

Humility (Accessing All Grace) – Part 3

5-Day Devotional: Walking in Humility and Grace

Small Group, Family and Personal Study Guide

Day 1: The Gift of Divine Resistance

Reading: James 4:6-10; Proverbs 3:34

Devotional: God's resistance to our pride is actually an act of profound love. When we barrel ahead in our own strength and wisdom, ignoring His direction, God strategically positions Himself to stop us—not to harm us, but to save us from destruction. This "intervention of divine frustration" is grace in action. Like a loving parent who blocks a toddler from running into traffic, God resists our prideful plans to redirect us toward His better way. When you feel doors closing or obstacles mounting, pause and ask: "Lord, am I operating in pride? Are You trying to redirect me?" His resistance is His rescue. Humble yourself today and trust that where God leads, He will grace you to succeed.

Day 2: Level Self-Esteem

Reading: Romans 12:3; Philippians 2:3-8

Devotional: Humility is not thinking less of yourself—it's thinking of yourself less. It's having "level self-esteem," understanding your identity in Christ without degradation or inflation. Like a construction level with the bubble perfectly centered, humility keeps us balanced between false humility and arrogant pride. You are fearfully and wonderfully made, redeemed by the blood of Jesus, and seated in heavenly places—that's your value. Yet you didn't create yourself, save yourself, or sustain yourself—that's your reality. This balanced perspective allows you to receive compliments without pride and criticism without devastation. Today, practice seeing yourself as God sees you: deeply loved, yet completely dependent on His grace for everything you accomplish.

Day 3: The Source of Everything

Reading: John 15:1-5; 1 Corinthians 4:7

Devotional: Pride whispers, "I did this. I built this. I pulled myself up by my bootstraps." But humility acknowledges, "Apart from Him, I can do nothing." Every breath, every talent, every opportunity flows from God's generous hand. Even your ability to work hard is a gift from Him. Satan's rebellion began with "I will," while Jesus modeled, "Not My will, but Yours." The difference between these two attitudes determines whether we receive God's empowering grace or His loving resistance. Today, audit your vocabulary. When you succeed, do you say "I" or "God enabled me"? This isn't false humility—it's honest acknowledgment of the Source. Shift from independence to dependence, and watch His grace multiply in your life.

Day 4: Submission Opens Heaven's Doors

Reading: 1 Peter 5:5-7; Matthew 23:12

Devotional: Submission feels counterintuitive in a culture that celebrates independence and self-promotion. Yet Scripture promises that those who humble themselves will be exalted—by God Himself. The highest place in the Spirit often looks like the lowest place in the natural. When you defer to others, prefer their needs, and submit to godly authority, you're positioning yourself for divine promotion. God doesn't exalt those who exalt themselves; He lifts up those who've learned to bow low. This process develops the spiritual character necessary to sustain the level your gifts can take you. Humility isn't weakness—it's wisdom. It recognizes that fighting God's way up is futile, but humbling yourself under His mighty hand guarantees He will lift you up in due time.

Day 5: Run Toward God, Not Away

Reading: Hebrews 4:14-16; 1 John 1:9

Devotional: When you sin or fail, your natural instinct may be to hide from God like Adam and Eve. But that's pride trying to handle your problem independently. Humility runs toward God, not away from Him. He's not waiting to condemn you—He's waiting to cleanse you and restore you. The same God who showed you mercy at salvation will show you mercy again today. Don't attempt to deal with your sin by yourself; you can't. Come boldly to the throne of grace and receive the mercy and help you need. God's correction is always redemptive, never destructive. His resistance to your pride is actually compassion drawing you back to your first

love. Today, bring whatever you're hiding into His light. Humble confession opens the door to abundant grace.

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Scripture Reference Guide

Small Group, Family and Personal Study Guide

Scripture References from the Sermon

Explicitly Mentioned:

1. James 4:6 - "But he gives more grace. Therefore, he says God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble."
2. James 4 (entire chapter) - Referenced multiple times throughout the sermon as the main text
3. Proverbs 4 - Referenced regarding the Word being "health and medicine to all your flesh"
4. James 4:15 - "You don't know what your life is? You're a puff of air. You are here today and gone. Your life is but a vapor."

Alluded To or Thematically Referenced:

5. Matthew 7:3-5 / Luke 6:41-42 - The plank and splinter illustration about judging others
6. Romans 12:1 - "Present our bodies as slaves to righteousness"
7. Ephesians 2:6 - "Seated in heavenly places" (mentioned at the end)
8. Romans 8:31 - "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (referenced in song before service)
9. 1 Peter 5:6 - "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God and he will lift you up"

10. 2 Timothy 2:15 - The concept of studying to show yourself approved (implied in the discussion about personal Bible study)
11. John 4 - The woman at the well (testimony shared about Dale reading this passage)
12. Isaiah 14:13-14 - Satan's "I will" statements (referenced when discussing pride)
13. Philippians 4:19 - "He supplies all my need according to his riches in glory" (mentioned as a confession)
14. 2 Corinthians 5:10 / 1 Corinthians 3:12-15 - The Bema Seat judgment and works tried by fire
15. Proverbs 16:18 - "Pride comes before a fall" (alluded to in discussion)

Relevant Verses for Main Themes:

- Humility: Philippians 2:3-8, Colossians 3:12, 1 Peter 3:8
- God's Grace: 2 Corinthians 12:9, Ephesians 2:8-9, Titus 2:11-12
- Repentance: Acts 3:19, 2 Corinthians 7:10
- Submission to God: James 4:7, Hebrews 12:9

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Small Group Guide: Humility - An Open Door to Grace

Based on James 4:6

Opening Prayer

Begin your group time by asking the Holy Spirit to speak to each person individually and help you apply this word to your own lives first before looking at others.

Ice Breaker

Share a time when someone showed you genuine humility. What impact did it have on you?

Key Scripture

James 4:6 - "But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: 'God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.'"

Key Takeaways

1. **Humility opens the door to God's grace** - Grace is not just unmerited favor, but the divine ability to overcome evil tendencies and live victoriously.
 2. **Pride cuts off God's grace** - Pride is an overestimation of self without acknowledgment of God as the source of everything.
 3. **God resists the proud in love** - This resistance is an act of compassion, an "intervention of divine frustration" to lead us back to His will.
 4. **Humility is level self-esteem** - Not low self-esteem, but a healthy understanding of who we are in relationship to God and others.
 5. **The highest place in the Spirit often looks like the lowest place in the natural** - To go high with the Lord, we must put our flesh low.
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Discussion Questions

Understanding Pride

1. What does it mean that pride is "living like you're the source of everything in your life with no acknowledgment of God"? Can you identify areas where this might show up in your life?
2. The sermon mentioned that "knowledge without fellowship puffs up." Why is it easier to see pride in others than in ourselves? How can we guard against this?
3. Discuss the statement: "Sometimes in order for God to be for us, He must be against us because we are in opposition to Him." Have you experienced this "divine resistance" in your life?

Understanding Humility

4. How does the definition of humility as "level self-esteem" differ from what you previously thought humility meant?
5. What does it mean to "defer" or "prefer" others? Share practical examples from daily life.
6. The pastor said, "Your character will hold you where your gift will take you." How does humility develop the character needed for promotion?

Personal Application

7. Read James 4:7-10. What specific actions does James call us to take? Which one stands out to you personally?
8. The sermon mentioned that God is not obligated to empower our plans that aren't rooted in His desires. How can we know the difference between our plans and God's plans for our lives?
9. What's the difference between running to God when we sin versus running away from God? Why is pride often what makes us want to hide?

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge

Choose ONE of the following to practice this week:

Option 1: Daily Humility Check

- Each morning, pray: "God, I humble myself before You. What do You want me to do today?"
- Each evening, review your day and ask: "Where did I operate in pride? Where did I operate in humility?"

Option 2: The Door Holder Exercise

- Literally and figuratively "hold the door open" for others this week
- Look for opportunities to defer to others, prefer others, and serve others

- Journal about how it feels and what God shows you

Option 3: Prayer Over Criticism

- When you recognize pride in someone else, commit to praying for them instead of correcting them
- Keep a prayer list rather than a criticism list
- Ask God to show you the plank in your own eye first

Option 4: Seeking Counsel

- Identify one decision you're facing or plan you're making
 - Before moving forward, humble yourself by seeking godly counsel
 - Ask: "Did I ask the Lord about this? Have I fellowshiped with Him on this?"
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Going Deeper

Personal Study

1. Read all of James Chapter 4 this week
2. Create a personal definition of humility based on what you're learning
3. Memorize James 4:6

Reflection Questions for Journaling

- Where in my life am I trying to be the source instead of acknowledging God as the source?
 - What areas of my life feel like I'm "running against a wall"? Could this be divine resistance?
 - How would my relationships change if I truly practiced "level self-esteem"?
 - What does God want to exalt in my life that I've been too proud to humble myself toward?
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Closing Discussion

The pastor said: "In humility, you're not degrading yourself. You understand your value concerning the Lord's love for you, but you're also not puffing yourself up."

- How does understanding God's love for you help you maintain this balance?
 - What encouragement can we give each other as we pursue humility together?
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Prayer Focus

- Pray for each person to recognize areas of pride in their own lives
 - Ask for grace to walk in humility
 - Pray for the Holy Spirit to lead each person into God's plans and purposes
 - Thank God that His resistance is actually an act of love and compassion
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Before Next Week

- Review your study notes from the sermon
 - Complete your chosen practical application
 - Be ready to share what God showed you about humility and pride
 - Bring specific testimonies of how humility opened doors to grace in your life
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Leader's Note

Remember to model humility in your leadership. Be willing to share your own struggles with pride and your journey toward humility. Create a loving environment where people can be honest about their struggles without fear of judgment, we are all growing spiritually. The goal is recognition for the purpose of change, not condemnation.