



# The Greatest Gift: Humble King

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No. 7, December 10th, 2023

## A True STORY

"A young wife and mother, overwhelmed by her responsibilities, walked out on her family one day. She just laid down her apron and left. When she called that night, her frantic husband demanded an explanation. But she just hung up. She called every week to check on the children, but she refused to let them know where she was. The husband pleaded with her to return, but she wouldn't listen. Finally, he tracked her down to a dumpy hotel on the other side of the state. When she answered the door, he poured out his love for her and begged her to come home. She fell into his arms and cried for forgiveness. Later, when her husband asked why she hadn't returned before, she replied, 'All those claims of love—they were just words before. **But then you came.**'"

(From Steve Brown, *Overcoming Setbacks* (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 1992), p. 179-180)

Sometimes, actions speak louder than words. People may tell us things, but often we are skeptical. We have to be convinced. We need to see it before we believe it! With this in mind let's consider God's faithfulness over the generations leading up to Jesus. What do we see when we examine God's actions? We see that God has a great desire for his people. Why does he love us so much?

"Why" is hard to answer, but it has something to do with his nature. He *is* love. He is defined by *relationship*. He designed us in his image—created us for relationship with him. This was broken through sin, and we became separated from him. However, God had a plan. And God is faithful.

### **1. Why do you think God created humankind? What do you think about this?**

His plan might surprise you. John 1 says, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us." (John 1:14 NIV). The "Word" refers to God. *God became flesh???* Yes! The Creator became part of his creation. He entered into our world. He came. Almighty God became a tiny baby. READ Luke 2:4-12.

### **2. What does this story show us about God?**

### **3. What surprises you about this story?**

Jesus became a baby. It was a humble beginning. *God is humble?* Think about "The humble King" or the "Humility of God." It almost sounds wrong to say that! If anyone could legitimately put himself first, it is God! Yet what we see is that the infinite God limited himself in a human body so that he could fulfill his mission!

Baby Jesus. God came as a defenseless, powerless little baby that needed humans (who he created!) to provide for him and take care of him. The God who has the whole world in his hands literally put himself in their hands.

The idea that God could or would become a human is very controversial to some. Much of ancient Greek philosophy proposes that our bodies are basically evil and only our spirits are good. These ideas have crept into the church where sometimes we have a very low view of our bodies and only value “spiritual things.” Yet when God had created mankind he called his creation “very good” (Gen. 1:31).

Taking the form of a man, Jesus was “restoring the Image of God” in many ways. One was redeeming the flesh. God created and said it was “good.” We do not need to hate our humanity, but let God redeem it.

- 4. What do you think is a good view of our bodies? How do we value them well?**
- 5. What does it mean that God was redeeming the flesh?**

Jesus was a man, but he was also fully God! Knowing that he was God, what did he do? READ John 13:3-5.

- 6. What surprises you about this passage?**
- 7. What does it mean to you that Jesus washed the disciples’ feet?**

Jesus also expects us to imitate him in his humility. After washing feet he said, “Go and do likewise.” Paul also writes, “In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus...” What was Jesus’ mindset? Read Philipians 2:5-11.

- 8. What do we learn about Jesus in this passage?**
- 9. How do we take Paul’s advice and “have the same mindset?”**

We see that humility can be recognizing your rights, but giving them up to serve others. John 3:16 says that “For God so love the world that he sent his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

All of this is about God loving people. He loves you! This story of God humiliating himself to become a man and suffer death on a cross is all because of his love for you!

- 10. What do all of Jesus’ actions tell us about how he feels about us?**
- 11. What are ways that we struggle to imitate Jesus’ humility?**
- 12. How can we use our rights and privileges to serve others?**

*GO DEEPER> Meditate on God’s love for you. Picture him kneeling to wash YOUR feet. Take some time to let him speak to you about this and how much he loves you. Adore him and tell him how grateful you are.*