

HUMBLE YOURSELVES

IN THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD
AND HE WILL EXALT YOU
(James 4:10)

This command fits very practically into the context of other specific commands that James gives in 4:6-10. He gives these steps in answer to a presupposed question "How do we get back to God once we've committed 'spiritual adultery'?" (finding fulfillment in anything else other than God is worldliness; James 4:1-4). However, the more I studied, the more I discovered that HUMILITY is a spiritual quality emphasized throughout scripture, and that without it one will never get anywhere spiritually! Look what Micah said (6:8)

"What does the Lord require?

But to ... walk humbly with thy God."

"Humility is an elusive thing. Some say it is a character trait that once you think you achieve it - you've just lost it. Maybe it's when you don't know you have it, that you really do have it. If you are to walk worthy (Eph.4:1-2), humility must be a reality in your life. Humility is the basic ingredient for all spiritual blessing. God is opposed to the proud, but will exalt the humble (Js.4:6). A person cannot be saved without humility (Matt.18:3-4). That's the only way into the family of God - and once you're in, there's no other way to walk!" - Dr. John Mac Arthur.

Therefore, let's look at what God does say about it. We are exhorted in Scripture to humble ourselves toward God.

I Pet.5:5-6
Js.4:6,10

Micah 6:8

We are also exhorted in Scripture to humble ourselves toward others.

Phil.2:3-4
Col.3:12

Eph.4:1-2
Eph.5:21
Lk.14:8-11

The word humble, means "to bring down; to make low." Humbling ourselves is not something we have to do because we're sinners - because Jesus did it (Phil.2:3-11; Jn.13:1-17), and He had no sin (2 Cor.5:21)! However, because we are sinners - that's all the more reason why we must. Christ's humility led Him down to us - so our humility can lead us closer to Him.

So then HOW DO WE HUMBLE OURSELVES? (write down a brief sentence of observation stating the principle revealed).

Gen.18:27

Prov.10:8

Gen.32:10

Prov.12:15

2 Chron.7:14

Prov.22:4

Ps.8:3-4

Prov.25:6-7

Ps.34:2

Prov.27:2

Ps.69:30-32

Prov.30:32

Ps.86:1

Ecc1.5:2

Ps.131:1

Isa.2:10-17

Isa.6:5	Rom.12:10
Isa.57:15	Rom.12:16
Isa.66:2	1 Cor.2:1-3
Jer.9:24	1 Cor.10:12
Jer.45:5	1 Cor.13:4
Ezek. 16:63	2 Cor.11:30
Zeph.3:11-12	2 Cor.12:5-12
Matt.11:29	Gal.5:26
Matt.18:2-4	Gal.6:3
Matt.20:26-27	Gal.6:14
Matt.23:11-12	Eph.4:2
Luke 7:6	Eph.5:21
Luke 14:10	Phil.2:3-11
Luke 17:10	Col.3:12
Luke 18:13-14	Js.1:9-10
Luke 22:24-27	Js.4:6
Jn.13:14-16	Js.4:10
Rom.7:18	1 Pet.5:5
Rom.11:20	1 Pet.5:6
Rom.12:3	

Now, where are we to humble ourselves? It sounds like an interesting question - I never would have asked it but for the fact that James and Peter answer it!

1. In the presence of God (Js.4:10).
2. Under God's mighty hand (1 Pet.5:6).

You see, without an increasing awareness and understanding of the person, nature, attributes, and works of God, we would never be truly humble.

#1 is a matter of your being there (in His presence), and #2 is a matter of your allowing God to do what He's doing and submit cooperatively to it by responding correctly.

What is the ENEMY of humility?

Isa.14:12-15	Prov.16:18
Prov.11:2	Prov.21:4
Prov.16:5	

(Remember, to overcome pride we must keep in perspective the previous principles on "How to Humble Ourselves").

Now, if we don't humble ourselves, our creative God (also our loving heavenly Father who know what's best for us) will help us. Be aware that pride, self will, boasting, self righteousness, and sin will bring consequences that teach us the hard way.

Deut.8:2-6

Lk.15:11-19

Dan.4:29-37

Lk.18:9-14

HOW DOES GOD RESPOND TO THE HUMBLE?

Humility is the key to releasing God's

power and blessing to us and through us. Observe what God is free to do now, on our behalf, that we would otherwise miss.

2 Chron.7:14-15

Isa.2:10-17

Job.5:11

Isa.29:19

Job 22:29

Isa.57:15

Job 42:4-6

Isa.66:2

Ps.9:12

Zeph.3:11-12

Ps.10:17

Matt.5:3

Ps.22:26

Matt.11:29

Ps.25:9

Matt.18:2-4

Ps.37:11

Lk.1:52

Ps.138:6

Lk.6:20

Ps.147:6

Lk.10:21

Ps.149:4

Lk.14:11

Prov.3:34

1 Cor.1:28-29

Prov.11:2

Phil.2:3-5 (6-11)

Prov.15:33

Js.4:6

Prov.16:19

Js.4:10

Prov.22:4

1 Pet.5:5

Prov.29:23

1 Pet.5:6

There are, I'm sure, many other Scriptural concepts relating the beneficial characteristics and rewards we will experience as God responds to our humbling ourselves. But think through the quality of life and the value of blessing God is offering to us!

Assurance (Isa.57:15)

Exaltation (Js.4:10)

Blessing (Matt.5:3)

Peace (Ps.37:11)

Life (Prov.22:4)

Honor (Prov.15:33)

Selflessness (Phil.2:3-4)

Riches (Prov.22:4)

Christlike attitude (Phil.2:5)

Guidance (Ps.25:9)

Christlike living (Phil.2:6-11)

Blessing (Prov.16:19)

Rest (Matt.11:29)

Teaching (Ps.25:9)

Wisdom (Prov.11:2)

Satisfaction (Ps.22:26)

Grace (Js.4:6; Prov.3:34) - unlocking the door to whatever we need (motivation, desire, power, help...) to live and do the will of God!

These terms reveal how God exalts us! He exalts us by giving us all that we need to live for Him and become Christlike. He exalts us by rewarding us openly with this quality of life: abundant, victorious living!

- a life that proves the existence of God.
- a life that reflects steadfastness and maturity.
- a life that attracts.
- a life that is successful and productive.
- a life that creates a hunger and thirst for righteousness.
- a life that communicates the reality of a vital relationship to the Word of Life, Himself. (Observe Josh.1:8; Ps.1:1-6; Matt.6:1-6)

The bottom line is that God will always oppose (or literally, "deliberately set Himself against") the proud - the one who lives apart from God in any way; the one who says:

- "I can do it myself" (self-sufficient and dependent).
- "I don't need God or His help."
- "I'm not that bad."
- "I'm pretty good at what I do."
- "I've..., I'm..., I..."

But HE gives grace (whatever is needed) to the HUMBLE - the one who is constantly acknowledging:

1. Who God is (holiness, wrath, justice, love grace, mercy, forgiveness).
2. Who I am.
3. What sin is (effects on me, others, God...)
4. I need to depend on God's (Word, Spirit) to live (Matt.4:4; Zech.4:6; Jn.15:1-15)

- Humility is to be an attitude that pervades our lifestyle.
- Humility is to be accurately viewing ourselves the way God sees us.
- Humility is recognizing our true place in life (servant of God to others).
- Humility is neither thinking nor pretending to be more than one really is (Rom.12:3).
- Humility is realizing that all that's worthwhile has been given by God according to His sovereign grace.
- Humility is an active, not a passive attitude.
- Humility is putting others first.
- Humility is balancing and/or rightly acknowledging:
 1. Without Him I, can do nothing (Jn.15:5).
 2. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me (Phil.4:13).

Grace (Jn.4:6; Prov.3:34) - unlocking the door to whatever we need (motivation, desire, power, help...) to live and do the will of God!

Since we can learn humility best from example; who are the Bible characters we can remember that reflected this quality in their lives, and how did they?

Gen.32:10

Lk.15:19

Ex.3:11, 4:10

Lk.18:13-14

2 Sam.7:18-19

Rom.7:14

2 Sam.19:20

Rom.7:18

Ezra 9:13

1 Tim.1:12-15

Neh.1:6

Jn.1:27

Job 7:20

Jn.3:30

Job 40:4-5

Acts 20:19

Job 42:4-6

1 Cor.15:9-10

Ps.8:3-4

2 Cor.3:5; Cor.12:7

Ps.131:1

Eph.3:8

Isa.6:5

Phil.3:12-13

Ps.40:17

Phil.4:12

Ps.22:6

Rev.4:10

Lk.5:8

Lk.7:6-7

OUR GREATEST and MOST PERFECT EXAMPLE: THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

"... take my yoke upon you and learn of me"

It is the responsibility of every Christian to "walk even as He walked," to acquire the same attitudes, responses, goals, and purposes as Jesus Christ. This is possible because the Holy Spirit dwells in every Christian enabling him to become like Christ. Study the following passages and write down the specific ways Christ humbled Himself in obedience to God for others (us!).

Phil.2:6-8

Jn.17:4

Matt.1:18-25

Jn.5:30

Lk.2:51

Jn.10:11

Matt.3:13-15

2 Cor.8:9

Matt.20:28

2 Cor.5:21

Jn.13:4-15

Gal.4:4

Matt.26:67-68

Isa.53:2-3

Jn.10:15-18

Isa.53:4-12

And look at the REWARDS from God the Father.

Acts 2:22-36

Eph.4:8-10

Heb.1:1-2

Phil.2:9-10

Heb.2:10

Rev.5:1-14

Heb.2:17

Rev.19:11-16

When you think back on these Scriptural examples and even great leaders of the past and present - it's obvious that it's not the arrogant, proud, or greedy that have gained our respect and honor - but those who have had a "servant's heart." Christ Himself came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many."

"If any man desires to be first - let him be the servant of all" (Mark 9:35).

"Whoever would be great among you, let him serve (see Mk.10:43-45).

"Whoever exalts himself shall be abased, and he that humbles himself shall be exalted (see Lk.14:10-11).

"Humility is the virtue by which a man becomes conscious of his own unworthiness." -Bernard

Humility is the only thing that defeats pride! Here's what John Mac Arthur says to do when you are feeling proud. "If you ever get the feeling that you're "pretty hot stuff," just read Isaiah 51:1, "Look unto the rock from which ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit from which ye are digged." In other words, don't forget where you came from! If you have any tendency to be proud, go back to Eph.2:1-3 and read about yourself being "dead in trespasses and sins; in which times past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience." Read that you were guided by "the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath." Remind yourself of who you are, when you want to be proud.

If you are not continually, consciously, and honestly acknowledging before God who He is, who you are, and that you need His help, wisdom, power, guidance, and love, then you'll be depending on self and not cultivating humility.

For further study, I have available:

"How to Have A Biblically Accurate View of Ourselves"

"How Does God View Sin?"

"Overcoming the Sin of Pride"

Also see "Happy are the Nobodies" (poor in Spirit), chapter 3 in

"Kingdom Living" by John Mac Arthur.

"Serving" (Bible study)

And look at the REWARDS from God the Father.
Acts 2:32-36
Heb.1:1-3
Phil.2:8-10
Rev.2:10
Rev.2:17
Rev.19:11-16
Jn.10:15-18
Matt.26:67-68
Jn.13:4-15
Matt.20:28
Matt.3:13-15
1 Cor.8:9
2 Cor.2:21
Gal.4:4
Jas.23:2-5
Jas.23:4-12