Weak people retaliate. It takes colossal strength to show restraint in the face of provocation.

One of the biblical synonyms for humility is *meekness*.

The Greek word for meekness, *praus*, has the idea of *strength under control*.

It was used of a bridled horse.

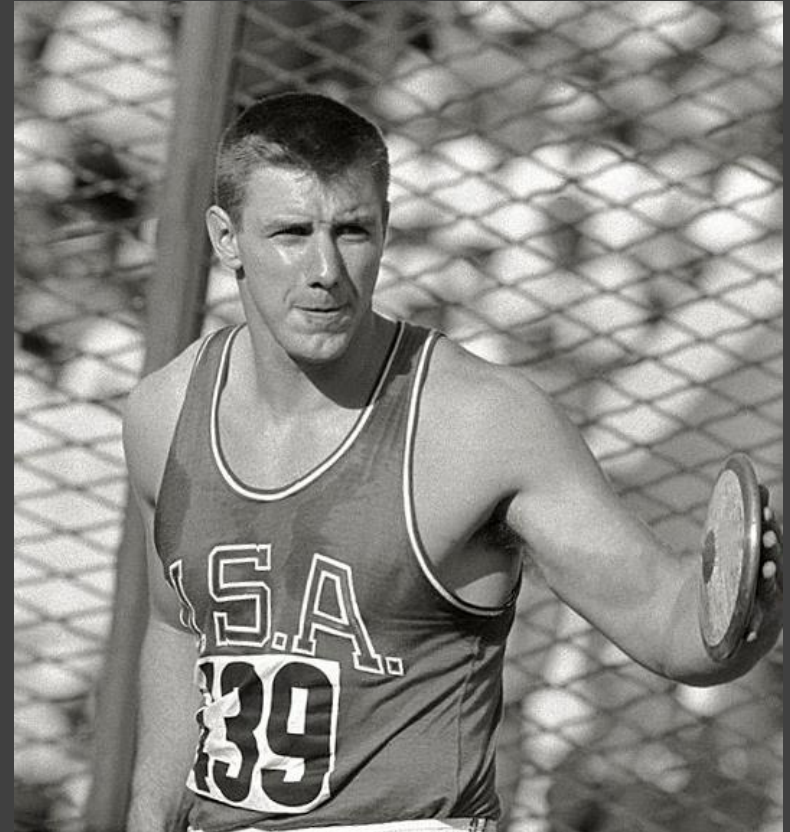


The branch
that bears the
most fruit is
bent lowest to
the ground.



Al Oerter was an American track and field star who was the first man to throw the discus more than 200 feet. During his career he won four consecutive Olympic Games gold medals and set new world records four times

During the 1960 Olympics, Oerter and his teammate Rink Babka were expected to take the gold and silver medal in the discus throw.



Although he was the number 2 man, Babka beat Oerter in the first four throws. Just before the fifth and final throw Babka pointed out a flaw he had noticed in his teammate's technique.

On the fifth throw Oerter stepped into the circle, spun around, and threw the discus farther than any other man, winning the Gold Medal.

That one small adjustment was all Oerter needed, and it cost Babka the gold medal. Babka was not the winner that year, but no one could call him a loser.



Application: How do we live in humility?

1. Take your eyes off yourself and put them on Christ.

Galatians 2:20.

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

True humility does mean being a dried-up depressing little person who drags around a huge inferiority complex.

It doesn't involve putting yourself down. You're already down.

Humility is simply recognizing that without God you are lost, helpless, and hopeless, and gets on with the business of trusting God in every circumstance.

Humility is not so much looking at ourselves to find our faults, but looking at God to find his perfection.

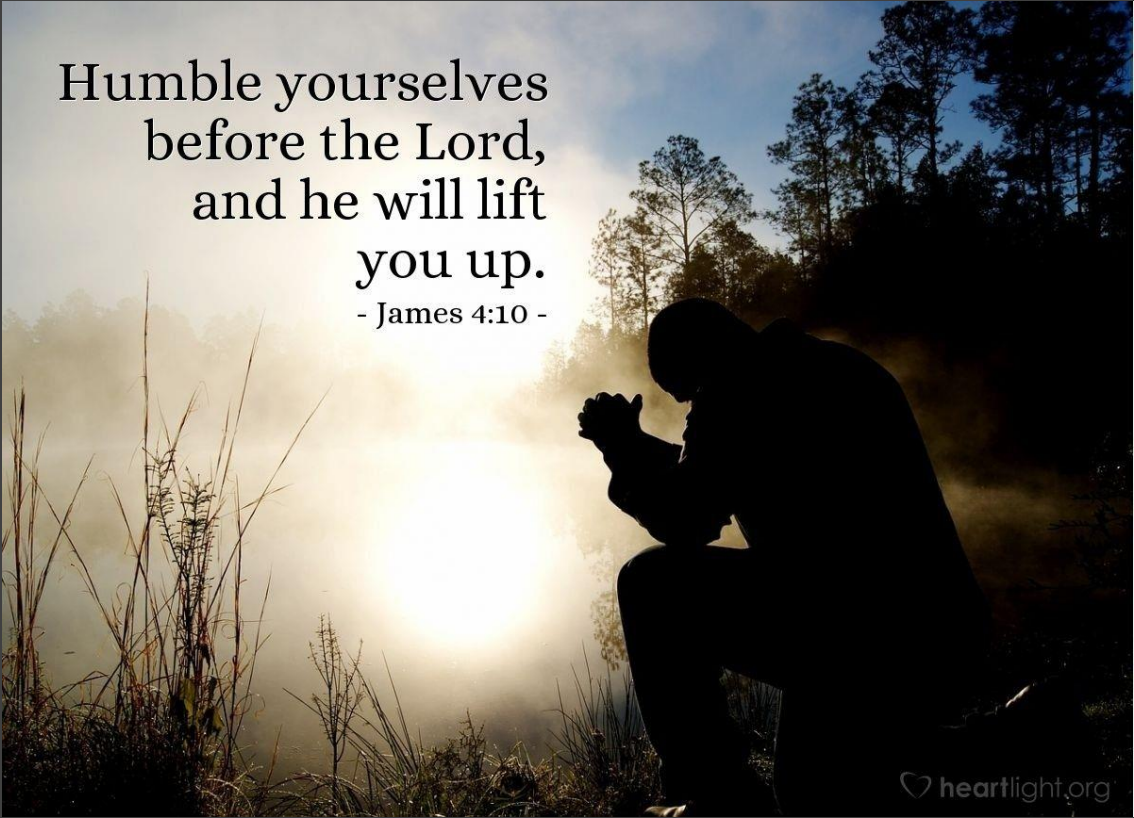


2. Ask God for humility.

Study his word.

Seek him in
prayer.

Set your heart
on pleasing God,
and you will
loose your
preoccupation
with self.



Humble yourselves
before the Lord,
and he will lift
you up.

- James 4:10 -

3. Humbly accept praise and appreciation when it is given, but don't seek it.

Luke 14:8–11

⁸ “When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in a place of honor, lest someone more distinguished than you be invited by him, ⁹ and he who invited you both will come and say to you, ‘Give your place to this person,’ and then you will begin with shame to take the lowest place. ¹⁰ But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when your host comes he may say to you, ‘Friend, move up higher.’ Then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at table with you. ¹¹ For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

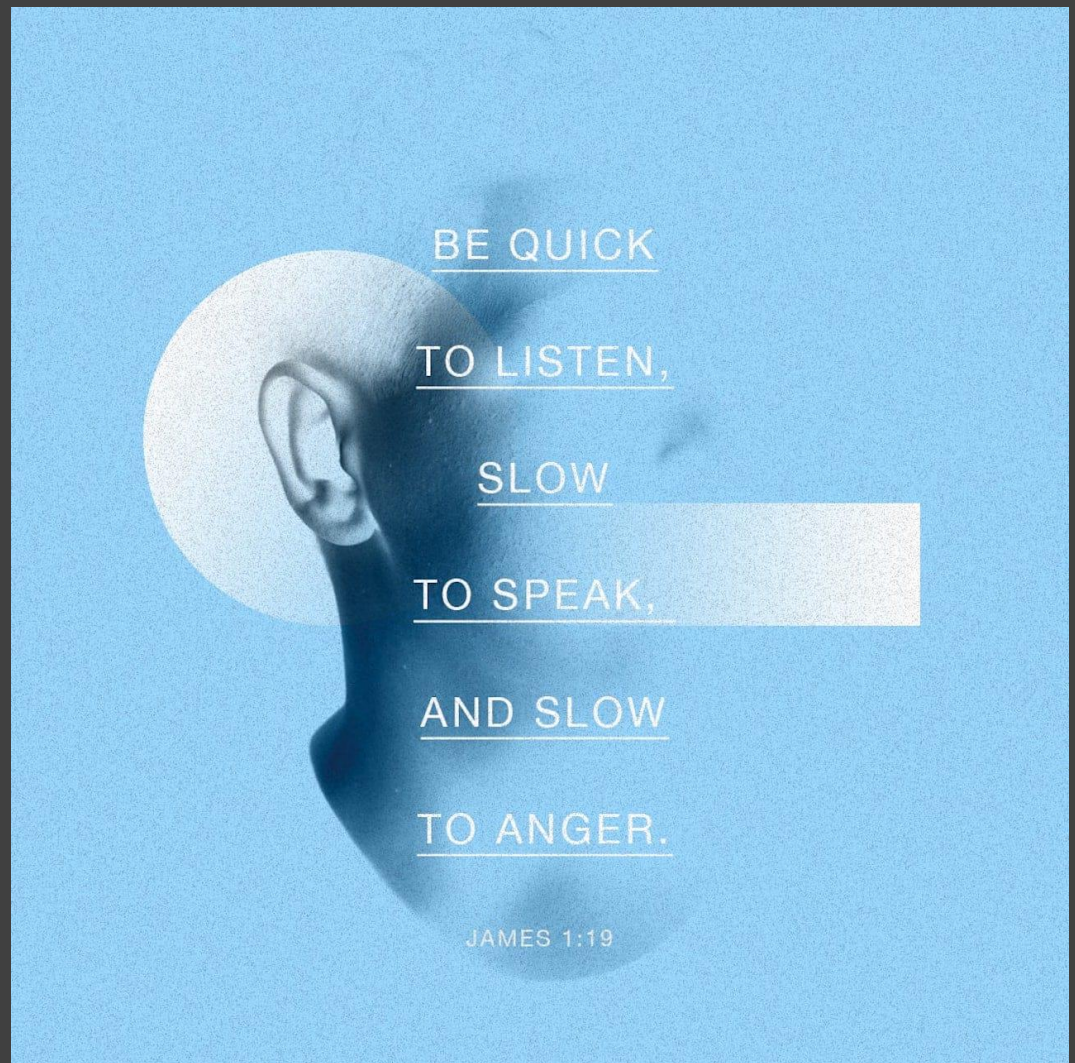
4. *When attacked, let God vindicate you.*

1 Peter 2:23

When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.



*Cultivate
the habit of
knowing when
to keep quiet.*



5. Focus more on the concerns of other people.

Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

- Philippians 2:4 -

