



EXPLORE THE BIBLE®

1, 2 Peter, Jude Sermon Series

Supports Session 10: Be Humble

Sermon Title: “Responding to Humility” (James 4:6-12)

Connection to Session 10

Peter quoted an Old Testament passage when speaking about humility to persecuted believers. James also quoted the same passage when speaking about humility to persecuted believers. We can learn how to live in and respond to humility from both New Testament teachings.

Introduction/Opening

We are wired to want a response when we behave a certain way. For example, if we answer our phones with “hello,” we expect a response. If we call the name of our spouse or one of our children, we expect some kind of response. If we get no response, we may conclude that we have a bad connection, or something has happened. We will learn from today’s passage that there is a response to humble living. Scripture articulates how God responds to humility as well as pride. The passage will also teach us how to respond to God along with each other as we strive to live in humility.

Outline

1. God’s response to humility (v. 6)

- a. *God resists the proud.* God is not neutral in His response to pride. This passage clearly articulates that God resists the proud. We have a few things to learn about the word “resist” to better understand the passage.
 - i. First, the word is a verb, which shows an action.
 - ii. Second, the verb is written in the present tense. This means that God does not delay His response to pride.
 - iii. Finally, we learn that the word has a military connotation to it. If we think about commanding general in a military engagement, the general is not going to be passive in seeking to destroy the enemy. The general is going to actively resist any and all forces of the enemy and will do whatever is necessary to see that the enemy is not able to leverage any type of advantage. When we have this picture in mind and heart, we can start to understand how God responds to pride.
- b. *God gives grace to the humble.* Not only does God respond to the prideful, but He also responds to the humble. To be humble simply means to think more of others than self, or to put others ahead of self. If we look at Philippians 2:5-11, we see how Jesus humbled Himself to the point of death on a cross.
 - i. We can once again see God acting and this time it is to those living in humility. This action is also in the present tense. When we are given a gift by a loved one, we know that it is truly given in love. Gifts are given; if they are earned, then they stop being a gift. The gift that God gives the humble is grace. One of the easiest ways to define grace is unconditional

love. If we are honest, we long for unconditional love. If this is true, then we see that God gives the humble what we are longing for.

2. Our response to God (vv. 7-10)

- a. *We are to submit to God.* If someone at church said, “Good morning” to us, it is polite for us to respond with “Good morning to you as well.” To have no response would be considered rude. Now that we understand that God responds to the humble, it is only polite for us to respond back to God. To not respond would be considered rude.
 - i. Our first response to God is to submit to Him. The word “submit” means to place in proper order. It is in our best interest to understand that God is God, and we are not. The sooner we come to this understanding, the better off we will be. The proper order is that God is in charge, and we are not. Pride would say that we are in charge, while the humble know this is not the case. The word “submit” is written as a command to be lived out in the now. Therefore, the proper application of this command is to be done moment-by-moment. This yields a lifestyle of active submission to God.
- b. *We are to resist the devil.* Our second response to God is to resist the devil. The same word that was used to describe how God responds to the proud is used on how the humble respond to the devil. All too often we ponder about how close we can get to a sin and yet not commit the sin itself. We need to take the exact opposite approach. The question needs to be, how far away can I get from the sin because I do not want to have anything to do with it? When we behave this way, we can’t help but to draw near to God, and He will in turn draw near to us.

3. Our response to each other (vv. 11-12)

- a. *We are to not be critical.* It is all too easy to criticize one another. Yet, the Bible is clear in saying we are not to do this. When we criticize another, we actively seek to put them down while artificially lifting up self. This too is the exact opposite of humility. If we find ourselves engaged in such behavior, we need to expect to encounter God’s resistance and should not be surprised when we find ourselves in isolation.
- b. *We are to trust God as judge.* One truth that it would be wise for each of us to embrace is to know that God is a good Judge, and He does not need our help. This does not mean we forgo standards. Rather, we hold on to standards *and* trust God’s judgment.

Conclusion

We started with the fact that it is polite to respond to someone when they engage us. We see that God responds to both the proud and the humble. The question then becomes, are we responding back to Him. If we are living in pride, then we need to repent and trust Him to respond. If we are living in humility, then let’s draw near to God and resist the devil.

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