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Humility, Worship and our Adversary the Devil



Part 8 (070318PM)

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Resisting the devil starts with humility (a deep sense of my littleness and God's greatness).

When you resist pride you are resisting the devil's foothold in your life. The two most pointed passages about believers and pride also include a warning about spiritual warfare? Both James 4 and this passage in Peter, cite the devil and his constant warfare against us in the context of pride.

Pride opens the door of our lives to the devouring influence of Satan.

That is the warning we see in God's Word. And what does God say is our protection from being devoured? Of all things it is HUMILITY! Open with James 4.

James 4:4-10 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. 5 Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"? 6 But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble." 7 Therefore submit 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 Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

Humility not only closes the door to the prowling devil, it opens the door to worship. Nothing is more powerful about humility than the increased freedom in worship.

The conclusion of God's Word says all of us born-again believers in the Lord Jesus Christ be doing what one thing forever around God's Throne? Yes, endlessly offering humbly-adoring, reverently-lifted **worship!**

Humility is the most prominent feature of Heaven from our perspective as believers. Every believer we see in Heaven is constantly doing one thing over and over—falling on their faces before an Awesome God who alone is the One to be worship-worthy, adoration-receiving, and humility-receiving.

Remember how Paul described true believers as humble-worshippers? Those two, humility and worship seem to be tied. Look at [Philippians 3:3](#).

Philippians 3:3 For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh,

Worship flows from a humble heart. Paul said that worship flows from the life emptied of selfishness and pride. When we are liberated from the tyranny of our own self-driven agenda and onto Christ's we find worship rising from our lives.

So Paul is here giving us a ...

Lesson in Godly Humility

- Humility **begins** with proper self-awareness.

Humility is "the virtue by which a man becomes conscious of his own unworthiness" so said Bernard of Clairvaux who wrote that grand hymn "Jesus the Very Thought of Thee".

Humility begins with an honest, unadorned, unretouched view of oneself as we saw last week in the 101 ways we are proud. The first thing the honest person sees in them self is sin, and therefore one of the surest marks of true humility is systematic

confession of sin.

"If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:8-9).

"We are not bold to class or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves," Paul says; "but when they measure themselves by themselves, and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding" (2 Cor. 10:12).

It is not only unspiritual but unwise to judge ourselves by comparison with others. We often exaggerate our own good qualities and minimize the good qualities of others. Humility takes off our rose-colored glasses and allows us to see ourselves as we really are.

- Second, humility **CONTINUES** WITH Christ-awareness.

Humility opens our eyes to see Christ clearly; but pride fogs and obscures the Glory of Christ.

Pride compares self with others and feels better; humility compares self to Christ as like Job, Isaiah, Peter, and John falls at Christ's feet as unclean and melting away before His Glory and Majesty.

Humility sees Jesus as the only standard by which righteousness and anything that pleases God can be judged. Humility sees God's goal for us is "to walk in the same manner as He walked" (1 John 2:6), and then confesses that only Jesus Christ walked in perfection. Only of Jesus has God ever said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased" (Matt. 3:17), and so only in Jesus can we be pleasing to God.

Our business success, fame, education, wealth, personality, good works, or anything else we are or have in ourselves only hinders our access with God.

Approaching God with the attitude of the humbled tax-collector, saying, "God, be merciful to me, the sinner," brings God's immediate and loving response. "For everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, but he who humbles himself shall be exalted" (Luke 18:13-14).

- Third, humility **ENDS** IN God-awareness.

Our ultimate and eternal goal is to "worship God in the Spirit" (Phil. 3:3) as Paul says. This involves "rejoicing in Christ Jesus" and His Cross. But the starting place is ever and always "having no confidence in the flesh". We neither please God by our own works, nor serve Him by them. Only humble and Spirit-energized ministry and Spirit-energized worship is accepted.

So the more we see the Lord as Isaiah saw Him, "sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted" the more we want to join in the cries of the seraphim, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory," and then, we will become aware with Isaiah of our utter unworthiness. Then our humble worship begins as his began with the confession, "Woe is me, for I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts" (Isa. 6:1, 3, 5). [1]

So how do we start? We begin the earnest pursuit of humility, energized by the Spirit, and always remembering the Cross of Jesus. Here are a few areas we can begin:

Growing True Humility:

- **WE MUST FOCUS OUR LIVES AWAY FROM SELF:**

James 4:10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up. (KJV)

The first step we must take to experience godly humility is to turn our eyes off ourselves and to look to God. We can do this each time we stop our self-driven lives and pause to study His Word. We can do this as we jump off the treadmill and learn to humbly seek His face in prayer. We humble ourselves when we sincerely desire to be near Him and please Him, all of these choices move us toward humility, the admission that we are poor in spirit.

As we grow in God's Word and stay in the shadow of the Cross, the Spirit opens through the Scriptures a vision of the infinitely Holy God in all His sinless purity and perfection—then we can see ourselves as sinners by contrast. To seek humility, we do not look at ourselves to find the faults, but at God Almighty to behold His perfection.

- **WE MUST DENY OUR OWN UNGODLY, WORLDLY LUST FOR PRIDE:**

Titus 2:12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; (KJV)

Secondly, we must starve the flesh by removing the things on which it feeds. The essence of the fleshly nature is pride, and to starve the flesh is to remove and avoid those things that promote pride.

Rather than looking for praise, compliments, and popularity, we should be wary of them. Yet because our human sinfulness has a way of turning even the best intentions to its advantage, we need to be careful not to make an issue of avoiding praise and recognition.

The evil is not in being given praise but in seeking it and glorying in it. When, without having sought it, we are praised or honored, to ungraciously reject the recognition may be an act of pride rather than of humility.

- **WE MUST REQUEST CHRIST TO CLOTHE US OVER AND OVER WITH HIS HUMILITY:**

1 Peter 5:5-6 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. 6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: (KJV)

The third principle in coming to humility is asking God for it. Humility, like every other good gift, comes only from God. Also as with every other good thing, He is more willing to give it than we are to ask for it, and He stands ready to give it long before we ask for it[2].

As we come to communion remember the atmosphere of Heaven is always servant-hearted, submission-prompted, humility-clothed worship.

Seeing God's glory always makes God's servants want to get into **as humble a position as the human body is able to get!**

And there it is, we have traced through the entire book of Revelation the gift God seeks from each of us which I call humility clothed worship.

- *Worship clothed in humility* is the description of the **atmosphere** of Heaven;
- *Worship clothed in humility* is the **protocol** God expects;
- *Worship clothed in humility* is the **reverence** John describes, and
- *Worship clothed in humility* is the way worship is offered and received **in the place where God is magnified and adored.**

Humility is the most prominent feature of Heaven from our perspective as believers. Every believer we see in Heaven is constantly doing one thing over and over—falling on their faces before an Awesome God who alone is the One to be worship-worthy, adoration-receiving, and humility-receiving.

[1] Adapted from MacArthur, John F., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, Ephesians 4, (Chicago: Moody Press) 1983

[2] These three points were adapted from MacArthur, John F., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, Ephesians 4, (Chicago: Moody Press) 1983

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