

sanctification and personal holiness. Several practical sections come to mind; (**Romans 12:1-15:13, Galatians 5:1-6:10, Ephesians 4:1-6:20, Philippians 2:1-18, Colossians 3:1-4:6, 2 Thess 3:1-15**). Almost the entire Epistles of James, 1 & 2 Peter, and Jude are given to this practical instruction. But when considering how to “**humble ourselves**” as Peter calls us to, consider the passage in James where James also tells us to “**humble ourselves.**” Here he gives very specific exhortations to this humbling. Let’s look at this text.

James 4:6-10 - 6 But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble." **7 Submit 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 miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy to gloom.** **10 Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.** NASB

Now as we consider this passage, don’t forget that we accomplish these things in the **power of the Spirit**, yet we make real effort toward them. Our effort is **God dependent effort** (faith), and we are working together with Him, empowered by Him to become like Him. Notice that James has in mind how to correct our **sinful struggles in relationships with God and others** (v-3:1-4:10) that are filled with ungodly lust (v-4:1-5) and selfish ambition (v-3:14), which lead to quarrels and strife (v-4:1-2), and ultimately striving with God as His enemy (v-4:4-5).

James 4:1-5 - 1 What is the **source of quarrels and conflicts among you**? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? **2 You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. And you are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel.** You do not have because you do not ask. **3** You ask and do not receive, because **you ask with wrong motives**, so that you may spend it on your pleasures. **4** You adulteresses, **do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.** **5** Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: "He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us"? NASB

As we arrive at his conclusion in **James 4:6-10**, notice he tells us how to practically **mortify our old sinful selves**, and to **vivify by putting on the new self**, but particularly calling this activity “**humbling ourselves.**” In this he points out that **humbling ourselves** has to do with both **mortification and vivification.**

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The context of verses 6-10 is sandwiched on both sides (v-6 & v-10) with the idea of humbling ourselves. Consider how he tells us it is done in between.

- **7 Submit therefore to God** – Here he calls us to the contrition and submissive yielding to the will of God that humility is. If you want to humble yourself, you must submit to God’s will, and yield yourself to Him in obedience. **How do we humble ourselves? By submitting to God.**
- **Resist the devil and he will flee from you** – This means you must put off or mortify the selfish desires of the old self, and stop yielding to Satan’s temptations (in this context it is lust, envy, quarreling, bitter jealousy and selfish ambition), but rather resist him. Here God says if you resist the devil he will flee. **How do we humble ourselves? By resisting the devil.**
- **8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you** – See here he encourages us to draw near to God, not to flee from Him like guilty Adam. God loves us and desires to free us from the slavery of sinful choices and He calls us to come near. See here the love that God has for us, and this should overcome our fear of Him (1 John 4:16-18).

Matthew 11:28-30 - 28 "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. 29 "Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. 30 "For My yoke is easy, and My load is light." NASB

Notice that God is ready and willing to draw near to those who draw near to Him. **How do we humble ourselves? By drawing near to God.**

- **Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded** - Here he calls us to mortify our sinful behavior both on the outside, "*cleanse your hands, you sinners*" and on the inside, "*and purify your hearts.*" Here the Christian is called a "*sinner*" and called to repent. Consider he also points to the inner man, the heart and mind of man. See here the battlefield of the mind, change your "*double mind*" into an steadfast single minded devotion to God. The Psalmist prayed, "*give me an undivided heart that I may fear your name!*" (Psalm 86:11). **How do we humble ourselves? By repenting (or mortifying) our sinful deeds, intentions and thoughts.**
- **9 Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy to gloom** – Here James calls us to the clear vision of humility in light of our sinfulness (v-8) and God's holy jealousy (v-5) for our purity. God has given His Holy Spirit to live within us, therefore we should hate, bewail and loathe our sinful deeds, intentions and thoughts! If we see our great offenses against God, and we perceive His loving-kindness in the Gospel to forgive us, we ought to have a regular mourning over our sinfulness with that contrition that detests its own corruption and seeks to amend its failures... remember the tax collector who "*was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!'*" **How do we humble ourselves? By mourning and weeping over our sinful deeds, intentions and thoughts!**

2 Corinthians 7:10-12 - 10 For the **sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret**, leading to salvation; but the sorrow of the world produces death. 11 For behold **what earnestness this very thing, this godly sorrow, has produced in you: what vindication of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what avenging of wrong!** In everything you demonstrated yourselves to be innocent in the matter. NASB

See in these few verses how James has given several **very practical** and **clear steps** to take in "**humbling ourselves.**" Notice how this humility relates to so many different aspects of our Christian life. Humility in this context includes, "**submitting to God, resisting the devil, drawing near to God,**" and "**repenting and mourning over our sinfulness.**" This is because humility is that foundation, that heart attitude of the true believer, that disposition of the heart before God that permeates everything we do in life and our relationship to God and others. It is in fact the **wellspring of all the virtues** in a Christian life. The more **intense and fertile the soil of humility in your heart**, the **richer and more bountiful** is the **virtue of God perfected** in our lives. This is because the humble are submitted to God, resisting the devil, drawing near to God and repenting and mourning their sin, and God in turn is "**giving grace to the humble.**" This is what the **God dependent effort of faith** looks like practically. It is a joyful trembling at the Word of God, which the Spirit is working in us, to cause us to **bear His image** in greater degree over time. We "**are being transformed**" through the Word and by the Spirit!

2 Corinthians 3:18 - 8 But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, **are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory**, just **as from the Lord, the Spirit**. NASB
But this happens in greater degree to those who respond to the Word in humility and receive it, being an "**effectual doer**" of the Word, and not just "**hearers**" only.

James 1:21-22 - 21 Therefore putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, **in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.** 22 **But prove yourselves doers of the word**, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. NASB