

### 13. Learning How to Develop Godly Humility

In our last topic, we saw that there are Christians who still live and act like the world. Some of these may be professing Christians who have never placed their faith in Christ. However, others are spiritual toddlers who have never had a spiritual parent to love them, give them an example to follow and walk alongside them to help them learn how to understand the milk of the Word so they can begin healthy growth. In order to help these weak and strength-less Christians in their spiritual growth, we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to become spiritual parents to such individuals. This will include helping these weak Christians learn how to develop godly humility in their lives.

Our last topic ended with the statement in James 4:6, “But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: ‘God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.’” Today, we will see that the Lord used James to give us ten commands that will help us develop godly humility in our own lives so that we can show our children how to develop godly humility in their lives and equip them to help others develop godly humility.

James 4:7 says, “Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” In this verse, we are given two commands. The first thing we are commanded to do is to submit to God. In the time of the New Testament, the word “submit” was used to speak of soldiers who were under the authority of their commanding officer. These soldiers submitted, because that was their duty. However, as Christians, we are to submit to God because of love. Paul told Timothy, in 2 Timothy 2:3-4, “You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of *this* life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.” As a result, we see that the word “submit” means *to place your full potential at the disposal of another*. We choose to place our full potential at the disposal of God, because He is the One who has given us everything we have. We will see that the following commands tell us how to place our full potential at the disposal of the Lord.

The second command is to resist the devil. We are promised that if we resist him, he will flee from us. We want to help our children understand how to resist the devil. Peter used this same word when he said, in 1 Peter 5:8-9, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.” In these verses, we see how to help our children resist the devil. We see that we resist the devil by standing firm in the faith. When Satan tempted Christ in the wilderness, Christ answered by quoting the Word of God. Satan left Christ as Christ continued to quote the Word of God. As we help our children memorize the Word of God, we are equipping them to stand firm in the faith.

James 4:8 gives us some additional commands when that verse says, “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *you* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *you* double-minded.” Here, we see that we are commanded to draw near to God. We help our children learn to draw near to God as we help them put the words of Joshua 1:8 into practice in their own lives. That verse says, “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate

in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.” We show our children how to think and meditate on the Word of God throughout the day and even the night. Then, we help them learn to obey the Lord by praying that the Lord will give them His strength to obey the Word of God.

As we show our children how to meditate on the Word of God, the Word will show us, and them, when we have sin in our lives. That is why we are commanded to cleanse our hands. 1 John 1:9 says, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” We want to help our children understand the need to confess their sins to the Lord so they will experience cleansing in their lives. At the same time, they are also commanded to purify their hearts. Psalm 19:14 says, “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer.” We want to help our children make it their goal to have the meditations of their hearts please the Lord at all times. In doing this, they will become single-minded instead of double-minded.

James 4:9 goes on to say, “Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and *your* joy to gloom.” As we help our children learn to cleanse their hands and purify their hearts, there will be sins with which they will need to deal, just as we have sins to deal with in our own lives. The word “lament” means *to feel afflicted and miserable because of sin*. The word “mourn” is *our inner response of sorrow for our sin*. The word “weep” tells how we express that sorrow. Mourning and gloom speak of a turning from sin and a cleansing of the heart. Together, these words speak of the actions that show true repentance when we have allowed unconfessed sin to remain in our lives.

James 4:10 says, “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.” The word translated “humble” means *to make yourself low before God*. Christ gave us an example of a person humbling himself before God in Luke 18:13. That verse says, “And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise *his* eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’” In recognizing his sin, this tax collector humbled himself before God. God gives us a wonderful promise when we humble ourselves before Him. He says that when we humble ourselves before Him, He will raise us up to a place of dignity, honor, and joy. Peter said a very similar thing, when he said, in 1 Peter 5:6-7, “Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.” It is as we humble ourselves before the Lord, that we realize how much He cares for us. This is important to help our children understand.

When we have a right relationship with the Lord, it will also help us to have a right relationship with others. James 4:11-12 says, “Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another?” Here, we see that we are not to speak evil of one another. To “speak evil” means *to make statements against other Christians that slander or tear down their name*. Such words are common by those who are not Christians. However, as Christians, we are

not to slander others.

God says that when we speak evil of a brother, we are actually judging that brother. Romans 14:13 says, “Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in *our* brother's way.” In this verse, we see that there are Christians who do judge one another. That is why it was necessary for God to say that we are not to judge one another anymore. It is time to stop judging each other. We also see why we are not to speak evil or judge a brother. We see that such actions can be a stumbling block to other Christians. They can also cause a brother to fall. As a result, we will hinder, or stop, their spiritual growth.

We are also told that when we speak evil of a brother, we are speaking evil of the law and judging the law. James 2:4-5 says, “Have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world *to be* rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?” Here, we see that we become judges with evil thoughts when we speak evil of a brother. Romans 14:4 says, “Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.” When we judge a brother, we are judging a person who is a servant of God. He is accountable to God, just as we are accountable to God. In fact, God is able to make him stand, so we are not to judge. That is why it is very important to help our children understand the danger of judging others.

When we judge the law, God says that we are not a doer of the law but a judge. This means we have become guilty of breaking the law ourselves. We are not obeying the law, because we are judging a brother. That means we have become guilty before God. As James 4:12 says, “There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another?” Here, we see a final reason why we are not to judge others. There is only one Lawgiver. That is the Lord. He is the only one who has the right to save or to destroy. When we speak evil against a brother, we have stolen the right that belongs only to God and tried to make it our right to judge a brother. If we are going to be an example to our physical and spiritual children, we must show true humility before God by not judging a brother or sister.

It is important for us to develop true humility before God so that we can show our children how they can develop humility before God. As 1 Peter 5:6 says, “Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time.” Our children will only learn how to humble themselves before God as they see our example. As they follow our example of godly humility, the Lord will bless both our lives and their lives. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your physical and spiritual children, by your example, how to develop godly humility.