



Humble yourself before the Lord.

James 4:10

Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.

How can you come close to God? James gives five ways: (1) *Humble yourselves before God* (4:7). Yield to his authority and will, commit your life to him and his control, and be willing to follow him.

(2) *Resist the devil* (4:7). Don't allow Satan to entice and tempt you.

(3) *Wash your hands... and purify your hearts* (that is, lead a pure life) (4:8). Be cleansed from sin, replacing your desire to sin with your desire to experience God's purity.

(4) *Let there be sorrow and deep grief* for your sins (4:9). Don't be afraid to express deep heartfelt sorrow for what you have done.

(5) *Humble yourselves before the Lord*, and he will lift you up in honor (4:10; 1 Peter 5:6).

Bowing in humility before the Lord means recognizing that our worth comes from God alone. To be humble involves leaning on his power and his guidance, and not going our own independent way.

Although we do not deserve God's favor, he wants to lift us up and give us worth and dignity, despite our human shortcomings.

Show tolerance for one another in love.

Ephesians 4:2

With all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love,

We must accept and love other Christians in spite of their faults. When we see faults in fellow believers, we should be patient and gentle.

Walk humbly with your God.

Micah 6:8

He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God?

Israel responded to God's request by trying to appease him with sacrifices, hoping he would then leave them alone. But sacrifices and other religious rituals aren't enough; God wants changed lives. He wants his people to be fair, just, merciful, and humble. God wants us to become *living* sacrifices (Romans 12:1, 2), not just doing religious deeds, but living rightly (Jeremiah 4:4; Hebrews 9:14). It is impossible to follow God consistently without his transforming love in our hearts.

People have tried all kinds of ways to please God (6:6, 7), but God has made his wishes clear: He wants his people to do what is right, love mercy, and walk humbly with him. In your efforts to please God, examine these areas on a regular basis. Are you fair in your dealings with people? Do you show mercy to those who wrong you? Are you learning humility?

Be humble in spirit.

1 Peter 3:8

Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, and be courteous:

To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit;

Peter lists five key elements that should characterize any group of believers:

- (1) One mind—pursuing the same goals;
- (2) Sympathy—being responsive to others' needs;
- (3) Love—seeing and treating each other as brothers and sisters;
- (4) Tenderness—being affectionately sensitive and caring; and
- 5) Humility—being willing to encourage one another and rejoice in each other's successes.

These five qualities go a long way toward helping believers serve God effectively.



“These are the few ways we can practice humility:

To speak as little as possible of one's self.

To mind one's own business.

Not to want to manage other people's affairs.

To avoid curiosity.

To accept contradictions and correction cheerfully.

To pass over the mistakes of others.

To accept insults and injuries.

To accept being slighted, forgotten and disliked.

To be kind and gentle even under provocation.

Never to stand on one's dignity.

To choose always the hardest.”

— Mother Teresa - The Joy in Loving: A Guide to Daily Living

Examples of humility

King David

1 Samuel 18:18

But David said to Saul, "Who am I, and what is my life or my father's family in Israel, that I should be the king's son-in-law?"

While Saul's popularity made him proud and arrogant, David remained humble (18:23), even when the entire nation praised him. Although David succeeded in almost everything he tried and became famous throughout the land, he refused to use his popular support to his advantage against Saul. Don't allow popularity to twist your perception of your own importance. It's comparatively easy to be humble when you're not on center stage, but how will you react to praise and honor?

Jeremiah

Jeremiah 1:6

Then I said, "Alas, Lord GOD! Behold, I do not know how to speak, because I am a youth."

Often people struggle with new challenges because they lack self-confidence, feeling that they have inadequate ability, training, or experience. Jeremiah thought he was "too young" and inexperienced to be God's prophet to the nations.

But God promised to be with him. We should not allow feelings of inadequacy to keep us from obeying God. He will *a/ways* be with us. If God gives you a job to do, he will provide all you need to do it.

John the Baptist

Matthew 3:14

But John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I have need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"

John had been explaining that Jesus' baptism would be much greater than his, when suddenly Jesus came to him and asked to be baptized! John felt unqualified. He wanted Jesus to baptize *him*. Why did Jesus ask to be baptized? It was not for repentance for sin because Jesus never sinned.

"We must carry out all that God requires" refers to accomplishing God's mission. Jesus saw his baptism as advancing God's work. Jesus was baptized because

- (1) He was confessing sin on behalf of the nation, as Nehemiah, Ezra, Moses, and Daniel had done;
- (2) He was showing support for what John was doing;
- (3) He was inaugurating his public ministry;
- (4) He was identifying with the penitent people of God, not with the critical Pharisees who were only watching.

Jesus, the perfect man, didn't need baptism for sin, but he accepted baptism in obedient service to the Father, and God showed his approval.

Moses

Exodus 3:11

But Moses said to God, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?"

Moses made excuses because he felt inadequate for the job God asked him to do. It was natural for him to feel that way. He *was* inadequate all by himself. But God wasn't asking Moses to work alone. He offered other resources to help (God himself, Aaron, and the ability to do miracles). God often calls us to do tasks that seem too difficult, but he doesn't ask us to do them alone. God offers us his resources, just as he did to Moses. We should not hide behind our inadequacies, as Moses did, but look beyond ourselves to the great resources available. Then we can allow God to use our unique contributions.

King Solomon

1 Kings 3:7

"Now, O LORD my God, You have made your servant king in place of my father David, yet I am but a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in.

When given a chance to have anything in the world, Solomon asked for wisdom—"an understanding heart"—in order to lead well and to make right decisions. We can ask God for this same wisdom (James 1:5).

Notice that Solomon asked for understanding to carry out his job; he did not ask God to do the job for him. We should not ask God to do *for* us what he wants to do *through* us. Instead, we should ask God to give us the wisdom to know what to do and the courage to follow through on it.

Gideon

Judges 6:15

He said to Him, "O Lord, how shall I deliver Israel? Behold, my family is the least in Manasseh, and I am the youngest in my father's house."

"I will be with you," God told Gideon, and God promised to give him the strength he needed to overcome the opposition. In spite of this clear

promise for strength, Gideon made excuses. Seeing only his limitations and weaknesses, he failed to see how God could work through him.

Like Gideon, we are called to serve God in specific ways. Although God promises us the tools and strength we need, we often make excuses. But reminding God of our limitations only implies that he does not know all about us or that he has made a mistake in evaluating our character.

Isaiah

Isaiah 6:5

Then I said, "Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because 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."

Seeing the Lord and listening to the praise of the angels, Isaiah realized that he was sinful before God, with no hope of measuring up to God's standard of holiness. When Isaiah's lips were touched with a live burning coal, however, he was told that his sins were forgiven. It wasn't the coal that cleansed him, but God. In response, Isaiah submitted himself entirely to God's service.

No matter how difficult his task would be, he said, "Here I am. Send me." The painful cleansing process was necessary before Isaiah could fulfill the task to which God was calling him. Before we accept God's call to speak for him to those around us, we must be cleansed as Isaiah was, confessing our sins and submitting to God's control. Letting God purify us may be painful, but we must be purified so that we can truly represent God, who is pure and holy.

Illustration:

Three boys in the school yard were bragging about who had the better father. The first boy says, "My Dad

scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, he calls it a poem, and they give him \$100." The second boy says, "That's

nothing. My Dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, he calls it a song, and they give him \$1000." The third boy

says, "My Dad is even better than that. He scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, calls it a sermon, and it takes six men just to collect all the money!"

Illustrations:

“There is nothing noble in being superior to your fellow man; true nobility is being superior to your former self.”

— **Ernest Hemingway**

“The biggest challenge after success is shutting up about it.”

— **Criss Jami**

“If anyone tells you that a certain person speaks ill of you, do not make excuses about what is said of you but answer, "He was ignorant of my other faults, else he would not have mentioned these alone.”

— **Epictetus**

An invitation is given to open your heart's door to Jesus

Rev. 3:20

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

To ask Jesus to come into your heart, please pray this Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

Holy Bible: King James Translation

- 1 New American Standard Bible
- 2

Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*. Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print