



EXPLORE THE BIBLE.

1, 2 Kings Sermon Series

Supports Session 12: God Hears

Sermon Title: "Praying with Humility" (James 4:6-10)

Connection to 2 Kings 19:10-19;32-34

Hezekiah was the humble king of Judah. He prayed to God and trusted God to hear and respond. God responded to Hezekiah, and He responds to the humble prayers of His people today.

Introduction/Opening

Learning to ride a bike can be scary proposition. The possibility of pain and failure get in our way. We fear both things. While we may not have a fear of riding a bike, we may fear humbly talking to God. We convince ourselves that something like this is only for the spiritual elite. The truth, however, is that it is for all of us, and God's Word gives us practical things we can all do to develop our prayer life.

Outline

1. Understanding the Problem (v. 6)

a) **God doesn't care for pride.** A simple definition of pride is to have an unusually high opinion of self or to elevate self above others. God loves us in that we are adopted into His family, and this shows value. But we need not think that we are better than others and thereby seek to elevate self ahead of others. God is opposed to this mindset and action.

The word translated *resists* is rich with meaning. It is a military word, and it means to stand in opposition to something or someone. God is so opposed to pride that He resists in similar manner as a military leader resists an opposing force. We should all strive to approach God with humility.

b) **God rewards humility.** A simple definition of grace would be God's unconditional love. His grace is best displayed on the cross of Jesus when He gave His Son so that we could have the opportunity to spend eternity with Him in glory. According to James, God bestows this grace, which we all need, upon the humble. If we learn that He is opposed to the proud and gives grace to the humble, our desire should be to determine steps we can take that move us away from pride and towards humility.

2. Steps towards Humility

a) **Submit to God (v. 7).** Submission is not an easy thing for most of us. We reside in a culture in which we want what we want, and we want it now. If, however, we want to pray in humility, then submission to God and His will for our lives is the first step.

We have an example of humble submission in that Christ “humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death – even to death on a cross” (Phil. 2:8). Christ lived a life of obedient submission to the Father’s will, and we are called to do the same. The best way to do this is to continuously ask the Father to give us the wisdom, faith, and courage to live in obedience to His will.

b) Resist the devil (v. 7). Our next step in this journey to humility in prayer is to resist the devil. Resist is calling us to stand our ground and not give up a single inch to the enemy. We do have real enemy and he is the devil. His goal, according to Jesus, is to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10).

The question now becomes, how do we resist him? Looking to the life of Jesus for an answer, we learn that the best way is to know God’s Word and stand upon the truth of God’s Word. When Jesus was tempted by Satan in the desert, He responded to the temptation with Scripture. Therefore, we need to be students of God’s Word so that we can resist his attacks against us.

c) Purify our hearts (v. 8). Many of us today wear jewelry. It could be a wedding ring or a cross around our necks. The jewelry did not start out looking the way it does now. It was discovered in its raw form and had to go through a purification process. The jeweler invested an extraordinary amount of time and attention into the raw material and knew that it could be something beautiful after the work was completed.

Our Father wants to purify us in the same way that the jeweler purified the raw material that became our wedding ring or necklace. God’s purification, however, is not gold or silver but rather our hearts. God will allow the pressures of this life to heat up on us to burn off the dross and remove the impurities. This purification process can be painful, and some may wonder where God is and why He is allowing it to happen. Rest assured that He has never been closer, and He sees a finished product that we cannot see.

Conclusion

Praying in humility is not an easy task as it goes against our sin nature. God, in His graciousness, provides us with ten distinct commands in verses 7-10. We have only begun to look at how to pray in humility in that we examined three of the commands.

If someone misses the first command of submitting to God, the other nine are in jeopardy. The question becomes, do we need to submit to God today? This can mean submitting to Him as our Lord and Savior. It can also mean praying Jesus’s words, “Not my will but yours be done.”

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