

How to Humble Yourself

- ✖ Pointedly, persistently and passionately, in both Old and New Testaments, the Bible calls us to humility.

In Deuteronomy 8, Moses told the Israelites three times that God tested them in the wilderness for the express purpose of humbling them: “The Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to *humble* he *humbled* he might *humble* thee” (Deut. 8:2-3, 16, KJV, emphasis added). By inspiration the apostle Paul added that their trials were recorded as examples to us in this Christian era: “Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition” (1 Cor. 10:11). In his epistle, therefore, James exhorts Christians everywhere, “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord” (James 4:10). Peter orders the same in his general epistle, “humble the mighty hand of God” (1 Pet. 5:6).

In these and many similar biblical references, God implies a fact too clear to deny or ignore: *In our natural (fallen) state we are all proud creatures—thinking too highly of ourselves, not highly enough of God, and too lowly of other people. Therefore, even after we’re redeemed by God’s grace, we need to be humbled.*

Consequently, the Redeemer seeks to deliver His redeemed ones from our overinflated sense of self-esteem and bring us into humility—a sober perception of ourselves, an appreciative view of others, and an awestruck and worshipful outlook on God. This mental transformation is essential if we hope to live and work close to God throughout eternity, because He has repeatedly declared His holy hatred of pride. In Proverbs, pride ranks first on God’s definitive list of most-hated sins: “These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: *A proud look....*” (Prov. 6:16-17, emphasis added). The writings of Isaiah and Ezekiel reveal pride was Satan’s (Lucifer’s) primary sin and caused his permanent

ouster from paradise before the creation of man (see Is. 12:14-15; Ezek. 28:4-19). And if God rejected Lucifer from His presence due to his pride, He won't receive people into His presence that are still proud.

James says that instead of receiving the proud, God resists them (see James 4:6). Peter agrees verbatim (see 1 Pet. 5:5). And as if to dash even the feeblest hopes of impenitently proud ones somehow spending perpetuity close to God, David declares that not only he but more importantly God will not tolerate them (see Ps. 101:5).

What is God's underlying message here? If we are ever to know and abide near the God who hates pride, we must be humbled. Obviously, if we were already humble in our natural state or even as born-again Christians, God's Word would not repeatedly call us to "humble yourselves." Nor would Jesus have warned even His closest disciples to humble themselves (see Matt. 18:3).

While becoming humble is easier said than done, it is not mission impossible. If it were, we could justly charge God with unfairness because through His inspired writers He plainly orders us to accomplish this task, using imperative language: "[You must] humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord" (James 4:10).

As with every other spiritual problem, the Bible provides us with clear and available solutions. Here are some biblical ways by which we may humble ourselves.

- Obedience to God's will—Jesus humbled Himself by obedience (see Phil. 2:8).
- Sober thinking—Don't think more highly of yourself (see Rom. 12:3).
- Full acceptance of the lowest place—you'll be exalted (see Luke 14:10-11).

- Receiving the chastening of God—training and corrective discipline (see Heb. 12:6).
- Submitting to spiritual leaders—they are accountable to God (see Heb. 13:17).
- Being subject to one another—listen to and serve one another (see 1 Pet. 5:5).
- Casting all your worries on the Lord—utterly dependent on God (see 1 Pet. 5:7).
- Receiving help freely—from God and man (see Luke 8:1-3).
- Confessing faults and errors—"I'm sorry, I was wrong" (see Matt. 5:23-24).
- Returning thanks for every blessing—form the habit daily (see 1 Thess. 5:18).
- Waiting patiently—pride is reduced and meekness produced (see Num. 12:3).
- Accepting humiliation—offenses will come—how will we react? (see Matt. 5:38-39).

These ways to humble ourselves are neither antiquated nor theoretical. They are proven, golden biblical methods. We may safely trust that as we practice them they will release us from the stressful yoke of pride and the Lord will establish us in healthy biblical humility. We will think worshipfully of God, highly of others and soberly of ourselves.