

Faith Without Works is Useless

An Expository “Journey” Through the **Epistle of James**

16- Godly Humility Delights in Dependence on God

Church; July 11, 2021

James 4:6-17

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.

11 Do not speak against one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge of it.

12 There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you who judge your neighbor?

13 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit."

14 Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.

15 Instead, you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that."

16 But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil.

17 Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.

To the Glory of God

Probably the single most admired Attribute of human beings- is Humility. To be Humble is thought of as being one of the best and noblest and most godly of Attributes- to which anyone could ever attain. And, normally, being Humble means being “soft-spoken”; and low-keyed- maybe even gentle. Now, strangely, even though Humility is supposed to be the “shunning of praise”- we often praise and celebrate Humility. Now why is that? Because we have determined that

Humility is worth emulating and adopting into our lives. And so does God. And that is why the half-brother of Jesus wrote this in verse 6:

GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.

Now James is actually quoting here from **Proverbs 3:34**- and he and the Apostle Peter (**1Peter 5:5**) both taught this Truth. In fact, all of the biblical writers taught this Truth. And that tells us that Humility is very important to God. In fact, it is the lack of Humility as to why people remain Lost and unsaved.

Coming to the conclusion that you are a wicked sinner, who deserves Eternal Damnation; and getting into a position of Holy Spirit empowered Desperation where you cry out to God for a Mercy that you haven't earned and aren't entitled to- is the greatest manifestation of Humility to which humans can attain. Likewise, refusing to admit your "lostness"; and refusing that Desperation- while remaining in your Sins- is the single greatest display of Human Arrogance; Pride; and Self-Righteousness that anyone can display.

So, we can say then that a Humility- brought about by a sovereign Act of God- is a *requirement* of Salvation. And that tells us that the Humility that the Bible describes is a whole lot more than merely being "soft-spoken"; low-keyed; and gentle. Humility is the *shattering* of Human Arrogance. It is the *destruction* of Human Pride. And it is the *elimination* of the Self-Righteousness that keeps lost people- lost.

So, as we seek to examine this section of James' Epistle- I want to try to ask and answer four Questions:

1. What is "Humility"?
2. Is God Humble?
3. Why does God *command* and *expect* Humility?
4. How do patently Arrogant people *become* Humble?

1. What is "Humility"?

The Dictionary defines "Humility" like this:

Humility: the quality or condition of being humble; modest opinion or estimate of one's own importance, rank, etc.¹

¹ Dictionary.com

Now this definition is interesting- since the single Goal of nearly every Institution on earth from Corporations; to the Federal Government; to the Military; to Psychology; to Schools is to “*raise the Self-Esteem of people*”- which seems to be diametrically opposed to being Humble- since the raising of Self-Esteem is the raising of Pride- which wars *against* Humility. So, if Humility is so admired and sought after- why are all these groups fighting against it? It is truly a confusing situation.

But how does the Bible define Humility? Well, the Bible doesn’t give us “definitions”. Instead, it gives us examples. Like:

Philippians 2:5-8

**5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,
6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,
7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.
8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.**

Now we need to remember that Jesus was the *wisest*; the most *powerful*; and the most *important* Man to ever live. Jesus was God Almighty in human flesh. He created all things; He owned all things; and all things were under His complete Control. Jesus could command fish to gather; and blind eyes to open; and withered hands to straighten out. He could simply speak- and fig trees withered while demons trembled. Jesus had absolute and total Authority and Control over Nature; and over Angels; and over the laws of Physics- so that He could walk on water and resurrect dead people; rise from the dead, Himself; and bodily ascend into Heaven. But perhaps His greatest and most important Ability was that Jesus could forgive all the Sins of all of God’s people.

And yet, the Apostle Paul says here that Jesus,

emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

The Bible says that Jesus- obeyed His Father so perfectly- that He “became obedient to the point of Death on a Cross”. And Paul says that Jesus obeying His Father to this degree was an example of- “Humility”.

The ever- existing; never-created; invincible; incarnate God- became Obedient- so He could die- screaming in Agony on a Cross. And the inspired

Word of the living God says that this type of Obedience is what true, biblical, godly Humility looks like.

So, the first word in our effort to define Humility- *biblically*- is “Obedience”. Humility looks like “Obedience” to God’s Word and Will. Or we could go to **Deuteronomy 8:2&3** that says,

2 “You shall remember all the way which the Lord your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.

3 “He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord.

.. and from this we see at least three things:

1. God has to *sovereignly* humble us
2. God uses Hunger to humble us
3. But what we should hunger for- is what comes out of God’s Mouth

... so, we have a few more words that have to go into our Definition of Humility:

- Sovereignty
- Hunger
- Scripture

... so, Humility looks like a “Hunger for the Word of God” and something that God has to visit us with- *sovereignly*. And then we might go to **1Kings 21:27-29** that says,

27 It came about when Ahab heard these words, that he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and fasted, and he lay in sackcloth and went about despondently.

28 Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying,

29 “Do you see how Ahab has humbled himself before Me? Because he has humbled himself before Me, I will not bring the evil in his days, but I will bring the evil upon his house in his son’s days.”

... and this gives us a few more words to add to our definition of what Humility looks like:

1. The Fear of the Lord
2. Repentance

... so, Humility looks like the Fear of the Lord- which brings about a Repentance- a “turning *away*” from Sin and a “turning *toward*” God. So, now let’s look at **2Chronicles 12:6&7:**

6 So the princes of Israel and the king humbled themselves and said, “The Lord is righteous.”

7 When the Lord saw that they humbled themselves, the word of the Lord came to Shemaiah, saying, “They have humbled themselves so I will not destroy them, but I will grant them some measure of deliverance, and My wrath shall not be poured out on Jerusalem by means of Shishak.

So, here, godly Humility recognizes the Righteousness of God; and it aids in our Deliverance from God’s Judgment.

Now, so far- we have developed a partial definition of Humility that includes these Characteristics:

- Obedience to God’s Word and Will
- A Hunger for God’s Word
- God gives Humility- sovereignly
- Fearing God
- Repenting of Sin

... which results in being delivered from God’s Judgment.

But now let’s look at what James taught about Humility from verses 6-12. Humility- according to James is:

- Submitting to God
- Resisting the devil
- Drawing near to God
- Cleansing our hands
- Purifying our hearts
- Not being frivolous or silly (having a godly soberness)
- Not speaking against another brother or sister

... but then there is one other aspect that is not usually discussed when defining Humility. In verses 13-16- James gives us insight into another Characteristic of Humility: *Dependence on God*. Here is what he said,

13 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit."

14 Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.

15 Instead, you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that."

16 But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil.

Here, James reminds us of just how fragile we are; and just how powerful and Good- God is- when he says,

You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.

Here, the half-brother of Jesus teaches that we are all like the steam rising up from the boiling water on the stove. And as merely vapor- we CANNOT say,

"Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit."

... why? ...

... you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow ...

We are vapor- steam- and God is absolutely Sovereign over everything- all the time. We have no idea what is going to happen tomorrow or what might happen in the next five seconds. And God is in total and complete Control over all things. And He operates in the Universe as though He owns it. And so, His Word and Will are Absolute. They *cannot* be thwarted. They *cannot* be defeated. Everything God determined to do- before He made the world with His Word and Spirit- will be done- *exactly* as God has said.

But most of the time- we have no idea what God's Will is- concerning the daily aspects of our lives. Is it God's Will for us to buy that rental house? Is it God's Will for us to invest in that Company? Is it God's Will for us to go on that diet? Is it God's Will for us to adopt that child?

Many times, the Mystery of God's Providence remains just that- a Mystery. And that is why James teaches here that Humility *acknowledges* that Reality- by being dependent on God. But NOT merely in the large things like War or Cancer

or the rising and falling of Nations- but in what we are going to do- tomorrow; and in what we are planning; and whether our business will make a profit.

So, first, *acknowledging* that God is Sovereign and we are not; and then, secondly- verbally expressing our dependence on God by adopting James' language here and saying, "**If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that.**" is the kind of godly Humility that honors God.

2. Is God Humble?

Now to be "godly" means we are to be "like" God. And while we will never be Deity- we are to emulate the Qualities and the Attributes and the Characteristics of God that we find in the Bible. So, for example, God is Love- so we are to be people, who love. God forgives- and so, we are NOT to hold the "Trespases" carried out against us- anymore than we want the Trespases that we have committed against God to be remembered. God is Good and Kind and Merciful, and Patient- and these are Qualities that we are strive to have in our own lives.

A few years ago, the Concept of what "godliness" actually meant was encapsulated in bracelets that people wore that had the initials, "*W.W.J.D.*" on them. And those initials stood for, "*What Would Jesus Do?*" And they were designed to help saved people make decisions about the circumstances they found themselves in- that would mirror what Jesus would do. In other words, the WWJD bracelets were a "Help" to assist us in being, "godly" or to display or show the Qualities and Attributes of Jesus. And the idea behind this was: We are to "be" like Jesus.

But the Truth is that there are some Attributes and Qualities and Characteristics of Jesus that we are NOT to emulate. Now it is true that in **1Corinthians 11:1**, the Apostle Paul said,

Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.

But Paul knew and we need to know that we *dare not* imitate Jesus in some of His most *glorious* Pursuits and Achievements. For example,

- ✓ DON'T imitate Jesus in His Authority to forgive Sin (**Mark 2:10**).
- ✓ DON'T imitate Jesus in His Right to say, "Before Abraham was, I am" (**John 8:58**).
- ✓ DON'T imitate Jesus in His glorious bearing of all the Sins of God's people as the "Lamb of God" (**John 1:29**).
- ✓ DON'T imitate Jesus in His Claim to have no Sin in Himself (**2Corinthians 5:21**).

- ✓ DON'T imitate Jesus in His Authority to say, **“The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath” (Matthew 12:8).**

... in other words, we must NOT even attempt to imitate Jesus in the areas of His Deity. Because for fallen humans to *attempt* to be God- or to *try* to be Deity is NOT being godly- it is the epitome of ungodliness. And it isn't being Humble either- it is being Arrogant and Self-Righteous. So, the wrong kind of “God-imitation” or “Christ- imitation” is NOT the pursuit of godly Humility- but the height of Rebellion. So, at best, “WWJD” only works *some* of the time.

We always need to keep in mind that the Essence of satan's Temptation that brought down the entire human Race was, what? Well, satan himself told us in **Genesis 3:5b:**

... God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God ...

... so, the Temptation that brought about the “*Second Greatest Sin*”² ever committed was,

“Go ahead and be a perfect imitator of God.”

And this is why we need to be careful that we DON'T make “God-imitation” or “Christ-imitation” too central in our pursuit of Holiness. Now before you reject what I am going to say next- I only ask that you think it through first. Here it is:

Imitating God or imitating Jesus is NOT the *main* Way we are to pursue Holiness or Godliness

Now there are occasions when we should. But the Bible does NOT teach that “imitating what Jesus did”- is the *main* Way we are to pursue Holiness and Godliness. The Scriptures do NOT teach that. What the inspired, inerrant, and infallible Word of the living God teaches- *clearly and repeatedly*- is NOT, “*DO WHAT I DO*”- but rather, “*DO WHAT I TELL YOU!*”

God and Jesus and the Holy Spirit and the Old Testament Prophets and the New Testament Apostles constantly taught, “*Obey God!*” And the way they told us to obey God was to, “*Obey the Word of God! Obey the Bible! Obey Scripture!*” So, it is NOT primarily that we are to imitate God's or Jesus' EXAMPLE. It is that we are to obey HIS WORD. So, “*WWJD*” would be better understood as, “*WDJS*” (*WHAT DID JESUS SAY?*)

² The single most heinous Sin was the murder of Jesus

We are called a hundred times more often in the Bible to bring our Loves and Desires and Wants and Affections into conformity to God's Word and then- by the Power of the indwelling Spirit- to discipline our Flesh to act in a way that accords with the Gospel and that flows from Faith. And that is the COMMAND of God for our Behavior. And that is *infinitely* more prominent and more common than the Call to imitate either God or Jesus' Examples.

One of the things we always need to remember when we are talking about God- is that we are talking about God and NOT a Man. And when we are talking about Jesus- we need to always remember that we are talking about the incarnate God- a Being, Who was "*fully God and fully Man- in the same body; at the same time- without conflict or contradiction.*"³ And that means that many of the most common ways we understand *ourselves* will simply NOT work by comparing ourselves with them.

So, the Question, "*Is God Humble?*" is tricky- precisely because we normally think that a person, who is NOT Humble is the *opposite* of what Humility is and is therefore an insecure braggart; or a show-off; or a windbag. For example, if you or I were to make it our life's Goal to have our Name exalted by everyone else- people would correctly understand us to be morally defective and perhaps even mentally unstable. In fact, there is a mental disorder called, "Narcissism" that is exactly that. A Narcissist is a person who cannot function properly unless he is made much of. And a person like that is crazy but they are usually harmless- unless they have some degree of Power or Authority.

For example, a 90 year- old woman, who suffers from Narcissism needs to be treated with respect and dignity. Because she usually can't hurt herself or anyone else- unless she forgets to take her medication. But you wouldn't want a Narcissist to be your boss at work- who can fire you or who has control over your salary. And you wouldn't want your Pastor to be a Narcissist either- because he tells you what God has said. And you wouldn't want the President of the United States to be a Narcissist either- because he has his finger on the nuclear button. A person, who goes around- commanding others to praise him- is disgusting to us. And we usually say or think- "*Just who does he think he is?*"

And yet, throughout the whole Bible, God does that very thing. He seeks to exalt His Name so that it is known and loved and praised and honored and enjoyed more than Life itself. He *commands* us to praise Him; and to love Him; and to enjoy Him- forever! And He has promised horrific Punishment to those who don't.

So, does that mean that God is a Narcissist? No, it means that God is God. And as God- as the most beautiful; the wisest; the most glorious and the most

³ This is a quote most commonly attributed to John Chrysostom back in the 4th Century

important Being in the Universe- it is right- it is correct for God to command us to praise Him. Yet if we were to do that- it would be Sin.

You see, it is wise to tell others to love what is the most- lovely thing in the created Universe. But Sin stops that from happening. So, the Love of God is NOT best understood as God doing all that He does- for our exaltation. No, the Love of God is BEST understood by God removing our Sin (by what He alone does for us) so He may give to us- *Himself*. So, it is our Sin our “fallenness” as to why God has to COMMAND us to love Him. Because, ever since the Fall- human beings loving God is NOT normal. It is NOT natural. The sons and daughters of Adam DO NOT automatically love God. We DON’T *choose* to love God and we DON’T *decide* to love God. Why? Because it is foreign to the Nature of wicked rebels to love God.

So, in order for *anyone* to love God- God MUST powerfully and miraculously; and supernaturally and permanently and sovereignly change our Nature from being “fallen” to being “divine”. And God must GRANT; He must GIVE us the Gift of a Love for God. Because without that change of Nature; and without that Gift of Love for God- no human on earth would ever love God. Why? Because we are fallen. And part of what being “fallen” means is that- left to ourselves- without a sovereign intervening by God to us- we would NEVER love God! In fact, we would love anything EXCEPT God! **1John 4:9** says that our Love FOR God is a Gift FROM God. And that means that Salvation is:

- ✓ The powerful and permanent removal (forgiveness) of the Barrier (Sin) that separates us from God
- ✓ The giving of the Gift of a Love for God
- ✓ The imputation of Jesus’ Righteousness

... and everything else- including the ability to believe; and the desire to obey God; and the power to overcome Sin; and the perseverance to stay faithful- all flow out from these three things.

And yet, we can’t do any of these three things. In fact, we can’t even cooperate in any of these three things. All three are sovereign Acts of God- alone-carried out on behalf of patently sinful rebels, who don’t deserve them and have not earned them.

And all of this is for one primary Goal- to glorify God! So, God loved us- so that, by and through His Love for us- we would love God and live our lives to His Glory. And God gave us Faith- so that we would believe- so that by and through this Gift of Faith- we would trust in God and believe what God has spoken infallibly in Scripture- so that He would be glorified.

So, EVERYTHING- from Creation to Salvation to Sanctification to Heaven itself- is geared for one overarching Goal- so that God alone would be glorified! So, my Question is this: If EVERYTHING is done so that God will be glorified- How could God be Humble? You can't receive praise and adoration and thanks and glory- and be Humble at the same time. Those things do NOT lend themselves to Humility. Listen to how God talks,

Isaiah 48:11

“For My own sake, for My own sake, I will act; For how can My name be profaned? And My glory I will not give to another.

Yet all through the Bible God tells us to, *“Empty yourself. Deny yourself. Humble yourself. Become small. You must decrease.”* But at the same time- God tells us about Himself,

Isaiah 46:9b&10

... I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, ‘My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure’;

Now if a Man were to talk like that, we'd call him a Megalomaniac and we would rightly condemn him. Yet God talks that way all the time. In fact, this is the ONLY way God refers to Himself. So, is God a Megalomaniac? No, God is- God. So, is God Humble? Again, *“No!”* Yet God is also NOT Arrogant. The solution is to say, *“God is loving.”* You see, when God exalts His Own Name- He's exalting the most beautiful, the most valuable, Reality in the Universe- namely, *Himself*. But He is doing that- NOT merely because it is true; and NOT merely because it rightly exalts Himself. No, God is also doing that- for the eternal Enjoyment of His believing creatures!

You see, God is in a “class” all by Himself. And so, we CAN'T imitate Him in this. And that means His most loving Act is to exalt *Himself* as the “all-satisfying One”- for the everlasting Pleasure of His redeemed people. And He does this- at the Cost of the Life of His sinless Son. And NOBODY else can love like this! And we simply CAN'T imitate this: offering ourselves as the “all-satisfying Treasure” of the Universe. So, what do we do? We believe this; and we trust in this; and we celebrate this; and rejoice in it. But we don't celebrate God's correct exaltation of Himself as the HIGHEST and BEST example of His Love- by being made much of ourselves. No, James says we celebrate God's exaltation of Himself- and rejoice over it- we magnify the Importance of it- by being Humble.

My dear friends, we don't imitate God by exalting *ourselves* the way God exalts Himself. When God does it- it's Right. But when we even attempt to do it- it is blasphemy. We only imitate God rightly when we exalt God the way God exalts God- because we're NOT God; and we NEVER have been God; and we NEVER will be God; and we CAN'T be God; and therefore, we shouldn't even WANT to be God.

And that is why we MUST be Humble. But it is also why God CAN'T be Humble.

So, God has called us to "be" something that He CAN'T "be". Because Humility is to feel; and to think; and to act; and to say; and to believe; and to live in a way that testifies, "*I am NOT God! And not only am I NOT God- but God IS God; and God is better than me!*" And this is the very heart of Humility for created humans: "*I'm NOT God. But God IS God and I'm UNDER God.*"

1Peter 5:6a

Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God...

So, at its very Core- Humility, for us is what God CANNOT "be" and what God CANNOT "do". And it isn't that God is simply NOT Humble- He CAN'T be Humble. And God CAN'T be Humble- because God CAN'T say, "*I'm not God. I'm under God!*" God DOESN'T have the Ability or Power to say that. It would be the undoing of the Universe.

So, godly Humility- perfect Humility- the sincere and happy Eagerness to NOT be God, but to be under God- to trust Him; and depend on Him; and to treasure Him- is *required* of all human beings. It is part of what "Spirit and Truth Worship" looks like.

It was required of Adam- but he failed. And it's required of us- and we have failed too. But God loves this Humility. It is in God's Nature to consider Humility- frail, weak, inconsistent, human Humility- to be a beautiful thing. It's in His Nature to delight in it. And so, God means to have this Humility from His people, whom He bought and paid for. But in order for His people to have this Humility- God will have to give it to them- since they CANNOT acquire it on their own.

But how will God give this Humility to us? He MUST do the unthinkable. He must take on Human Nature. The Son of God becomes the God/Man, precisely to do what God as God CANNOT do: be perfectly Humble in His Human Nature. So, Jesus perfectly trusted His Father. And He became absolutely and perfectly obedient to His Father; and perfectly dependent on His Father. And in that Dependence, Jesus did what only a perfectly sinless Human in flawless Union with God could do:

Philippians 2:8

Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

So, God, as God, CANNOT be Humble- even though He CAN be and is-loving. But the God/Man, in His perfect Humanity, COULD be Humble. And He was. And in that sense, Jesus has taken the Beauty of Humility into the Godhead. Because Jesus, the God/Man, will *always* be fully God and fully Man- forever!

3. Why does God *command* and *expect* Humility?

Why does God *command* and *expect* Humility from us- when He already knows we are inherently Arrogant, Proudful, and Self-Righteous creatures? What's the point? Does God get a kick out of watching us struggle- even though we are doomed to fail?

There are two ways that Humility is approached in the Bible:

1Peter 5:5b

... GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.

... and ...

Luke 14:11

For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

.. so, it seems that the Promise that God makes to “give Grace” to the Humble- is what the Promise of “being exalted” when we humble ourselves looks like. So, “being given Grace” is what “being exalted” means. And both of these come by way of godly Humility.

Now if we just left it there- we would come to the Conclusion that “being given Grace” or “being exalted” is the Reward that we earn by putting forth our human effort to become Humble. And I hope you know that this is NEVER what the Bible teaches about ANYTHING! So, if you have come to that Conclusion (about any subject)- you're simply in Error; and you are entirely *inconsistent* and *contradictory* to EVERYTHING in the New Covenant.

The New Covenant is infinitely superior to the Old Covenant *precisely* in this area. Because we don't earn ANYTHING from God. We aren't entitled to ANYTHING; and God is NOT obligated to us- in any way. EVERYTHING we do that pleases God- is carried out in the SAME way:

1. “By” Grace ALONE
2. “Through” Faith ALONE
3. “To” God’s Glory ALONE

... or it is nothing more than another way to puff up our own Flesh. And that includes every single “religious thing” we engage in. If that thing is not done “by” God’s Grace; and if it is not done “through” the Gift of Faith; and if it is not done “to” God’s Glory- then it is nothing but stinking, rotten Flesh.

But God is faithful in that He provides both the Grace and the Faith that He requires- that allows us to do what we do- for His Glory. And that is why EVERYTHING we do that exists outside of us being totally dependent on God- and that is carried out for any other reason other than for God’s Glory- is Sin.

Because the New Covenant is NOT merely a different set of Requirements and Commands than what the Old Covenant expected. If that were true- we would NOT be any better off than we were under the Old. In fact- we would be worse off. We need to always remember that human beings did NOT keep the Requirements and Commands of the Old Covenant. Nobody did. Not Abraham; not Moses; not David; not Isaiah. Nobody. And they DID NOT keep God’s Commands because they COULD NOT. And it has nothing to do with effort. Obeying God- *perfectly* and *continually*- in thought, word, and deed- is simply *beyond* human ability. So, if all the New Covenant is- is a different set of Rules and Orders- then Jesus died in vain.

What the New Covenant *provides* and what makes the New- *infinitely* superior to the Old- is that the New Covenant gives unworthy sinners a new heart; and a new spirit; and a new Nature that produces in us a genuine and permanent and invincible Love for God. And EVERYTHING that God requires for sinners to be with God in Glory- forever- God Himself did- in, by, and through the auspices of the New Covenant through the Person and finished Work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So, what the New Covenant *requires* for guilty rebels to be saved- is NOT Obedience. Even after we are saved- our Obedience is haphazard and fleeting and inconsistent and frail- at best. And God knows that. So, what the New Covenant requires is BELIEF; and TRUST; and HOPE; and FAITH in two areas:

1. WHO Jesus is- in His fully Deity and full Humanity
2. WHAT Jesus has already done- by living and dying and rising again

... and a Celebration; a Delight; a Joy; a Rejoicing; and a Treasuring of

God- in WHO He is and in WHAT He alone has done. And *that* is what godly Humility looks like.

So, Humility is the “lowering of the eyes”. It is the “shamefacedness”; the blushing; the Admission and Recognition that we are entirely wicked. And as wicked creatures of the dust- we are *unable* to earn ANYTHING from God- by and through ANYTHING that we do for ourselves. And that *includes* our Salvation; and the Forgiveness of Sins; and the Righteousness we need to be in God’s Presence; as well as all the Rewards He has promised. And that is Humility.

And God CAN’T “do” that or “be” that. But in Christ and through Christ and with Christ and in the Power of the Holy Spirit- we CAN strive to be the kind of people- who CAN truly understand that we deserve NOTHING from God- but eternal Damnation. And we CAN be a people who can lower our eyes; a people who CAN be ashamed of our Sins; a people who CAN Believe and Trust and Hope in a Savior- Who never sinned; and a people who CAN rejoice and celebrate the Grace of God! And that Humility causes us to run to Jesus for Help and Deliverance and Salvation and Forgiveness and Comfort.

And we CAN be a people- who rejoice in Who Jesus is; and in What Jesus alone has done. And we CAN be a people who Delight in living our lives with abandon- because we truly believe that Jesus is the Treasure of the Universe and the fairest of 10,000 to our soul. And we CAN be a people who find the fullness of our own JOY in Jesus being made much of.

And so, that Celebration; that Rejoicing is part of this Humility. Because when we delight to do His Will and when striving to Obey is NOT a Duty or Obligation- but the pathway to the fullness of our own Joy- God is glorified! And we CAN be a people who become totally dependent on God- for EVERYTHING. And that is what godly Humility looks like.

Because God is NOT honored when we become so strong and so capable that we can function within the parameters of our own strength and our own wisdom and our own capabilities. No, God is honored the BEST and the MOST when- by God’s Grace and through the Gift of Faith- we become MORE dependent of Him- not only for the large Issues- but in the everyday Issues like breathing; and the beating of our heart; and in the Love we have for Him. That is the Humility that God loves.

4. How do patently Arrogant people *become* Humble?

It is true to say that ALL lost people are Arrogant and ALL saved people are Humble. Because the essence of what it means to be Lost- is that we do NOT see (understand/believe) that we are actually as wicked and as guilty as the Bible says we are; and that we are also blind (unable to understand) to our NEED for a Savior.

And most people in the modern Church understand these two Issues. And so, most preaching and teaching- especially about Evangelism is geared around these two Issues.

But I suggest that both of these two Issues are simply symptoms of a much larger and a much more serious Problem. And the Apostle Paul taught about this infinitely greater Problem in **2Corinthians 4:4b** when he said,

... the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

So, ALL lost people have an Arrogance; a Pride; and a Self-righteousness that prevents them from understanding just how wicked they really are; and how deserving of eternal Damnation they really are. True. But what causes this Arrogance? True- they are born with it. But Paul teaches that they are lacking something- that would remove the Obstacle to their own Salvation. What is it? Paul said that the devil has:

... blinded the minds of the unbelieving ...

... okay, but what has the devil blinded the minds of ALL lost people to? To what End has satan blinded the minds of the lost people of this world?

... so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

So, ALL lost people are blind to one thing:

... the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ ...

Now these people may know some Facts about Jesus. They may even understand- on an intellectual level- some Truth about Jesus. And they may acknowledge that the information they have about Jesus- is true. But these people remain Lost- because they have never seen; they have never beheld; they have never looked at the Glory of Jesus.

Now keep in mind that satan has NOT kept the historical Reality about WHAT Jesus has done from them. But he has blinded their minds to WHO Jesus is- in His Glory. So, these people may have memorized and may can even recite verbatim- EVERYTHING Jesus did- by living and dying and rising again. But

they have never one time beheld; they have never looked at; and they have never seen the Glory of Jesus. And so, they remain Lost.

So, these people don't need a list of all that Jesus did. They have no need for a recital of the historical Facts surrounding Jesus. No, these people need an unveiling of their eyes- so they can look- full face- at the Glory of Jesus. Listen to the Apostle as he explains this dynamic:

2Corinthians 4:5&6

5 For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake.

6 For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

Paul says here that as Jesus- in His pristine Glory is rightly and fully preached- that God performs a Miracle in the minds and hearts of the people He has chosen to save. And as the men, who meet up with the godly Requirements of verse 2- herald the Gospel of the Glory of Christ- God then shines:

... in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

... and Paul says that God shines into our hearts the Knowledge of the Glory of God- that is BEST seen (understood) in the Face; or in the Person of Jesus- IN THE SAME WAY as God created Light out of Darkness during the six days of Creation. And what is the Result of "seeing" the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ?

2Corinthians 3:18b

... 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.

... so, the Dynamic is this:

1. God sovereignly unveils our minds and hearts through the preaching of the Gospel
2. We see (behold/comprehend) Jesus in His Glory (we see the Glory of God in the Person of Jesus)

3. We love what we see
4. We are changed into what we see

... and as we are changed into the Image and Likeness of Jesus- from one realm of Glory to the next- we become more like Jesus. And as we become more like Jesus- we become more emptied of Self and more filled with Him. And the net Result is that we become more and more in awe of Who Jesus is. And as we are more amazed and more in awe of Jesus- we see the great contrast between who we are and WHO He is and that Knowledge of Jesus' Glory- strips away our Arrogance and our Pride and our Self-Righteousness.

And as we continue to be changed- by continually beholding Jesus in His Glory- we become more Grateful; and our Joy in Jesus being made much of- increases. And that ongoing transformation causes us to become more and more dependent on God- for EVERYTHING. And as that Dependence grows- our admiration and fear and respect and Delight in Jesus- also increases- which assaults the remaining vestiges of our Arrogance; Pride and Self-Righteousness. And the process continues- as long as we continue to have our eyes unveiled so that we may see the Glory of God in the Face (Person) of Jesus Christ. And this is the Humility that James is talking about.

Now everybody always wants the “secret” to become what we want to become. As humans- we are always looking for the formula as to how we can do things. Yet being Humble is NOT so much about the “five steps to greater Humility” or the “seven secrets of humble living”. No, the kind of Humility that believes; the kind of Humility that trusts and that hopes in God; the kind of Humility that rejoices in Who Jesus is and in What Jesus has done; the kind of Humility that causes us to become more and more dependent on God- flows out from the Gift of being able to behold the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ.

So, the Desire and the Effort and the Prayer to be Humble- is wrapped up in the ability that we have to see Jesus in His Glory. And that is why James said,

Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.

You see, trying to obey God; striving to follow Jesus; and putting forth an effort to be Humble- without beholding the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus- is like trying to be godly- WITHOUT Grace and WITHOUT Faith; and to our own Glory. It is like trying to be Humble by utilizing human Arrogance and human Strength. So, James reminds us that knowing about the kind of Humility that makes us totally dependent on God- and yet trying to love and follow

and obey God- without utilizing it- is as much a Sin as doing something overtly wicked.

So, our cry; our desperate cry to God- is that He would unveil our eyes- so we can see Jesus in His brilliant Magnificence. Because it is this Magnificence of the Glory of God that we see in Jesus- that shines so bright- so clear- so pristine- that it puts all other glories of all other created objects into the dark shadows.

And as we are able to behold this glorious Jesus- more and more- (Paul said it is a process that will take us from one realm of Glory to the next- **2Corinthians 3:18**)- we fall in love with the Christ that we see. And as we grow in that Love for Jesus; and as we pursue that Love- like the lovesick man did in the **Song of Solomon 3:1-3** that says,

“On my bed night after night I sought him Whom my soul loves; I sought him but did not find him. ‘I must arise now and go about the city; In the streets and in the squares I must seek him whom my soul loves.’ I sought him but did not find him. “The watchmen who make the rounds in the city found me, And I said, ‘Have you seen him whom my soul loves?’”

... and as we “hunger and the thirst” for God like the sons of Korah and David and Isaiah and Jesus and John talked about (**Psalm 42:2/Psalm 63:1/Isaiah 55:1/Matthew 5:6/The Revelation 21:6**). And as we “pant after God” like the deer pants for the waterbrooks- like the sons of Korah saw (**Psalm 42:1**)- we are changed.

And we are changed into what we love. And what we love is what fills our eyes (the Glory of God in Jesus). And that is the Humility that James was talking about- a Humility that Rejoices in its Dependence on God!

Amen. Let’s pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.

