

Humility of Faith

James 3:13—4:10

Introduction

In this series, “The Works of Faith”, we have learned:

- Faith alone saves; but faith is never alone.
- Good works point others to Christ.
- When God puts the bit of grace into our mouth, we speak the words of faith, pointing others to Christ.
- Today, we see how humility is a work of faith, pointing others to Christ.

God Opposes the Proud

In **1 Timothy 6:10**, St. Paul says, *the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil*. While that is so, we can look deeper and see a root cause for all sin, even the love of money – pride. Pride is placing our wants, needs, even our very selves above all others. This culminates in a desire to be our own god. That was the reason for Lucifer’s fall from heaven (Read **Isaiah 14:12-14**). It was the primary reason for Adam and Eve eating the forbidden fruit (Read **Genesis 3:5**). We can see today, the cause for all sin and strife in the world and in ourselves is focusing on the self. In short, pride causes us to be enemies of God (Read **Romans 8:5-8**). It is natural and right for God to oppose His enemies.

Humility, the Opposite of Pride

Humility, which is the opposite of pride, is not having a low opinion of ourselves. That is pride masquerading as humility because we are still focusing on ourselves. In **Romans 12:3**, St. Paul tells us that true humility is having a sober view of yourself, seeing yourself as you really are. This humility is summed up in the fruit of the Spirit – *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control* (**Galatians 5:22-23**). Notice, all but self-control focus on others. True humility is living for God by living for others. How do we go from our naturally fallen state of living for ourselves to living for others?

Draw Near to God

In **verse 7**, James says that if we *submit to God and resist the devil, he will flee* from us. He restates that in **verse 8**, by saying that if we *draw near to God, He will draw near* to us. How do we draw near to God?

Walking in His Footsteps

Bede the Venerable says that we draw near to God by walking in His footsteps. How do we know what the footsteps of God are? Where can we find them? His Word, which is a *lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path* (**Psalms 119:105**). God’s Word, being a means of grace, not only shows us the way to walk, but it also gives us the power to walk in that way.

Submit to God

Then, through the power of the Word, we can submit to God. To submit to God means to bow to His will, not just when it's convenient, but all the time. There's no room for self when practicing this type of submission. Another thing, this type of submission isn't forced. It's voluntary. We submit to God because He is our Father, and we are His children. We want to submit to Him because we know that He loves us and knows what's best for us.

He Will Draw Near to You

James says that if we *draw near to God, He will draw near* to us (**v. 8**). God gives grace to the humble. When we draw near to Him in humility, He will draw near to us in grace, love, and mercy. He draws near to us through the means of grace – Word and Sacrament. We spend time in His Word because that's where we learn His way. While we are learning His way in His Word, He draws near to us and gives grace to us. God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. When we come to the rail and humbly receive the body and blood of our Savior, He gives us His grace, so we can live a life of humility before Him, pointing others to Jesus with our lives.

*And the peace of God,
Which surpasses all understanding,
Will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*
