

Humbly Submit To God
James 4:6-10

6 But He gives a greater grace. Therefore *it* says, "GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE." 7 Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.

NOTE:

The grace that God gives to the humble does not negate our responsibility to obey. We are given grace so that we CAN OBEY.

"What comfort there is in this verse! His resources are never at an end, his patience is never exhausted, his initiative never stops, his generosity knows no limit: he gives more grace." Alec Motyer

There are 10 commands in v. 7-10. Spiritual growth and maturity is not instant and effortless. There is no drive through spirituality. There may be "instant grits", but there is no instant spiritual maturity.

Grace is not opposed to effort; it is opposed to earning.

v. 6 The solution to conflicts, etc – humble yourself before God.

The gift of grace is not the carrot for us to be humble, but God's opposition to the proud may be a stick.

In my way of thinking I don't want to find myself in a place where I've made God my opponent. Friends, that is not a fair fight. It is NEVER to our advantage to have God opposed to us. It's not like God is some ornery old, "Get off my lawn" kind of guy, but you don't want to find Him on the opposing team. God is gracious enough to tell us what we need to avoid...

Prov 6

16 There are six things which the LORD hates,
Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him:
17 Haughty eyes, a lying tongue,
And hands that shed innocent blood,
18 A heart that devises wicked plans,
Feet that run rapidly to evil,
19 A false witness *who* utters lies,
And one who spreads strife among brothers.

All of those are manifestations of PRIDE.

There is more grace to be had, but the scripture shows humility is something we receive, not achieve. We receive it by trusting in all the God is for us in Christ. He gives us security that is not based on our performance and it frees us from depending on others to be our savior. When the words "It is Finished" seep into the areas of unbelief, they leave the spiritual DNA of humility on our hearts.

Humility is the by-product of the gospel. We progress in humility by going back to what Christ has done for us.

When Humility happens, relational healing happens. When what we have received vertically goes horizontal, relationships are healed.

God gives the grace and then we respond with an obedient walk as described in v. 7-9

v. 7 Relationships flourish when humility is practiced.

What does it look like?

1. **SUBMISSION to God** – toward God and others; take yourself out of the way Prov 3

5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart

And do not lean on your own understanding.

6 In all your ways acknowledge Him,

And He will make your paths straight.

7 Do not be wise in your own eyes;

Fear the LORD and turn away from evil.

Begin the day remembering the greatness of God and you become unimpressed with yourself – Billy Graham.

The word “submit” has a sense of enlistment and allegiance in taking up the cause of a superior to engage in the fight under His Banner– Motyer.

Jesus – “take up your cross and follow me.”

The path of allegiance that Jesus describes includes

-dying to self-

-counting the cost ahead of time and no turning back

Luke 9 61 Another also said, "I will follow You, Lord; but first permit me to say good-bye to those at home." 62 But Jesus said to him, "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

-The loss of relational ties

Luke 14 "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciple. ²⁷And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

2. **Resist the Devil**

**NOTE – Once again, James refers to the demonic influence that we face in our spiritual lives. We must be aware that there are spiritual forces at work that seek to destroy us.

Submission to God does NOT rule out spiritual warfare.

“James knows of no act of consecration to God which takes us out of the conflict.” – Motyer

It’s really the opposite. Once we humble ourselves and are given grace, the enemy attacks.

The Devil wants to silence our voices by getting us to pursue and follow our own agenda, rather than following Jesus.

EX: Garden of Eden – Satan tried to convince them that they could become like God; they didn’t need God’s grace, power and mercy. They were capable – “You can do it.” As a result they became enslaved to their own appetites.

C. S. Lewis observed in *Mere Christianity*: “What Satan put into the heads of our remote ancestors was the idea that they could ‘be like gods’—could set up on their own as if they had created themselves—be their own masters—invent some sort of happiness for themselves outside God, apart from God. And out of that hopeless attempt has come nearly all that we call human history—money, poverty, ambition, war, prostitution, classes, empires, slavery—the long terrible story of man trying to find something other than God which will make him happy.”

The schemes and temptations of the enemy will come in various forms – fruit from a tree, circumcision or no circumcision, eating meat sacrificed to idols, etc.
These are things that seem small, strange, and insignificant in our eyes.

Rf: v.4-5 friendship with the world is enmity with God because the spirit of the age/the prince of the power of the air of this world IS AT enmity with God.

While it may seem that the battles are being fought over political or social issues, the war behind the scenes is far bigger.

Throughout the history of the church, believers who stood for biblical principles have often been attacked under the guise of political issues or disputes.

Act 17 6 When they did not find them, they *began* dragging Jason and some brethren before the city authorities, shouting, “These men who have upset the world have come here also; 7 and Jason has welcomed them, and they all act contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus.”

When you proclaim that there is another king, you will run afoul of the powers that be.

In the 1st century, Christians didn’t face persecution simply because they worshiped Christ. They were persecuted because they WOULD NOT proclaim that Caesar is Lord. That was viewed as a political crime against the state.

Separatist in England got into trouble because of a difference over loyalty to the king and his role in the affairs of the church.- (Act of Supremacy – to deny it was seen as treason)

The Reformers faced opposition because their biblical views had implications for the religious and civil institutions, which were often mingled in their day.

Christians who supported the civil rights movement of the 60’s on biblical grounds were accused of breaking civil / political laws, not religious laws.

Christians who take a stand for pro-life, pro-Biblical marriage, pro-Image of God in male and female, pro-Religious Freedom in your private and public life, etc. are opposed outwardly based on political grounds, but the issues are far deeper. There is a reason why Religious Freedoms are under attack today.

The battle behind the scenes is over ultimate authority and truth. Are we autonomous, able to define ourselves and our existence, or are we to live according to the laws of nature and nature’s God?

As believers, we acknowledge that there is an authority higher than the State?

To resist the devil is as simple as practicing humility and obedience to the Word of God over obedience to the DECEITFUL schemes of the world and the spirit of the age.

Don’t try this apart from the power of the HS and be sure to be equipped with the armor of God.

Eph 6 Armor of God

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

13 Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. 14 Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

18 With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints,

God has not left us alone in our battle against the world forces of this darkness.

8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

We'll actually come back to this in more detail next week. But as we prepare for the Lord's Table, let's understand that we can draw near to God because HE FIRST came near to us.

Jesus came with clean hands, a pure heart, and was NOT double-minded.

As we partake of the supper, we can draw near by faith and feed on Christ who gave Himself for us.

In and through Christ, there is hope for the double-minded sinner. You can get back on track.

"There is more mercy in Christ than sin in us." *Richard Sibbes*

James gives the exhortation because he knows that it is easy to lose touch with God. Drawing Near is not a one-time event. It is a lifestyle of the habits of grace.

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