

THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

Luke 14:7-15
Lesson #39
Humility and Honor
06/21/2020



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If we want
peace, we
must seek
justice

GOD'S WAY



3

“We’re tired of the national conversation centering on “What should we fear?” and “Who should we blame?”.”

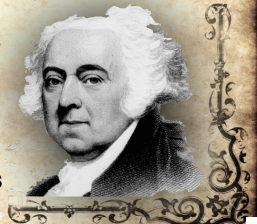
Brene Brown



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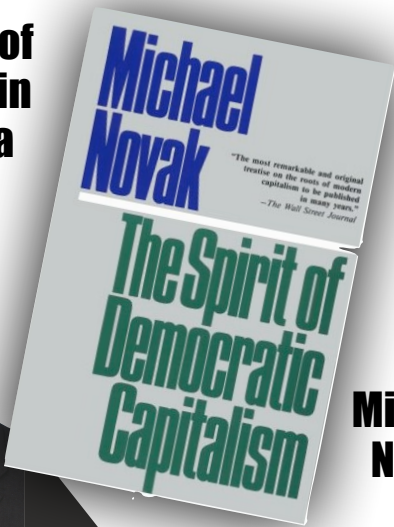
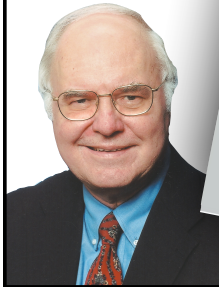
“Our constitution was made only for a moral and a religious people. It is wholly inadequate for the government of any other.”

John Adams



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The role of religion in America



Michael Novak

6

Democratic Government

The American System

Capitalistic Economy



Judeo-Christian ethical spirit

7

Without a Biblical ethical spirit:

Capitalism becomes the exploitation of the poor by the rich.



Democracy becomes the marginalization of the minority by the majority and an endless litigation of rights.



Pluralism dignifies every kind of divergence as a form of creativity.

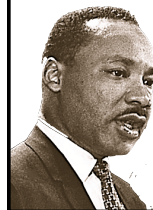
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How can we all get along?



"Morality cannot be legislated, but behavior can be regulated. Judicial decrees may not change the heart, but they can restrain the heartless."



Until we reach the heart all changes are only cosmetic.

Martin Luther King Jr.

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How can we all get along?



The Gospel of Jesus is a **"heart changer"**.

1. Manage **waiting** and expectations.
2. Manage **fear** and perception.
3. Manage **our opportunities**.
4. Manage **our own heart** first.

5. Manage our ego.

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We are facing a cultural "Headwind"

Americanized Evangelicalism is tainted by a libertarian spirit of independence from any external authority.

- **We are suspicious of central government** - We have a libertarian impulse.
- **We are suspicious of church hierarchy** - We have a local congregation mentality.
- **We are suspicious of community identity** - We have a "personal" (self defined) faith.
- **We are suspicious of a sovereign God** - We have a god made in our image.



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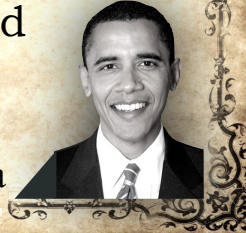
We live in a culture of increasingly confused values.

- *We confuse humility with weakness.*
- *We confuse self worth with net worth.*
- *We confuse competition with combat.*
- *We confuse general welfare with socialism.*
- *We confuse failure with being a loser.*
- *We confuse patriotism with nationalism.*
- *We confuse power with position & title.*
- *We confuse truth with optics.*
- *We confuse God's will with the American dream.*

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"We live in a culture that too often tells us our principal goal in life is to be rich, thin, young, famous, safe, and entertained."

Barack Obama



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Context of Luke 14

"1 And it came about when He went into the house of one of the leaders of the Pharisees on the **Sabbath** to eat bread, that they were watching Him closely. 2 And there, in front of Him was a certain man suffering from **dropsy (edema)**. 3 And Jesus answered and spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, 'Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?' 4 But they kept silent. And He took hold of him, and **healed** him, and sent him away. 5 And He said to them, 'Which one of you shall have a son or an ox fall into a well, and will not immediately pull him out on a Sabbath day?' 6 And they could make no reply to this. 7 And He began speaking a parable to the invited guests when He noticed how they had been picking out the places of honor at the table; saying to them . . ."

- **Jesus deliberately mocks them by healing on the Sabbath and then suggests that they treat animals with more respect than people to whom they felt superior.**

14

"8 'When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, lest someone more distinguished than you may have been invited by him, 9 and he who invited you both shall come and say to you, 'Give place to this man,' and then in disgrace you proceed to occupy the last place. 10 But when you are invited, go and recline at the last place, so that when the one who has invited you comes, he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher'; then you will have honor in the sight of all who are at the table with you. 11 **For everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, and he who humbles himself shall be exalted.**' 12 And He also went on to say to the one who had invited Him, 'When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, otherwise they may also invite you in return and that will be your repayment. 13 But when you give a reception, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, 14 and you will be blessed, since they do not have the means to repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

15 And when one of those who were reclining at the table with Him heard this, he said to Him, "Blessed is everyone who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!"

15

Proverbs 16:18

"**Pride** goes before destruction, and a **haughty (high) spirit** before stumbling."

Matthew 5:5

"Blessed are the **humble**, for they shall inherit the earth."

Implications

- **True strength is seen:**
 - **NOT** in exalting oneself
 - **BUT** in exalting the weak.



Humility is a sign of strength and a key to social peace.


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James 4

"1 **What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you?** Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? 2 You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. And you are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures. 4 You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. 5 Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: 'He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us?' 6 But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, '**God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.**'"

- **Harmony and Humility are linked.**

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His key to success
as president of Yale
University was

**“to grow
antennae,
not horns.”**

Dr. James Rowland Angell

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Growing Humility Antennae (TEAM)

1. **TONE** - Lay down your weapons -
Swords & shields do not enhance peace.
2. **EMPATHY** - Respectful listening -
Work just as hard at understanding as at
being understood.
3. **AFFIRMATION** - Common ground -
Build on what we share in common.
4. **MINISTRY** - Use your strength to
build up and affirm those who are passed
over, left out, pushed down, and abused.

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1. **TONE** - Lay down your weapons -
Swords & shields do not enhance peace.

“Smashing heads does not open minds.
America has become an *Argument Culture*
that urges us to approach the world in an
adversarial frame of mind. It rests on the
assumption that opposition is the best
way to get anything done, ...



Nearly everything is framed
as a battle or game in which
winning or losing is the main
concern.”

Deborah Tannen
Georgetown Univ. linguistics professor

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1. **TONE** - Lay down your weapons -
Swords & shields do not enhance peace.

- Jesus came as a **Shepherd** not a Warrior.

Matthew 5:9

“Blessed are the **peacemakers**
for they shall be called **sons of God.**”

- Changing a toxic environment starts with
the **changing of the hearts** of those in it.
- Changing hearts involves **changing
perceptions** and **removing fears**.
- This cannot be done without a
“ceasefire” and listening to one another.

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Our tone creates a slippery slope.

- Peacemaking is made very difficult
when we demonize others and view them
as “enemies” to be destroyed.

differ disagree disdain demonize



dialogue debate disengage destroy

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Don't let this become our national motto.

“If you can't
beat'm,
arrange to
have'm beaten.”



George Carlin

23

“Conflict is inevitable, but combat is not.”

Max Lucado



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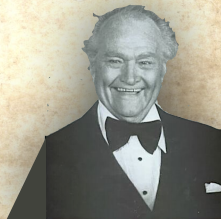
The language of war. . .

- **fosters “civil combat”** - where we call those who disagree with us “stupid, enemies, evil, un-American, human slime. etc.”
- **communicates a adversarial mindset** - an “us or them” mentality where there is no middle ground only winners and losers.
- **makes it harder for us to listen to others** - as we exclude them from respectful dialogue.
- **obscures the nature of the real challenge** - “E PLURIBUS UNUM” being one community with differing perspectives.

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“I should love my enemies, after all, I made’m.”

Red Skelton



26

“Peace is not merely a distant goal that we seek but a means by which we arrive at that goal.”

“Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend.”

Martin Luther King Jr.



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Brene Brown

Connecting with others calls for emotional disarmament -

- 1) laying down sword & shield,
- 2) avoiding warfare words,
- 3) **courageous vulnerability**

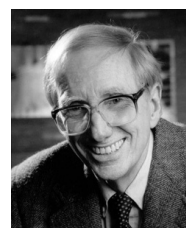
https://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_listening_to_shame

https://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_on_vulnerability

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2. EMPATHY - Respectful listening -

Work just as hard at understanding as at being understood.



Robert Bellah
(sociologist)

Expressive individualism

“We are moving to an ever greater validation of the sacredness of the individual person, **but our capacity to imagine a social fabric that would hold individuals together is vanishing.**”

We have classes on how to speak and persuade but why are there not classes on how to listen?

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- Jesus came to be **one with us**, not to lord it over us.

Philippians 2:7-8

Jesus “**emptied himself**, taking the form of a bond-servant. . . to the point of death, even **death a cross.**”

Galatians 5:14

“For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, “you shall **love your neighbor as yourself.**”



The essence of the Law
(ethics) is
empathy.

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There are generally three views in a social conflict:

My view



Your view

- **THE TRUTH** -

“The opposite of anger is not calmness, **it's empathy.**”

Dr. Oz



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2. **EMPATHY** - Respectful listening -

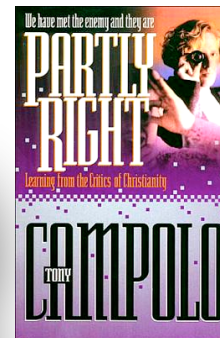
Work just as hard at understanding as at being understood.

What happens when we don't listen well?

- **We don't grow** - We are designed to be a part of a larger body or community through whom God speaks to us through one another.
- **We don't convince** - If I hope to influence someone, my first move should be to win their trust and respect by listening to & understanding **THEM**.
- **We don't behave** - When people do not feel that they are heard, they turn up the volume, shut off the hearing aids, exaggerate differences, and gather a defense team or they just walk away.

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By listening to those who disagree with me
I hope to see things that I need to see but can't see because I refuse to see or am afraid to see.



Tony Campolo

Hegel
Nietzsche
Kierkegaard
Dostoyevsky
Freud
Marx



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So what do we take home?

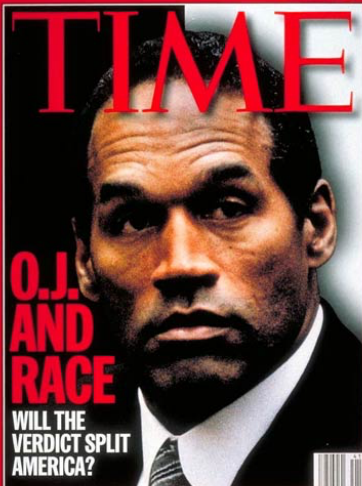
Look at **Jesus' teaching** and example for guidance in managing conflicts.

Growing Humility Antennae

1. **TONE** - Lay down your weapons - Swords & shields do not enhance peace.
2. **EMPATHY** - Respectful listening - Work just as hard at understanding as at being understood.

Look at **political figures and cable news commentators** for examples of what NOT TO DO in managing conflict.

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The evidence was a slam dunk for conviction.

The verdict suggested that the L.A. PD and Racism (not O.J.) were on trial.

Could it be that God is more concerned about developing “**white**” empathy than justice?

Matt. 18:34-35
(Lesson #17)

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