



James 4:7 The Outworking of Humility Pt 1: Submitting to God

Nov 22, 2015

Text: James 4:7

- Last week, we examined the biblical **imperative** to humble ourselves.
- Like any biblical imperative, it is based in the ultimate indicative of the Gospel of Jesus, that the Son of God shed His blood for our sins! **So our motive for humility (and EVERYTHING ELSE), flows out of the Gospel and becomes the fruit and witness of the Gospel of our Lord!**
- We learned that God **opposes** the proud! We said that “if the LORD resists or opposes something or someone, oh, dear friends, let us not indulge in that something or be that someone!”
- Matthew Henry wrote that this wording in James 4:6 “signifies God's setting himself as in battle array against them.” He continues: “Can there be a greater disgrace than for God to proclaim a man a rebel, an enemy, a traitor to his crown and dignity, and to proceed against him as such? The proud resists God; in his understanding he resists the truths of God; in his will he resists the truths of God; in his will he resists the laws of God; in his passions he resists the providence of God; and therefore no wonder that God sets himself against the proud. Let proud spirits hear this and tremble - God resists them.”
- Throughout this epistle, James has been correcting behavior. In the last few verses he has called out particular sins prevalent in his congregation and is beginning to point them to some practical helps.
- Now, James aids the hearer's understanding of how to walk in greater humility. We might ask a few contextual questions to better understand the coming instructions:
 - How is one to honor Christ by avoiding quarreling and fighting and controlling warring passions within? (4:1)
 - How is one to honor Christ by defeating such brutal sins as murder and covetousness? (4:2)
 - How is one to honor Christ by praying prayers from a place of contriteness and prayers more in line with His will? (4:3)
 - What must one do to avoid idolatry and friendship with the world? (4:4)
 - What must one do to demonstrate his fidelity to God alone; to refuse to provoke Him to jealousy; to acknowledge that the Lord of the Universe “yearns” to be close to us? (4:5)
 - In other words, how is one to honor Christ through a growing meekness and trembling before Him?
- Making it personal, CRCC, how can we become the kind of Christ-followers who constantly **please** our master? What must be planted and **cultivated** in our daily character that will yield a Jesus-pleasing harvest?
- Remember, the motive for the imperatives in Scripture is always the **Gospel!** How might we honor the God who gave so much, gives so much, and will give so much to sinners like us?
- In the grace of the God who gives more grace :), James outlines at least five things we can do in verses 7-10:
 1. Submit to God (4:7)
 2. Resist the devil (4:7)
 3. Draw near to God (4:8)
 4. Cleanse our hands and purify our hearts (4:8)
 5. Mourn and weep (over our sins, 4:9)

- The Holy Spirit then restates the purpose for these instructions in 4:10: “Humble yourselves before the Lord and He will exalt you.”

Submitting to God

Thoughts on Submission:

Up first is one of the hardest parts of humility in the entire process...the root of it...the **foundation** upon which it stands in my opinion.

➡ Against every natural instinct we have, the Christian must learn to **SUBMIT**.

The word for submit here is *hupotassō* in Greek. It means 1) to arrange under, to subordinate, 2) to subject, put in subjection, 3) to subject one's self, obey, 4) to submit to one's control, 5) to yield to one's admonition or advice, or 6) to obey, be subject.

It comes from a root word that simply means “under.” Here are a few more thoughts:

- Submission is a **mature** mandate. It is the mark of someone who has gone beyond grudging obedience to love. (John 14:15)
- Obedience is the act. Submission is the **attitude**. Both are required.
- The sort of submission God wants from His children flows from the **heart**. (Eph 5:22) He wants to be wanted!
- Submission should not be **selective**. You are either submitted to God or you aren't.
 - This isn't to say that we don't make mistakes; we do! However, there is a difference between a maturing believer who is submitted to God and makes mistakes and an immature believer still fighting Him at every turn.
 - The good news is the same faith that saved us can empower us to put some work with that faith! (James 2)
- From the time of our birth we resist submission. In the Garden, Adam and Eve failed to submit. We've been failing ever since! It is the nature of sin. It is within the sin-nature to rebel against God!
- The battle is LOST if we refuse to acknowledge that within all of us is the capacity and will to rebel.
- The simple lessons in our text today (Jam 4:7) are noteworthy. It gives both the command to submit to God, names the one who refuses to (the devil), and implies that submission to God IS in effect, resistance of the devil! Oh, please understand this!!!!
 1. When you submit to Scripture, any portion of it, with a humble heart, you resist the devil!
 2. When you decide to govern an area of your life by the Word of God, you resist the devil!
 3. When you draw a line in the spiritual sand and decide to submit to God in the area of your marriage, or your propriety, or your money, or your entertainment, or your love for others, or your service to the church, or...or...or...YOU RESIST THE DEVIL! (*More on this next week Lord willing!*)
- I also find it interesting that James issues this command unto itself. He doesn't feel any need to explain how to submit. He just says (to Christians), “submit.”
- **Might it be that we who have the Holy Spirit inside us and the Word of God before us have all we need to submit?**

Applications to consider this Week:

1. **Think** through the biblical commands you have been avoiding.
2. **Examine** your heart. Ask, "Why is submission to God in this area(s) so difficult?"
3. **Determine** to obey God in love. Simply begin doing.

May our Lord help us love Him through our submission.

Amen.

Additional Family Worship/Devotional reading for Encouragement

- *Psalms 119 (Pay particular attention to the "attitude" of the psalmist concerning the Word of God)*
- *1 Peter Chapter 1*
- *1 John Chapter 2*
- *1 John Chapter 3*