

## #165 “Evidences of a Humble Heart”

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James 4:6 says, “GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.” The proud set themselves in opposition to God, glorifying in themselves rather than in Him. It is not a smart thing to be opposed to God, so we would do well to think through Biblically what it is to be humble so that we can continue operating as God would have us.

1. The humble heart understands dependence upon God.

John 15:5 makes it clear that apart from Jesus we cannot accomplish anything of eternal value. It is impossible to do God’s will and to store up treasure in heaven if we think that we are fully able without God. The humble rightly understand their insufficiency and powerlessness apart from Christ.

2. The humble heart trembles before God’s Word.

Isaiah 66:2 says, "But to this one I will look, to him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word." God not only delights in those who tremble before His Word, but He promises to look to them to use them mightily for the purposes of the kingdom. Those with humble hearts don’t read God’s Word carelessly but rather with hearts that are tender to what God’s Word might have to say to them to convict them or teach them. They take God’s Word seriously and the act of hearing it with great reverence. There is a love and value for what God says that clearly sets apart the humble from the proud.

3. The humble heart is willing to own up to sin.

Isaiah modeled this in Isaiah 6:5 when he cried out to God in acknowledgement of his uncleanness. In light of God’s holiness, he realized that his sin would destroy him. He wanted God’s cleansing, and God forgave him and commissioned him for service. If we want to be used of God, we need to first be humble, a significant part of which involves dealing with any sin in our hearts promptly, readily, and rightly.

4. The humble heart is willing to acknowledge human weakness so that Christ can show Himself to be strong.

Paul rightly understood that God’s power is perfected in our weakness and that it is in our weakness that He can be strong (2 Corinthians 12:9-10). God allowed Paul to suffer so that he would not be tempted to exalt himself (2 Corinthians 12:7). He knew that Paul could fall prey to pride given all of the wondrous things he had seen and experienced. So God ordained suffering for him to remind him that he was but a very weak human being who needed God for everything. We need to remember our weakness if we want to let Christ be strong through us.

5. The humble heart has the fruit of obedience.

The Israelites cried out to God in Judges 10:15-16, "The sons of Israel said to the LORD, "We have sinned, do to us whatever seems good to You; only please deliver us this day. So they put away the foreign gods from among them and served the LORD; and He could bear the misery of Israel no longer." As long as Israel held on to their worship of fake, foreign deities, they were opposed to God. God in His great love for them allowed them to suffer at the hands of foreign peoples. If their gods were so powerful, they only needed to trust in them. So God taught them a valuable lesson about Who has true power, and the people repented and put their gods away from them. Truly humble hearts that truly repent and turn to God will no longer be opposed by God. When we draw near to God, immediately He will draw near to us. He only wants us to be humble enough to call sin "sin" and to deal with it by repenting and seeking the forgiveness that He is fully ready and prepared to offer. The humble heart is an obedient heart.

6. The humble heart values the welfare of others ahead of its own.

Philippians 2:3-4 says, "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others." The humble of heart are cognizant of the needs of others, and they are willing to sacrifice so that others can be ministered to.

7. The humble heart accepts the role of servant.

Jesus said in Mark 9:35, "If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all." The way to greatness in the life to come is by being a servant in the present. Jesus demonstrated this to the utmost in that His purpose in coming was not to make the most people like Him, to gain the most popularity, or to gain a position of great earthly power. His mission was to lay down His life for His sheep (John 10:11-15). He came not to be served, but to serve (Mark 10:45). Now He is exalted in heaven with great power, but in this life He was a servant. We would do well to realize the importance of being a servant in this life if we want to be great in the next.

Humility may not be a characteristic that the world exalts in, but they don't understand God's ways. 1 Peter 5:6 says, "Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time." There are no shortcuts to true exaltation, something only God can bestow. What is sure is that those who are humble in heart will, at the proper time, be exalted. If we want to truly be exalted we need to truly be humble, saying with our Savior the ultimate expression of humility, "Lord, not my will but Yours be done" (Luke 22:42).