

Grace for the Humble

by James Smith

True happiness and peace can only be found in humility, which is a fruit of the Spirit and a mark of God's children.

Scripture: Psalm 119:67, Isaiah 57:15, John 14:6, Romans 7:24, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Philippians 4:11, Hebrews 4:16, James 4:6, 1 Peter 5:5

Topics: "Christian Humility", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

James Smith preaches about the importance of humility, highlighting that true humility is a fruit of the Spirit and a mark of God's children. He describes how a humble Christian is honored, blessed, and grows in likeness to God, avoiding snares and receiving many blessings. Smith explains that humility is known by a deep sense of the evil of sin, a high esteem of the righteousness of Christ, submission under afflictions, gratitude for divine mercies, meekness under reproaches, contentment with one's station, and love for prayer and divine appointments.

Transcript

"He gives us more grace. God opposes the proud--but gives grace to the humble." James 4:6

We have no humility by nature. There may be a softness of disposition, and a readiness to yield to others--but there is no true humility. That is a fruit of the Spirit, a new covenant blessing. One of the marks of God's children, and a proof of God's special love. God makes us humble, and then, approving of our humility, makes many great and precious promises to us in that character. The humble Christian, is an honored character. He is a blessing to all about him, and an honor to Christ. He has much to do with God, receives much from God, and so becomes growingly like God. He avoids many snares, and escapes many dangers into which others fall. He obtains many blessings, and enjoys many comforts, to which others are strangers. O precious grace! O distinguishing mark of the Lord's people! May I grow downward in humility before God. O to be like Jesus, rooted in humility.

But how is true humility to be known? By what is a really humble man distinguished? By many things; we will notice a few.

First, he has a deep sense of the EVIL OF SIN. He looks upon it as the bitter root, from which springs all the woes and wars, all the sadness and sorrow, all the pains and pollution, all the misery and madness, and all the torment and terror--to be found in God's universe! He regards it as that abominable thing which

God hates. It is to him a loathsome object, and a subject fraught with all that is base, degrading, and horrible. He looks upon sin as more dreadful than hell. Indeed, he considers sin to be the evil of all evils, and considers that nothing is evil, in comparison with sin.

He often thinks of sin as it has grieved God's heart, murdered God's only begotten Son, and vexed and resisted his Holy Spirit. O if he could but be free from sin! "Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death?" Romans 7:24. But as he is not, he lays low before God, and walks humbly with God.

Second, the humble man has a high esteem of the RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST. The glorious work of Jesus lays the foundation of his hope, is the daily food of his faith, and the subject of his sweetest meditations. Seeing as he does, the deep pollution of his nature, the powerful principles of evil which work in his heart, the imperfection of all his graces, and the sinfulness of all his actions--he feels obliged to look to the obedience of Jesus Christ alone, for his justification before God. And the longer he lives, the more glorious does the righteousness of Christ appear to him, and the more precious it is in his personal experience.

For this, he counts all things but dung and dross. For this, he is prepared to part with all. This is his joy, this is his boast, this is his song in the house of his pilgrimage.

Righteousness of Jesus! You shall be my wedding garment, when the marriage of the Lamb has come! You shall be my plea before my Father's throne! You shall be my solace and comfort on my dying pillow, and when I cross the flood!

Third, the humble man is known by his SUBMISSION under afflictive dispensations. Instead of fretting, murmuring, or repining, he is silent like Aaron, or only says like him, if others speak harshly to him, "Such things have befallen me." Instead of kicking like a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke, he meekly says with humble Eli, "It is the Lord--let him do what seems him good to him." Instead of reflecting harshly on the Most High God, or indulging vindictive feelings against man, he says with David, "Hear am I, let him do with me, as seems good to him." Like the osier--he bows to the breeze, and like the reed--he bends before the storm.

He realizes, that he has forfeited all by sin, is supplied alone by mercy, and is laid under the deepest obligation to free and sovereign grace. O for the holy submission, which bows the head, silences the tongue, and presents the heart as a whole burnt offering to God!

Fourth, humility fills a man with GRATITUDE for divine mercies. Like Jacob, he feels that he is not worthy of the least of all God's mercies. And like David, he sits in astonishment before God, and asks, "What am I, and what is my father's house--that you should thus favor me?" When he reads his pardon in the blood of Jesus, feels the peace of God in his heart, sees the gifts of a generous providence scattered all round him, and looks forward anticipating his future glory--his heart swells, his soul overflows, and he praises the Lord with joyful lips. And even when darkness surrounds him, and providence seems to frown upon him, he reflects upon his deserts, and what is still left to him, and gives thanks unto God.

Humble souls are always grateful--and grateful souls enjoy much inward peace, and hidden joy. O my God, fill me with humility, that I may daily manifest gratitude to you, and praise your holy name!

Fifth, humility is seen in our MEEKNESS under reproaches. We are apt to be reproached for the sake of Christ; and reproach, unmerited reproach, is hard to bear. It went to the heart of Jesus, who is represented as exclaiming, "Reproach has broken my heart!" It fills human nature with indignation, or it crouches in cowardice, and fawns contemptibly. But the humble Christian, while he deeply feels--he meekly endures, and sometimes rejoices, that he is counted worthy to suffer shame for the precious name of Jesus. He pities and prays for those who treat him reproachfully; and desires for them the peace and comfort that himself enjoys.

O Savior, pattern of meekness under reproaches, O patient, uncomplaining Lamb of God--work in me by your Spirit, conformity to your lamb-like nature, that I may meekly bear, and patiently suffer, whatever shall come upon me for your sake, while in the world!

Sixth, the humble man is known by his CONTENTMENT with the station God has allotted him. Some are always complaining, and can never be satisfied. Scarcely anything is right! They have never enough, or that which is right. They look with an envious eye on some--and with a jealous eye on others. This indicates pride--and arises from the unsubdued state of the heart. They are not--cannot be satisfied.

The humble are the opposite of all this, having food and clothing, they feel that they ought to be content. And, though they may be poor and needy, they look around--and see how many have less; they look down into the pit--and see what they deserve! And then as the Apostle exhorts, they endeavor to be satisfied with such things as they have, seeing God has said, "I will never leave you--nor will I ever forsake you."

Lord, teach me the grace of contentment! "I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want!"
Philippians 4:11-12

Finally, the humble are known by their love to prayer and all divine appointments. They often plead with God, give thanks to God, and wait before God. Prayer, is at once their relief and delight. They carry everything to God--and in all things aim to please God. They search God's Word--and follow it. They watch God's providence--and admire it. They consult God's will--and do it. They live not unto themselves--but unto him who died for them, and rose again. They observe all Christ's ordinances, and yet do not place the least dependence on any. They do all that they can, and then say, "We are unprofitable servants!" Prayer is a privilege, praise a delight, the house of prayer a home, and the service of God freedom.

O holy Spirit, give me this characteristic of a truly humble man! May I love prayer, and prize all the ordinances, and appointments of my gracious God!

The humble are God's special favorites. God will do anything for them, or give anything to them. "All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, God opposes the proud--but gives grace to the humble." 1 Peter 5:5.

But who does not love the humble? There is something so lovely in humility, that we cannot but admire it wherever we see it. O that we were all humble, for then we would be all ornamental and useful, and happy!

"He gives us more grace. God opposes the proud--but gives grace to the humble." James 4:6. God gives the grace that makes us humble, and when in obedience to his word, we cultivate humility--he gives more grace! He continues to give grace--as they need grace.

First, he gives grace to them for duty. We can only perform duty aright, in the strength of grace. Besides which, many New Testament duties are so mortifying to the flesh, so contrary to our natural inclinations, that we could never bring ourselves to attempt them, if grace were not given to us. But by the grace of God, we esteem what God approves, we acquiesce in what God requires, and attempt whatever God commands. We can do all things through Christ, and the grace that he gives. O for grace to conform my will to God's will, and to prompt me to attempt, and enable me to perform, whatever is good and acceptable in the sight of God!

Second, he gives grace to sanctify their trials. Unsanctified trials are real evils--but sanctified trials are great blessings. The humble are tried, often deeply tried--but then they receive grace with their trials, which makes them beneficial and profitable. Sanctified trials deepen our humility, strengthen our faith, excite our hope, furnish us with matter for prayer, endear the mercy seat, render the promises precious, lead us to lean more on Jesus, and sow the seeds of praise. They wean us from earth, direct us to heaven, wither our corruptions, brighten our evidences, and prove that our hearts are right with God. May all my trials be sanctified, and so sanctified, that I may be constrained daily to bless the Lord for them. "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey Your Word!" Psalm 119:67. "It was good for me to be afflicted!" Psalm 119:71

Third, he gives grace to comfort in poverty. Humility is more frequently found in the cottage--than in the mansion; among the poor--than the rich. As some of our sweetest flowers grow and blossom in obscurity, so this most lovely grace grows and blossoms often in the seclusion of humble life. But poverty is not always what it appears to be: under the threadbare coat--often glows the happy heart!

Everything is--what God makes it to us; and he often, very often, makes poverty a ladder by which we climb to heaven; or a cloud which comes laden with the richest blessings. Many experience the beautiful language of the prophet to be true. "The humble shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel." I will not fear poverty--if my God will give me grace to comfort me, make it the means of bringing me nearer to himself, and of conforming me to my Savior, who drank deeply of the poor man's cup.

Fourth, he gives grace to deliver in danger. We are often in danger, for dangers stand thick along all our road, and even the humble man would fall into some of them--but for grace. The grace that God gives, strengthens the sight to discern them, imparts prudence to walk wisely among them, and caution to escape injury by them. Others stumble over them, are ensnared by them, or fall into them--but the humble man passes uninjured through the midst of them! O Jesus, I am often in danger, in imminent danger! Send, O send me, day by day, delivering grace!

Fifth, he gives grace to sweeten personal afflictions. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, and affliction is naturally bitter. We cannot like it. We would never choose it. But the Lord sends it, because it is necessary for us--and makes it a blessing to us. To the humble man, with affliction--comes grace; so that on the bed of sickness, in the chamber of bereavement, and in the house of mourning--he is ready to sing! He sees so much mercy in the affliction, he enjoys so much of the love of God under it, or is made so familiar with heaven by it, that he calls it sweet affliction, and blesses God that he ever experienced

privation and pain! O for grace in bodily pain and weakness, in bereavement and the alienation of friends--to sweeten this bitter to me!

Sixth, he gives grace to train up for heaven. Heaven is the humble man's destination. To this he is appointed, and for this he must be prepared. He who said to us, "Train up a child in the way that he should go," will Himself train up all His beloved children. By the work of his Spirit within us, by the dispensations of his providence towards us, and by the communication of his grace to us--he trains us up for heaven. The present is to fit us for the future; earth is to fit us for heaven. O Lord, give me grace to make me fit to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light.

Finally, he gives them grace to enable them to leave all events with God. This is the secret of true happiness. This is one of the humble man's greatest privileges. He is not anxious about tomorrow. He leaves God to govern His world; and while He does this--to manage all his affairs both temporal and spiritual, personal and relative. He rests all his cares on the Lord. He rolls all his burdens on his God. He trusts everything in the hands of the Lord. By prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, he makes known all his requests unto God, and enjoys the peace of God--while others are tossed with tempests and not comforted. He knows whom he has believed, and to whom he has committed, not only his soul--but his body, and all his affairs--to be kept and to be managed, until Jesus comes the second time, without sin unto salvation. Gracious God, give grace to me--your poor, feeble, fickle child--to enable me to commit all my concerns to You, and to leave them with You!

See then, whom God will visit: "The high and lofty one who lives in eternity, the Holy One, says this: I live in the high and holy place with those whose spirits are contrite and humble--to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite!" Isaiah 57:15. God loves the humble, he will visit the humble, he will make the humble man's heart--his home.

See what God will give. Not gold--but grace. Not the perishable--but the imperishable. Not what man can procure--but what he himself only can confer. He will give grace, the seed of glory, the sanctification of the heart, the antidote for all the evils of life, and the only sufficient solace and support in death.

See why some are so happy--they are humble! We imagine that we would be happy if we had--an abundance of worldly good things, great abilities, an elevated position, and the admiration of our fellow men. But none of these--nor all these--could make us happy! We may be happy without them--or we may be happy with them--IF we are humble, but in no other way.

Humility is the source of true happiness in this world! Not even God himself could make us happy--but by making us humble. See then, the path of peace and prosperity--humility! The more humility--the more peace. The more humility--the more true prosperity. The lower we are--the more beautiful the sun appears. And the lower we lie in humility--the more we see the beauty of Jesus, and the glory of God. And the more we see of the Savior's beauty and God's glory--the more of true peace and prosperity do we enjoy!

Reader, what do you say to these things? Do you know experimentally what true humility is? Have you been stripped of everything of your own--and as a poor, empty, worthless sinner--have you sought to be saved freely by grace? Do you feel that you are nothing in yourself, and that you can do nothing of yourself? And do you lie at the foot of the cross--as a sinner; at the throne of grace--as a suppliant; and at your heavenly Father's feet--as a little child? If so, happy are you--for God will give you more grace. Expect grace from God, ask grace of God, and use all the grace that you receive for God.

Proud, unhumbled sinner--you must be brought down! Like the proud king Manasseh, you must be humbled, and as a poor, perishing creature--beg a pardon at God's hands, and seek salvation through the Savior's blood. You may be made humble, you may enjoy all the good things we have been speaking of. If you would, you must seek them from God, and be willing to receive them as favors from God. May the Lord make us all humble, holy, and happy!

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