

Walking Humbly With Your God

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[0:00] As we continue working our way through James, we come to chapter 4. We'll read the first ten verses. What causes fights and quarrels among you?

! Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something, but don't get it.

You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight.

You do not have because you do not ask God. When you do ask, you do not receive because you ask with wrong motives that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. You adulterous people!

Don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. Or do you think Scripture says without reason that the Spirit He caused to live in us envies intensely, but He gives us more grace?

That is why Scripture says God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Submit yourselves then to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

[1:06] Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn, and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom.

Humble yourselves before the Lord and He will lift you up. And he was converted gloriously by the Lord Jesus Christ and went on to become a leader in the church in North Africa.

And he said this, For those who would learn God's ways, humility is the first thing, it is the second thing, and it is the third thing.

And we might think that's overstatement. But if we look long in Scripture, we find out otherwise.

There is no beginning of the Christian life without humility.

And there is no finishing of the Christian life without humility. And there is no continuing in the Christian life without humility. It is indeed the first, the second, and the third thing.

[2:11] The prophet Micah asks us, What does the Lord require of you? And he answers to, Act justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.

Now James is going to add his weighty testimony to the importance of humility in the Christian life. Now where have we been so far?

All through this book, James has been calling us to the all-out pursuit of holiness. And he's spelled out what that holiness looks like.

And he's not finished by a long shot yet. There's still more to come. And if you've not been asleep or blinded by your pride, each week you have found yourself coming up short, not measuring up to the standard of holiness, not hungry enough to be holy.

Indeed, we've not handled our trials well. We've not counted their approach as a reason for great joy. And we've not persevered well under trials, often giving up and complaining, lashing out at others or God.

[3:26] And our own evil desires have dragged us away and enticed us into sin. And we've not been content in our financial trials. We've been deceived into doubting God's goodness in our trials.

We've not been looking into that perfect law that gives freedom and looking intently in it and continuing in it and being a doer of every word that we hear.

We've been guilty of favoritism, haven't we? Prejudicially loving some neighbors, but not others.

And our deeds have not always equaled our profession of faith.

Our love is not always given practical help. And our tongues at times have been exhaust pipes of hell. And our cockpits, the cockpit of our heart, has often been controlled and occupied by worldly wisdom with its bitter envy and selfish ambition.

And our desires have been so self-centered and so demanding at times that they've brought conflict into our relationships with others and have caused God not to answer our prayers.

[4:42] And we've been caught flirting with the world. And have become outright spiritual adulteresses carrying on love affairs with the world, with self.

And God counts it as hatred and unfaithfulness to Him. And all these desires of our hearts just won't go away, but they continually spew out and envy intensely what they want.

So what are we to do? What are we to do, James, about all this? Is there hope for us who find ourselves coming short, failing in holiness?

We finally come to that critical passage in the letter of James where he tells us what to do about our failures. He explicitly lays it out. And in two words, it is humble yourself.

Humble yourself. Because what we need is grace. That's the answer for unholy Christians. It's the answer for worldly non-Christians, and it's the answer for worldly Christians.

[5:48] Grace. And God gives grace, and He gives more grace, but He only gives it to the humble. There is hope for us then, because there's grace for us if we will but humble ourselves and seek it.

Yes, humility is the first, the second, and the third thing. So immediately, James launches into a call to humble repentance. In verses 7-10, he spells out some of the details of what walking humbly with God looks like.

There's actually ten crisp commands piled on top of each other that grab and hold our attention. Here they are. Submit. Resist. Come near. Wash.

Purify. Grieve. Mourn. Wail. Change. Humble yourselves. These are what we might call James' ten commandments of walking humbly with God.

And the whole section is bracketed with promises to humility. Verse 6, the promise. God gives grace to the humble.

[6:57] Verse 10. God lifts up those who humble themselves. So we've come this morning to be instructed on walking humbly with our God.

And what we find is that this is also the prescription that James gives us on how to find victory in this lifelong battle for holiness. We're going to boil his ten commandments down into six.

Number one. Submit to God. Verse 7. Submit yourselves then to God. The then points back. Since grace is given to the humble, then you be sure to submit yourselves to God.

Now to submit means to place oneself under the authority of another to obey them. It's what wives are called to do to their husbands.

It's what citizens are called to do to their government. What church members are called to do to their elders. It's what employees do to their employers.

[8:07] It's something the proud will not do. Submission is a humbling thing to place oneself under another's authority.

God-given authority. And that's what we must do to God. Submit yourselves then to God. That means put your will, your desires, your thoughts, your hopes and plans all under His.

It means stick your neck under the yoke with Christ. Humbly own Him as your Master and Lord. Give yourself up to be governed by Him, by His Word, His wisdom, and His will.

And that's something that your pride will kick against. But not doing this is what has gotten us into all our troubles. We've placed ourselves above the Lord, our will above His, our wisdom above His. My way, not yours, O Lord. And there is nothing more proud than the creature lifting himself up above the Creator.

[9:20] There is no walking humbly with God without submitting yourself to Him. So in your trials and in your temptations, put yourself under God and stay there.

Stay under Him. And in your failures, get back in line. Get back where you belong. Under that wisdom that is perfect.

under that will that is best and under that Word that gives freedom. That's the road to more grace. Submit to God.

Now this is very closely related to what immediately follows. Number two, resist the devil. And this reminds us what James has showed us already, that there are always two sides to every trial, temptation, event.

Every temptation from the devil is a trial, a test from God. And every test from God is a temptation from the devil.

[10:27] Every day, in every event, we're always dealing with these two, God and the devil. And they each have their own agenda in each event.

The agenda that they're pursuing with us. So in your present trial, whatever it is, God is pursuing your holiness. The devil is pursuing your sin.

And you are either submitting to God and resisting the devil, or you are resisting God and submitting to the devil. So, submit to God, James says.

That means humbly accept this trial is from the Lord and let God be God in choosing your trials. It means submit to His process. Put yourself under His process of strengthening faith, of developing perseverance, and working out holiness in you.

Submit to His commands. But remember, if you are to submit to God, you will need to resist the devil. Because he's out to keep you from submitting to God.

[11:34] And so, he'll be at your ear with his suggestions and with his lies. That God is not being good to you in your trial. That the way of holiness is really unreasonable.

It's too hard. It's not worth it. Just give it up and sin. Just this once. It won't really matter anyway. You can confess it later to God and no one else will know besides you can't really help it anyway. And everyone else is doing it. And so, the devil comes in your trials and he turns it into a temptation. And you must resist him. According to James, the devil has a hand in all your temptations. Sometimes he begins the temptation and plants the thought. Other times, he just helps them along. He knows how to pour fuel on your own evil desires. He's out to get you to respond in your trials in self-centered ways with selfish ambition, envy, a hellish tongue.

So you'll need to resist him. That's what James is saying. In every trial, you'll need to submit to God and resist the devil. Now, to resist means to take your stand against.

[12:48] It means to stand up against a foe, to oppose them, to fight against them. It's what God does to the proud. And it's what you must do to the devil.

Reject his thoughts. Reject his suggestions at once as he comes to you feeding your pride. And the sooner and louder you resist him, the better.

The longer you dally and discuss with the devil, the more trouble you get into. Resist him. Resist him with the sword of the spirit. Isn't that what we saw Jesus doing in the wilderness in Matthew? It is written. It is written. It is written. Take up the shield of faith that quenches all the fiery darts of the devil, this evil one. And resist him, standing firm in the faith.

Don't give up an inch. Don't compromise a bit. He's not to even gain a foothold in the believer's life. He's to be resisted. No further.

[13:52] Be gone, Satan. Get behind me, Satan. And there's a sure promise for those who stand up against him. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

He'll flee from you like a vanquished enemy running away in defeat. It's like some dogs I know. Not all dogs, but some dogs I know who bark and growl like they're really something until you stand up to them and then they're gone with their tail tucked up between their legs and off they go.

Resist him and he will flee from you. See the Lord Jesus putting him to flight in his temptations. And you do the same because believer, you share in Christ's victory over Satan.

He is a defeated foe. Christ has triumphed over him and we share in that victory. Paul says we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

So you don't need to cave in to his suggestions. Stand up and resist him in the name of the Lord, in the power of the Lord. And he will flee from you.

[15:06] It's the promise of God as sure as any other promise from heaven. Oh yes, he'll be back to tempt you with more. But you know something?

He can never overcome you without your consent. He's a defeated foe. So resist him each time he comes back.

A loud, firm no. Victory is never more than a moment away. Say yes to God and no to the devil. Submit to God.

Resist the devil. And that's for every trial, for every temptation, every battle for holiness. Third, come near to God.

Verse 8. There's a connection between all these. We've seen them building. And now we see the connection with what has gone before. We want the devil fleeing, but we want God coming near.

[16:02] We want the devil fleeing from us, but we want God coming near us. And we're told how to have that so. Verse 8. Come near to God and he will come near to you.

What a promise. He's so willing to help me, even in my weakness, even in my failures. Come near to me, he says, and I will come near to you.

Now we come near to God in prayer. And in answer, he comes near to us with needed grace to help us, to encourage us, to revive us, to guide us, to strengthen us in our battle.

The devil is ever trying to move you away from God. But believer, your greatest need in trial is to come near to God. To come near him because he has more grace for you.

He's got more grace for you than Satan has power in his temptation. He's got resisting grace for battle-weary Christians. He's got devil-defeating grace. For you.

[17:10] And that's what he brings when he draws near to you. So draw near to him if you would have him draw near in grace. Prayer brings our God into the field of battle and Satan is no match.

No temptation of his is ever a match for omnipotence. And that's why he works over time to keep you from coming near to God in your trials.

Have you noticed there's always something else to do besides pray? Because if you come near to God, the devil knows God will come near to you with the grace that you need to resist him again.

And to glorify God in your trial. Oh, let us hear that bell calling us to prayer. It's called trials. And every trial is a call to come near to God.

And so our trials, as someone has said, have done you good if they have brought you to Jesus. To live near God, that's constant communion with him.

[18:16] So in the heat of battle, cry, Christian. Cry. Draw near. More grace, Lord. More grace. It's only pride that keeps you away.

Self-righteous pride. Self-sufficient pride. Then humbly draw near. For if you would draw near, you would have more grace. But now when you come near to God, you must come for cleansing.

You must come for cleansing. It's holy hands that must be lifted to God in prayer. 1 Timothy 2, verse 8. Don't think you can come near to God with hands that are still clinging to your sins or with a heart still cherishing your evil desires.

David knew that in Psalm 66 and verse 18. He says, If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened. So Jane says, wash up in the fourth place.

Wash up. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. There is no coming near to God without cleansing from sin. That's because sin puts distance between us and God.

[19:29] You can't come near to God when there's this distance that sin has put between you. It's a distance like any other relationship. But God says to His people in Isaiah 59, 1 and 2, Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save.

That's not the problem. Nor is His ear too dull to hear. That's not the problem. But here's the problem. Your iniquities have separated you from your God.

Your sins have hidden His face from you so that He will not hear you. For your hands are stained with blood. Your fingers are stained with guilt.

Yes, filthy hands and filthy hearts put distance between us and God. It's a distance not measured by feet and miles, but measured in terms of closeness and intimacy.

You know, a husband and wife can both live under the same roof and yet be... have a great distance between them. We can say they can be pulled apart and yet living under the same roof.

[20:37] As far as intimacy goes, there's this great distance between them. So with God, He complains, these people come near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.

That's what sin does. It puts distance between us and God. There is no coming near Him until we come for cleansing, to get that sin, that filth, out from between us.

And so for any who would come near to God, there's this problem. It's called sin. God is light and He has no fellowship with darkness.

He's too holy to stand sin in His presence. He can't even look on it without judging it. He cannot dwell with sin. So there cannot be intimate communion with Him apart from cleansing.

Now that was all pictured in the Old Testament worship, wasn't it? The priest would come near to God in the temple, but there outside was this great bronze laver or wash basin.

[21:49] And the priest would have to come in to wash before they went in to come near to God. And the altars and the sacrifices and the blood that would purify was all part of sending this signal.

This is all picture language that our sins put distance between us and God. They're moral filth that must be washed, just like a man washing in water.

They must be purified by sacrifice. Even the priests who approach the Lord, Ezekiel 19, 22, even the priests must consecrate themselves as they come near to the Lord or the Lord will break out against them.

And David asked in Psalm 24, who may ascend the hill of the Lord? Who may stand in His holy place and commune with Him? He who has clean hands and a pure heart.

And so James now, perhaps drawing upon that very passage, says to us, any of you who would come near to God, he calls for the washing of both hands and heart.

[23 : 02] We have dirty hands. We have divided hearts. They both need to be purified. Wash your hands, you sinners. Purify your hearts, you double-minded. And so our hands speak of what we do.

Our deeds, our actions. And our hearts speak of what we are. Our inward life, our thoughts and motives and desires. And both must be cleansed.

It's a constant theme in the Old Testament. Jeremiah 4, verse 14. Wash the evil from your heart and be saved. How long will you harbor wicked thoughts? You think to come in and to worship me? While you're harboring wicked thoughts in your heart? Wash up, he says. David says, Create in me a clean heart, O God.

It's a clean heart that I need. And Jesus says, Blessed are the pure in heart. Yes, the heart must be purified. But also the hands. Isaiah 1, in verses 16 and 17.

[24 : 05] Your hands are full of blood. Wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight. Stop doing wrong. Learn to do right.

And though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. And though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. That's the purification that's needed if we would draw near to God.

And so James has already said, Get rid of all moral filth. Chapter 1, verse 21. And now he says, Wash your hands. And wash your heart.

Purify your heart. Notice he says it with the direct address. Wash your hands, you sinners. And purify your hearts, you double-minded.

Those are stinging words. They were meant to sting. Just like chapter 4 and verse 4. You adulterous people. You sinners.

[25 : 04] You double-minded. The charge has been leveled. Do we feel it? All who break God's law are sinners. All who flirt with the world are double-minded and in need of cleansing.

We saw it back in chapter 1 and verse 8. A double-minded man is unstable in all he does. He's got a divided heart. He's Mr. Facing both ways at the same direction. He's two-faced with God.

Now for Him. Now against Him. Now a friend of God. Now a friend of the world. Now wanting God's wisdom. Now wanting worldly wisdom.

Now following God's truth. Now following Satan's lies. Now with God at the center of his life. Now with self at the center. That is the fundamental defect of all professing Christians.

They are not decidedly the Lord's. They've not yet decided whose they will be. Themselves. The world's. Or God's.

[26 : 06] Given up to Him. Oh but who of us. Comes off unscathed. By this withering indictment. How long will you.

Halt between two opinions. If God be God. Serve Him. When it comes to sin. And double-mindedness. The question. Is not if. But where.

Where oh Lord. Have I been sinning. Where oh Lord. Is my heart double-minded. Search me. Oh God. Cleanse me.

Oh God. Create in me. A clean heart. Oh God. And so we've wandered from God. We must return to Him. And as we return to Him.

Coming near to God. It must be to wash our hands. And to purify our hearts. And I ask you. What can wash away my sin?

[27 : 07] Nothing but the blood of Jesus. James has no other way. For washing up. For purifying the heart and the hands. We come to that fountain. At Calvary.

Open for sin and uncleanness. And we wash in that blood of the Lamb. And we come out whiter than snow. That's what John says in his first epistle.

When he writes. God is light. And in Him there is no darkness. No none at all. Now if we claim to have fellowship with Him. And yet walk in darkness.

We lie. And do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light. As He is in the light. Then we have fellowship with one another.

And the blood of Jesus. His Son. Purifies us from all sin. For if we confess our sins.
[28:06] He is faithful and just. To forgive us our sins. And to purify us from all unrighteousness.
That's how we. In our failures in holiness. Are able to maintain fellowship.

With this God of pure light. We keep confessing our sins. We keep acting fresh faith. Upon the blood of Jesus.

That that was all that was needed. To take our sins away forever. To remove them from us. And so we look again to Christ. And His cross. And that sacrifice.

He's done everything for me. And faith in confessing sins. Says God. I am the sinner. That thought was vile. That word was unkind.

I agree with you. Concerning it. It deserves judgment. Oh but Jesus died for me. There's my hope. Forgive me for Jesus sake.

[29:02] And what happens? Cleansing. Cleansing. Not just the typical cleansing. Of the labor outside the temple. But the real cleansing. Of the conscience. From acts that lead to death.

The real purification. Of the heart. Therefore brothers. Since we have confidence. To enter the most holy place. By the blood of Jesus.

By a new and living way. Opened up through the curtain. That is His body. And since we have a great high priest. Over the house of God. Let us draw near to God.

That's what James says. Come near to God. How are we to come near? By faith in the Lord Jesus. With a sincere heart. In full assurance of faith. Having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us.

From a guilty conscience. And having our bodies washed with pure water. It's all the work of Christ. That washes us. Our hands and our heart.

[29:57] Our outward actions. And our inward desires and attitudes. Oh the blood of Jesus. Oh the blood of Jesus. It washes white as snow.

Hebrews 10. 19 through 22. So. As you come to God. For cleansing. Let it be no slight healing of the wound.

Let it be no light treatment of sin. No quick trip to the confessional booth. Without a heart of repentance. No protestant confessional. Of a superficial prayer of confession.

Without turning from sin. With genuine sorrow for it. And so James says. Number five. Grieve for sin.

Grieve. Grieve. And here's where he piles up the words. More under this point than any other.

Grieve. Verse 9. Grieve. Mourn.

[30:56] And wail. Change your laughter to mourning. And your joy to gloom. These words include both the inward grief. Felt in the heart. As well as the outward expressions of it.

In our body. Grieve. Mourn. Wail. With repeated jabs. He calls for that godly sorrow.

That leads to repentance. 2 Corinthians 7. 9 through 11. He's seeking to awaken a complacent. Self-satisfied. Smug church.

The 21st century isn't the only. Self-satisfied. Smug church. It was so in the first century. Listen to James. Go after them. Grieve.

Mourn. And wail. He says. You who take such a light view of sin. That all mourning is forgiven. Is forgotten. And when I read James. I can't help but.

[31:52] Feel that modern Christianity. As well. Is far too chipper. Far too chipper. So obsessed. With light heartedness. Everything's got to be upbeat.

It's got to be the. The toothy grin. It's got to. Be the jokes. The laughter. And James reminds us. That there is a Christianity. That knows nothing of sorrow for sin. In their religion.

And it's not the true religion. That God our father accepts. It's the ever happy crowd. That must be humored. And entertained. And made to laugh. Or they're not content.

It's light frothy spirits. That don't want their party ruined. By anything. That makes them serious. About sin. And folks.

That's the worship of so many. In American. Christianity. But I ask. Have we. Right here at Grace Fellowship.

[32:47] Escaped. Unscathed. Or can we quote all the verses. About rejoicing in the Lord. But we've forgotten the commands.

Grieve. Mourn. And wail. Folks. Their commands. To be obeyed. As much as submit to God. Resist the devil. Come near to God.

Wash up. Grieve. Mourn. Wail. It's a neglected duty. Because it's not fun. It's just not fun.

To grieve. Mourn. And wail. Where are all the broken hearted. Mourners for sin. Jesus says. Blessed. Happy are those. That mourn. The wise man says. In Ecclesiastes. There is a time to weep. And a time to laugh. There's a time to say. With Paul. Oh. Wretched. Man. That I am.

[33 : 48] There's a time. To grieve. Mourn. And weep. Do you ever weep. For your sin. Have you ever. Wept one tear. For your sin. Against God. God. No it's not the tears.

Themselves. That James is emphasizing. But the broken. And contrite heart. Behind them. We've not yet seen our sin. Until we've seen it. As against God.

He takes it. Personally. When you go off. With some piece. Of worldliness. He treats it. As adultery. You have stepped out. On him. He takes it.

Personally. That's what sin is. It's against. God. It grieves. His heart. And so. It should grieve. Mine. What do I know. Of this sorrow. For sin. That James speaks of. He's got a further word. For this chipper. Christianity. Of the day. Change your laughter.

[34 : 45] To mourning. And your joy. To gloom. Now that's stronger. Than wipe that. Silly grin.

Off your face. But it's similar. Change something. Repent. Fix something. Here. It's wrong. You're laughing.

When you should be mourning. You're joyful. When you should be gloomy. And so. Your ten year old. Is just lipped off. To his mother. And. And you as the father.

Say. To your room son. And I'll be there. With the consequences stick. And when you walk into the room. He's got this silly grin on his face.

And he's laughing. And you say. Change your laughter. To mourning. And your joy. To gloom. It's totally inappropriate. Not half as inappropriate.

[35 : 41] To be laughing. And carrying on light heartedly. When we have sinned against the almighty. And we're still clinging to those sins. We're still harboring. Those evil desires.

Change your laughter. To mourning. And your joy. To gloom. Have you read the penitential psalms. Lately. It's new covenant scripture.

It's for us. It's to instruct us. It's to rebuke us. It's to correct us. Read the penitential psalms. Psalm 32. Psalm 38. Psalm 51.

Psalm 51. Psalm 51. Is David's prayer of confession. And folks. David is not laughing. Oh. Let me hear joy and gladness.

He says. Let the bones you have crushed rejoice. Because they're not rejoicing now. Restore to me the joy of thy salvation. Because I have lost that joy.

[36 : 43] True conviction of sin. And takes the grin off of your face for a while. Oh. To see. The pain. Written on your face.

Bearing the awesome weight of sin. Every bitter thought. Every evil deed. Crowning your bloodstained brow. What made him weep in the garden of Gethsemane.

What made him shed blood on Golgotha's cross. Is enough to change our laughter to mourning. And our joy to gloom.

Because there he became sin for us. Took the blame. Bore the wrath. We stand forgiven at the cross.

Oh. But what a love. What a cost. We stand sobered. We stand saddened at our sins that put in there. Did my sins make him to become the man of sorrows.

[37 : 44] Acquainted with grief. Then grieve. Mourn and weep. And wail my soul. Because your sins put in there. And if your Christianity has nothing.

For James 4 and verse 9. I call you to examine whether you've got the real thing. Does this mean that there's no place for laughter and joy in the Christian life?

Of course not. James would rather argue that true joy and happiness. That the world knows nothing of.

It comes very much through the way of repentance. And humbly. Broken and contritely. Coming before the Lord Jesus.

And you believers know exactly what I'm speaking of. You've come broken. And you've left with a song in your heart. And so the Christian is ever cycling himself through this process from sorrow to joy.

[38 : 48] Through the grace of Christ's cross. It's in the cross of Christ that our mourning is turned to gladness. And our sorrow is turned to joy as we receive that kiss of peace.

Forgiven. Sins remembered no more. It's the gospel that does that for a sinner. It's a gospel that does that for the saint. It turns our mourning to the oil of gladness.

But woe to you who laugh now, Jesus says, for you will mourn and weep. A lack of grief for sin exhibits an unhumbled heart before God. And so he closes.

Humble yourselves. That's what he's been after all along. Not just the tears. Not just the confession mowed with our lips.

Humble yourselves. Before the Lord. And he will lift you up. Verse 10. So he ends where he started. With humility.

[39:51] It is the first, the second, and the third thing, isn't it? And that means that pride, its opposite, is at the bottom of all of our worldliness, of all of our self-centered desires, all of our self-centered living and thinking and praying.

The cure? Humble yourselves. Humble yourselves. If you don't get what you want, then you humble yourself. Rather than trying to get it by forcing your will on others, fighting and quarreling with them. No, no. Humble yourself. Just humble yourself before the Lord. If you don't get what you ask God for in your prayers, then humble yourself. Accept his will for you.

Contrary to the devil's suggestion, you really don't deserve better. Humble yourself before the Lord. So if you try to lift yourself up, God himself will oppose you and fight against you.

He opposes the proud. Oh, but he stands ready to lift up all who humble themselves. Martin Luther said it is only he can say it's God's nature to make something out of nothing.

[41:06] And that's why he cannot make anything out of him who is not yet nothing. Are you nothing? Are you willing to be nothing that God might make you something?

Humble yourself and he will lift you up. He will exalt you. Now, notice we're to humble ourselves before the Lord. That's where all true humility grows.

It's before the Lord. It's in the light of his presence. Not some pretended holiness and humility before men, but genuine humility before him who sees the heart.

Pride withers in the presence of the Almighty. And that's why he who draws nearest to the Lord is the most humble. You can't draw near to the thrice holy God without being humbled for sin.

Ask Isaiah. Who tried it? He'd seen the king in his glory and he cried out. Woe is me. I'm a man of unclean lips. I'm ruined. Ask Peter who saw the glory of Jesus and said, Depart from me, Lord.

[42:14] Away from me. I'm a sinful man. And Job who says, I had heard of you through the hearing of the ear, but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore, I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes.

So continually draw near to God. And in his presence and before the Lord, you will be humbled. That's where you humble yourself.

As you have large thoughts of God, you will have low thoughts of yourself. And oh, the gracious promise. He will lift you up.

He will lift you up. That's the result, not the motive. It's the result. Humility is so pleasing to the Lord that he promises to exalt it wherever he finds it.

Here is the man that the king delights to honor. The humble man. The lowly man. He will lift you up. With more grace now.

[43:15] And with glory. Hereafter. Filling you with joy. Lifting you up with joy. Lifting you up with forgiveness. With strength. Reviving your soul. Grace for all that you need.

Victory. Exalting. But humility. Is the necessary condition of spiritual victory and exaltation. After all. That was the way of our pattern.

The Lord Jesus. Who had nothing less than God the Father. But who humbled himself in the incarnation. And became a man.

And became the servant. The suffering servant. And was obedient unto the death of the cross. He humbled himself. Therefore God has highly exalted him.

And given him the highest place. Now there's your pattern. Follow him. Put your feet in his steps. Humble yourself. And he will lift you up.

[44:13] And so we've seen the ten commandments of humility this morning. Will you humbly submit to God? Will you resist the devil? Will you come near to God?

Oh come to have your heart and hands cleansed. And come with true grief for sin. And humble yourselves. Before the Lord.

So how are you doing with James? I'll tell you it's a lot easier to memorize the book than it is to live it. It's a lot easier to preach it than it is to live it.

So what do you do with all your failures? What are you doing with them? Where are you struggling with the pursuit of holiness as James spells it out?

Well the problem is never with God. We've seen that this morning. Victory is ever at hand. God is always ready to give you more grace. He's always ready to lift you up.

[45:11] Did you know he was ready yesterday? He was ready last Sunday. You know he's ready this morning. If you will just put yourself under.

Submit to him. Resist the devil. Come near to him. Come to be washed in hand and heart. Come with your grief to the Lord. Humble yourself.

And he will lift you up. The only thing standing between you and this victory. Is your pride. Humble yourself right now. As we come near to God.

Let's come near to him in prayer. As we all take our hearts before him. Let's pray. Oh Lord.

How superficial we can be in our dealings with you. How double minded we can be. How sinful. How unholy.

[46:08] How un-Christ-like. Oh we've not yet seen the hell of our sins. Come and teach us. Teach us these things.

Lord we have no strength of our own. Even to obey these ten words that you've given us. But we have read that you give grace to the humble. And you give more grace.

Grace upon grace. So come to us with the needed grace. That we have. And help each one in the midst of our trials and temptations.

To have dealings with you. In submitting ourselves to you. And to have dealings with the devil. In resisting him. Come and help us.

Through that mighty name of your son. Who cleanses from all sin. We ask in Jesus name. Amen. Saving help. Amen.