

Humble Yourself

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[0:00] Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord and he shall lift you up. James 4 verse 10, humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord and he shall lift you up.

! Instead, he confessed how weak that he was, how he got tongue-tied and how he wasn't a good speaker.

That's in Exodus 4 verse 10. Yet Moses was one of the greatest men of God in all history. Numbers 12.3 it says of Moses, Moses was very meek.

In other words, he was very humble. He was a meek man, it says. He was very meek above all the men which were upon the face of the earth. example is Isaiah. God called the prophet Isaiah to prophesy against Israel and other nations and immediately Isaiah, when he was called, he saw his own sins and his weakness of character and he confessed them. He said, holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty. He says, woe is me, I'm a man of unclean lips. So that's another example. Another example is Jeremiah.

Jeremiah told God that he was too young and too immature to speak. He says, then said I, ah, Lord God, behold, I cannot speak for I am a child. You know, he tried to humble himself. He took that low place. He didn't take it on willfully, but humbly, the call that God had given to him.

[1:44] Another man of God is Paul. God used him to write much of the New Testament. And yet Paul called himself the least of the apostles, the least of all the saints and the worst of sinners.

So he was very humble as well. Another example, John the Baptist. Think of him as the great herald of our Lord's coming. And when asked if he was Elijah or the Christ or some great prophet, he called himself just the voice of one crying in the wilderness. John would have heard about the amazing events surrounding his birth and of the special calling God had given him. Yet still he stayed humble. And the Lord said of him, there was none who was greater than John the Baptist in Matthew 11 verse 11. So lots of examples of these ones, as we've cited, Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Paul, John the Baptist, humble men, humble men and women are the ones that God has given some acknowledgement to in a very special way. And the word humble means having or showing a feeling that one is unimportant, weak, poor, modest in spirit, without wrongful pride in oneself or in one's accomplishments. So being humble is the opposite of being some high and mighty and prideful one. It means not having that selfish kind of pride, bragging and boasting and big noting, but taking the low place, taking the servant's place. And you've all heard this, I know I've used it before, of how you could reference humility as three things, J-O-Y as an acrostic. So Jesus first is a kind of obvious one, that the one who is humble puts Christ first and has that Christ likeness because really humility is being like our Lord, our Lord Jesus. It's his very nature, his very person. And the Lord Jesus, it says, he made himself nothing. He took upon him the form of a servant and he was made in human likeness. And it says of our Lord that he took that lowly task of washing even the disciples' feet. Now what a lowly task that is. In John 13, 12, our Lord says, Know you what I have done to you? You call me Master and Lord? And you say, Well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example that you should do as I have done to you. So we'll get the bowl out later and we'll have a, we don't actually literally do that, although some churches can and have done and maybe one day we could do, but it's not so much the principle of washing the feet, it's the principle of humbling ourselves. That's what matters.

That's what God really praises and wants for us. He wants us to be having that heart that we would bow down and wash one another's feet. Amen? That would be a good thing, wouldn't it?

[4:47] You know, just to have that heart, to love one another such and to take that place of humility such that our Lord took as that servant role that he was, that he was so humble. And it says of our Lord, he trod that

pathway of obedience and all the way to his death at the cross that he took that punishment, that violent, cruel death for us. So let's put the Lord Jesus first. Humility, someone's defined it as an absolute dependence on God for everything in life, physical, emotional and spiritual. Humility, absolute dependence. So think that we, if you think of it, that every day we are truly dependent on our Lord, trusting in him, reliant upon him. And how can we reflect that? Prayer is one way. Our prayer life will show our humility as we depend upon God, as we trust in him, as we seek him, as we ask him for our needs and the needs of others. The humble person will have that time in prayer to seek God's face, to know his supply for our needs. And we see this through the lives of men and women of God that have lived through history. And people might not be aware, but even the famous inventor of the Morse code, here's the man Samuel Morse, the famous inventor Samuel Morse was himself a Christian. And here's one of his quotes here. If ever he encountered a situation where he didn't know what to do, he said this more than once. And whenever I could not see my way clearly, I knelt down and prayed to God for light and understanding. So Samuel Morse, he invented the Morse code.

And some of you might have learned a bit of Morse code in the younger days. I had a little bit of exposure to it, but you know, the dot, dot, dot and the dash, dash, dash, dash and the SOS, you know, it saved many lives to having that kind of information that could go out across the airwaves before the high tech days we're in now. But Morse received many honors from the invention of the telegraph, but he felt undeserving. And just as a reflection of his humility, he said this, I've made a valuable application of electricity, not because I was superior to other men, but solely because God, who meant it for mankind, must reveal it to someone and he was pleased to reveal it to me. The humility of the man. He didn't big note himself for this astounding invention, this wonderful discovery and his application of his intellect to invent such a thing, but he saved the glory for God. He gave glory to God.

And so the humble person likewise gives praise to the Lord. We are humble and we're thankful. We're thanking God for his saving grace. We know that all that we have comes from our God and we give God the credit. We can never thank him enough. So we exalt the Lord Jesus and we learn more of him. So we put Jesus first. That's the J. Secondly, the O is others second.

Put others second before yourself. You know, give up something for someone else. We read Philippians 2 verse 3 through 4. Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory, but in loneliness of mind, let each esteem other better than themselves. The O, the other. Esteem others better than ourselves.

Then it goes on verse 4. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. In other words, don't put your own interests first, but consider the interests of others.

[8:45] Then another like scripture is Romans 12 verse 16 where it says, Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. So it's talking about that humility of mind to not be high-minded, but to be down to earth, you know, be able to relate to people of all persuasions.

So in other words, don't be proud or conceited. Go to where other people are at. You know, talk at their level. How can we reach the man on the street, the average Joe or Joan? You know, we've got to talk at their level. Get in their shoes.

There's people reaching everyday people, lowly people, and they're all around about us to take that humble path, to truly reach out in love and to see them saved.

Others. We can think of building others up, encouraging others. Look out for others who might have a downheartedness. See how you can be a minister, a servant to them, to thank God for them, to encourage and praise them and lift them up.

Others. What can we learn from others? Sometimes we can be so prideful that we can't, that we're not teachable. That's a problem, isn't it?

[10:13] But a humble Christian will seek and receive counsel from others. As it reads in Proverbs 11, 14, where no counsellors, the people fail,

but in the multitude of counsellors, there is safety.

Moses was one who took the counsel of his father-in-law, Jethro. He not only accepted it, but he acted on it. So we can, you know, listen to others. Show some care and thoughtfulness for others. Another way is show brotherly love to others. It's Romans 12, 10. It reads, Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another.

So think of others. How can we prefer others? How can we serve others? A preacher was asked, How can we know when we have truly got a servant attitude?

And he said, By how you act when you are treated like one. Be willing to be a servant. Learn to appreciate others. Show consideration.

[11:14] Think of ways you can prefer others. Value others. Honour others. And serve others. So what does humility look like? J, Jesus first.

Secondly, others. And thirdly, yourself last. J-O-Y. Jesus, others, now yourself.

Yourself. Proverbs 16, 5. It says, Everyone that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord.

That's a very strong Bible word, abomination, isn't it?

To be proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord. That's very serious. Sin. Pride. Pride. And really when you think through life, I know as you relate to people and see different situations, pride is really just a fundamental issue, isn't it?

You know, as people have said, it's the middle letter of S-I-N. The I, isn't it? The ego. And we must defeat pride. Pride must be nailed to the cross, crucified.

[12:21] We must put pride, self, flesh to death. That we can live the victorious Christian life. We must deal with the self. So put yourself last.

2 Corinthians 10, 5 says, Casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalted itself against the knowledge of God and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

Now that's, there's a lot in that verse there, isn't there? Think of it. You know, that's just, that's just jam-packed with some really challenging concepts. If we could just get that right, casting down imaginations, every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing into captivity, you know, that we'd rein it in, that we'd bring it all in, into that control, into that obedience of Christ, that even our thinking, our every thought would be such that honours Him.

So put yourself last. Don't complain. Sometimes we can be very prideful that it's all about ourselves and we cannot, really, when it comes down to it for others.

And it's been said, a sure sign of a person who's in rebellion to Christ is when he whines, gripes and complains about everything and everyone.

[13:43] Nothing meets his expectations. Nothing pleases him because he's only thinking about himself. We can get so self-centered, so self-preoccupied that we don't see, actually, there's others around us.

They've got bigger needs and bigger situations and hurts than ourselves. It's having that other-mindedness, isn't it? Now, there was a man in America called Booker T. Washington.

He was a famous educator and he was a man of Negro background. And this was a time where America was still coming out of a lot of discrimination and such.

and the story goes that this man, this man, Booker T. Washington, was a definite Christian.

As you see this quote here, he says, the man doing the vital things of life are those who read the Bible and are Christians and not ashamed to let the world know it.

[14:50] So he was an out-and-out Christian, this man. And he was an educator, so he was a highly qualified, like a director of a university.

And he was going to be taking over the presidency of this university, this institute in Alabama. And so he was walking through an exclusive part of town when he was stopped by a wealthy white woman and she didn't realise who Mr. Washington was and she just thought he was just the average man on the street.

She wasn't aware of who this famous man was. So she asked him if he'd like to earn a few dollars by chopping wood for her. And because he had no pressing business at that moment, Professor Washington smiled, he rolled up his sleeves and he proceeded to do this humble chore that she requested of him.

And when he was finished, he carried the logs into the fireplace, into the house and stacked them there. And a little girl recognised him and later revealed his identity to the lady of the house.

And the next morning, the embarrassed woman went to see Mr. Washington in his office at the institute, at the university, whatever the institute was, and she apologised profusely.

[16:09] And he said, It's perfectly all right, madam. Occasionally I enjoy a little manual labour because it's always a delight to do something for a friend. She shook his hand warmly and assured him that his meek and gracious attitude had endeared him to her heart and his work.

And not long afterwards, she showed her appreciation, her admiration, by persuading some other wealthy acquaintances to join her in donating thousands of dollars to the institute.

So here was this man, Booker T. Washington, willing to take a humble task and to just do it quietly and humbly. And God blessed him for that.

You know, God commands us to be humble, to put ourselves last. And God will honour the humble. Think of it, pride was Satan's problem. That's what got him into all the trouble that he's really in, isn't it?

And man's problem, likewise, was pride in the garden, wasn't it? Going his own way, doing his own thing, wanting to be his own boss, not willing to humble and accept God's clear, simple direction, really.

[17:16] Another example we could see is the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector. The tax collector and the Pharisee were there in the temple to pray and the tax collector whom the Pharisee looked down on, he was more right with God than he was.

It was the tax collector who humbly realised his absolute need of the Lord. You know, the Pharisee was going on about how good he was, not like that sinner over there.

And this tax collector, he was broken up over his sin and hitting his chest and saying, God be merciful to me, a sinner. So putting yourself last is a spiritual thing to do, to submit to God, to submit our flesh, our natural sinful nature to the Lord.

And that fights against humility. We've got to submit it to God. Humility. It means we give over to God and submit to his Holy Spirit. There's a quote here, most Christians are subject to the world, the world's ideas and the world's way of doing things.

Sadly, that's often the way, isn't it? We can be inclined to be just as worldly as the world. But what about submitting to God instead?

[18:34] Amen? To submit to God instead. Romans 12.3, it says, Paul writes, for I say through the grace given unto me to every man that is among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly according as God has dealt to every man the measure of faith.

Sometimes we can get too high an opinion of ourselves. Think of the grace he's given to you and not to think more highly than you ought to think.

You know, we can all have times where we might think of ourselves as elevated above others or we might think of ourselves as wiser or more spiritual than others, but really and truly we're all on the level field of the cross, aren't we?

We're all level at the foot of the cross. We should all think of ourselves think soberly as God has dealt to every man a measure of faith. You know, we'll all have those that know Jesus as saviour, those that are born again by faith, by his grace, will all be together and there's no status, no classes of Christians really.

We're all either saved or we're lost. Now, let's not get too high an opinion of ourselves at any time. Always think it's but for the grace of God.

[19:56] We could be, even as a lost man on the street, we could be in their shoes but for the grace of God. We can go to a Christian bookshop and we can see loads and loads of books on all kinds of subject matter, how to handle your finances, how to manage your family issues, how to raise your self-esteem.

But we might find it hard to find a book on how to humble ourselves before God. It's not a subject you often kind of, it's not on the top ten of the Christian bookstore sales items, I'm sure.

but how to humble yourself is really, it's actually a very fundamental and critical important trait, an important character quality.

Someone said this, humility is not a grace that can be acquired in a few months, it's the work of a lifetime. Now even as a mature Christian, we might get pride, we might get proud of our maturity, we might get proud of our doctrine or of this or that and really that's something we've all got to guard against, isn't it?

That we can, we've got to be careful that we don't get pride and prideful about maybe doing it right. We need to keep ourselves humble. Here's another quote, those who declare themselves unworthy, God makes worthy.

[21:16] Those who declare themselves worthless, God makes valuable. Those who declare their sinfulness, God makes saints. Those who declare their spiritual poverty, God makes spiritually rich.

Now look at those examples we started with, Moses, Jeremiah, Paul, John the Baptist and such, we see that they were not really inclined to put themselves forward, rather they were humble and they were the ones that God chose to use.

So it's about bowing the knee really, isn't it? And as a believer, as a Christian, it's fundamental that we bow the knee to our Lord and we humble ourselves before him.

Think of the Beatitudes, you know, the blessings of Matthew 5. Matthew 5 verse 2, where it's the first Beatitude, the first blessed are the such. It was the first one that as he opened his mouth and taught them, this is Matthew 5, 2 and 3, he says, blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

One preacher put it like this, the Lord Jesus, he put this beatitude first because humility is the foundation of all other graces. It's a basic element in becoming a Christian.

[22:31] Pride is no part in Christ's kingdom. Until a person surrenders pride, he can't enter the kingdom, the door into his kingdom is low. No one who stands tall will ever go through it.

We cannot be filled until we are empty. We cannot be made worthy until we recognise our unworthiness. We cannot live until we admit we are dead. We might as well expect fruit to grow without a tree, to expect the other graces of the Christian life to grow without humility.

So humility is fundamental. The fundamental feature of the Christian life is humility. And when we save, really, we humble ourselves, don't we? We acknowledge we're a sinner.

We realise our great lack, our great desperate need of a saviour, our absolute need to be saved. That's really the core, the starting point.

of the Christian life, isn't it? As we receive the saviour, we receive his forgiveness, his grace, and then we grow in that grace. We seek him in daily study, in Bible study, in prayer, in seeking his will, in seeking to please him, in asking for more humility, like David did, create in me a clean heart, oh God, and renew a right spirit within me.

[23:42] David continued to have that humility as much as he failed, we know. But God restored him. Friends, J-O-Y, is Jesus first, others second, and yourself last.

Think of it, the Lord Jesus said of the humble, he called them the poor in spirit, and he says theirs is the kingdom of heaven. God. Those who are truly great in the kingdom of God are those who give God all the credit, give God all the praise, give others the credit, call attention to others, consider others, know that really we're undeserving of our own selves, for all his love and blessings, all of his mercies, all of his compassion, the life that he's given us, our salvation itself.

So let's guard against pride, not to seek popularity or praise, not to glorify ourselves, but to take the humble place. Paul foretold nearly 2,000 years ago of these last days before our Lord's returning. He says in 2 Timothy 3 verse 1 in part it says in the last days perilous times shall come for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud.

Sounds like a lot of pride there doesn't it? Arrogant, proud, selfish, strutting, puffed up, conceited, bragging, walking about with a high opinion of themselves.

[25:21] It's the selfie generation is it? Lovers of themselves, just all about the self, all self centred, self esteem, you know, gone over the top.

The best thing we can do with ourselves is to crucify ourselves, is to die to self. We see in Proverbs 16, 18 it says pride goeth before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall.

And the next Proverbs 18, 12 before honour is humility. And then we see this next one, Psalm 34 verse 18, the Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken and contrite heart and save such as being of a contrite spirit.

Those that are of a meek spirit, a contrite spirit. Those are the ones that he saves. Notice that, see how it says, the Lord is nigh, is close to those who are broken, of a broken and a contrite heart.

You know, it's talking about repentance, isn't it? It's talking about being broken up over our sin. realise our desperate need of a saviour, of his forgiveness, of his grace, of his mercy.

[26:31] And he saves such, it says. Those that are of a contrite spirit, when we learn that meekness, when we learn that humility, 1 Peter 5 verse 6, it says, humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God that he may exalt you in due time.

It's a command there brothers and sisters, isn't it? How can we humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God? Let's think of that as we go through the weeks ahead.

How can I make that real in my life? How can I take that humble place to not be prideful, even not to be prideful as a Christian? Because really, again, as I say, it's only by the grace of God we're saved.

So let's have that humility that will want to reach out to those who don't know this wonderful love gift from God that we can reach them by God's help and they can likewise come under that mighty hand of God.

Proverbs 22 4 talks about the blessings that flow from humility. It says, by humility and the fear of the Lord are riches and honour and life. There's a blessing promised.

[27:39] There's a fullness promised. There's side benefits, I suppose. There's the humility and the fear of the Lord. God will bless your life for that. And of course these riches and honour and life, it's not necessarily material, but that sense of the true riches that we know.

A rich life is a saved life, isn't it? A rich soul is a saved soul and it's by humility and the fear of the Lord there's riches, honour and life. I like what the man Thomas Watson said, he was an old time Puritan preacher, he said, a humble heart is God's palace.

Think of that, brother, sister, a humble heart is God's palace. And along the theme of that we see Isaiah 57, 15, it says, For thus saith the high and lofty one that inhabits of eternity, his name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place.

That's one of his dwelling places and then he gives a second dwelling place in effect with him also that he's of a contrite and humble spirit to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

His name is Holy, he dwells in the high and holy place and he also comes and dwells in the humble heart, in the humble spirit, in the heart of the contrite ones.

[28:59] So friends, tonight just some thoughts as we could consider the truth of humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord and he shall lift you up.

Let us pray. Lord God, we thank you that you do lift up those that call upon you. You lift us up and seat us in heavenly places.

Lord, you give us that high and holy, lofty place that is heaven and you dwell in the contrite and humble heart.

Lord, we thank you. Help us, each one, to know what it is to come to the foot of the cross to acknowledge our essential need to be saved for one thing.

And Lord, as saved people, help us to walk in that humility of life that we will not have a prideful nature. We know pride is often the cause of discord, of marital suffering when pride just blinds people to put themselves first.

[30:12] Lord, help us to put you first, our Lord Jesus. Lord, help us to put others second and help us to put ourselves last.

Help us to take the truly servant place, the humble place. And Lord, we know as we humble ourselves under your mighty hand, you will lift us up and guide our way.

We thank you, Lord, for every heart, every home that is represented here, those that might be watching online. Lord, that we might truly not just consider this principle, but that this principle will be something that we'll adopt.

Lord, that we'll make an application of this principle. help us to humble ourselves. Help us to recognise pride when it shows itself and to deny that.

Lord God, do a work in us for you, for your praise, we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.