

## The Philosophy of Humility

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This thesis is a philosophical investigation into the virtue of humility, how it is defined, and whether it can be considered a positive trait. I compare and contrast varying accounts of humility by various philosophers like James Kellenberger and Mark Button who claim that humility is either a vague category of virtues or claim that humility involves viewing oneself as less than what one truly is. I also evaluate the classic Christian account of humility in light of more modern views. Additionally, I attempt to distinguish humility from modesty, servility, self-underestimation, arrogance and other related concepts as well as the ways humility can be disingenuous. Using the examples of Cincinnatus, the Roman leader and the ancient Greek Diogenes as paradigms for defining humility, I argue that humility is an internal quality possessed by some that can not simply be willed into or out of existence. Essentially, humility is the lack of a desire to be glorified, or to act without seeking recognition. Given the ease by which humility can be falsified, genuine humility is most beneficial to the individual who possesses this attitude. Humility may promote moral autonomy, a greater sense of purpose, compassion, and personal development. The virtue of humility can also have benefits in the field of sports and in a democratic society. Moreover, I attempt to tackle some well-known objections to humility by Friedrich Nietzsche and Baruch Spinoza. This analysis offers a moral defense of humility not because failure to be humble is unethical, but because there are consequential benefits that the humble may reap.