

Living Humbly  
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Opening exercise using our smart phones: Go to [www.biblestudytools.com](http://www.biblestudytools.com). Pick a word to search: “humble, humbly, humility, or meek.” Any verses speak to you about living humbly?

Pastor Johnny writes:

*“Humility may be the most confusing virtue in the Christian life. How does one know he or she is humble? Is it possible to work toward humility? Is believing oneself to be humble actually being prideful? James raises several questions about humility in the believers life in (this passage), but not without offering spirit-inspired answers upon which believers can depend.”*

James 4:7–12 (ESV)

7 Submit yourselves 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 wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

11 Do not speak evil against one another, brothers. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. 12 There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?

- Verse seven: The word “therefore” connects this passage to what we studied last week.
- Look back at verses one through four and let’s review what we learned.
- Verse one: **Why did we say there were quarrels and fights among these believers?**
- Verse two: **What goes on inside a person who starts fights and quarrels?**
- Verse three: **What was wrong with their prayer life?**
- Verse four: **What effect was the pagan world having on these quarrelers?**
- We left off in verse six with the beginnings of a solution to this problem of PRIDE:
- *6 But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”* It’s a battle between our sin nature and our new nature. Between pride and humility.
- Verse seven, **what does James say is the first step in defeating pride and living humbly?**
- When we are studying the Bible we don’t want to rush past key words, especially VERBS.
- How do you define “submit?” You don’t have to be a Greek scholar on this one.
- The Merriam Webster Dictionary’s first definition: “1 a: to yield oneself to the authority or will of another: surrender” Greek: Hypotasso - “to place or rank under; to obey; to put in subjection”
- **How is submission thought of in our culture? Why is it so hard, even for Christians?**
- **When we submit to God how does Satan respond?**
- Pastor Johnny: *“Any endeavor the Christian pursues for the glory of the cross will always be met with devilish resistance.”*
- The second part of verse seven teaches us “Spiritual self-defense.” **What is it?**
- Verses eight through ten give us several actions to clean up our prideful state and move to humility. Verse eight: **What is the first step? How does that contrast with verse seven?**
- This paints a picture of a child running FROM danger and running TO the security of their strong parent. Imagine a child that was bold or careless enough to play in a dangerous situation. Once they realize the danger they run to the parent to defend them. Then there are tears, regret, and a promise not to do that again. That’s a picture of repentance!
- It’s one thing to TALK about drawing near to God, it’s another to DO it consistently.

Matthew 15:8 (ESV) 8 “This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me;

- Verse eight tells us: “Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.” **What is James describing? What does ‘washing our hands’ speak to?**
- **Why does he say clean up both hands and hearts? Why is bathing is a good metaphor?**
- **Why would a person who had been starting fights with Christians be “double minded?”**
- **How can we become “single-minded” when we make choices every day?**

Colossians 3:2 (ESV)

2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.

- **Verse nine is a real downer isn’t it? Doesn’t God want His children to be joyful?**

Any loving parent wants their child to be happy. But no parent in their right mind wants their child to laugh at a funeral! When Christians view our own sin, it’s a time to “mourn.”

Psalms 51:17 (ESV)

17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

Psalms 34:18 (ESV)

18 The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.

We joke: “You clean up pretty good!” It’s not enough to clean up on the outside. Repentance is an “inside job.” It has to be felt...and surrendered to...deep inside at the heart level.

- Once we’ve been sad for our sin and repented, there’s good news!
- **Verse ten: How is this an example of the “topsy turvy,” up is down, first is last, nature of the Christian life?**
- Verse eleven shifts from what to DO to what NOT to do. It ties to chapter three’s teaching on the destructive power of the tongue: *“Do not speak evil against one another, brothers.”*
- **What kind of evil do many Christians carelessly speak of other Christians?**
- One commentator states that some believers ‘consider “fault finding” their Spiritual gift!’
- Verses eleven and twelve say it’s not just “rude” or “hurtful” to speak evil against other Christians. **What does verse eleven say is the bigger issue?**
- **When I choose to drive faster than the speed limit, what do I think about the law?**
- **How does that same idea apply to verse twelve?**
- That last line of verse twelve is convicting: *“But who are you to judge your neighbor?”*
- Pastor Johnny: *“If we took James’ challenge seriously, the body of Christ would be far less inclined to judge their neighbors and far more inclined to love their neighbors as James indicated in the Royal law (2:8).”*

So, What’s The Takeaway?

- Three simple instructions: SUBMIT; DRAW NEAR; and HUMBLE OURSELVES.
- Simple instructions...but hard to do. Even for Christians.

Warren Wiersbe writes:

“If we obey these three instructions, then God will draw near, cleanse us, and forgive us; and the wars will cease! We will not be at war with God, so we will not be at war with ourselves. This means we will not be at war with others.”

Isaiah 32:17 says, ...the effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever.

Micah 6:8 (ESV)

8 He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?