

A SERIES OF DEVOTIONS BASED UPON THE LETTER OF JAMES

GOD OPPOSES THE PROUD BUT SHOWS GRACE TO THE HUMBLE

James 4:6 "Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble."

As these devotions have often mentioned, God's word often provides you with contrasts. James 4:6 is another Bible verse that contrasts the behavior of individuals, some of whom are arrogant and proud versus others who are humble and contrite.

Pride is the root and essence of sin. A proud person trusts in himself or herself, their intellect, wealth, power, community standing and the like. They take great personal credit for their successes and blame others for their failures. Sin is in essence a rebellious pride which attributes to self-credit, honor, and glory that are due God. James leaves no doubt, as does Solomon (Proverbs 3:34-35) and Peter (1 Peter 5:5), God gives no blessings to the proud.

Humility is the exact opposite of pride. A humble person sees themselves as not the center of attention, their life as of no greater importance than those with whom they associate and frequently defer to others. Peter wrote, "Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that He may lift you up in due time." (1 Peter 5:6) Is this not what the First Commandment is all about, namely "to fear and trust in Yahweh, Almighty God, above all things." (Luther's Explanation of the First Commandment)

God is in charge of your life, the world and all in it. The Prophet Samuel wrote, "The LORD sends poverty and wealth; He humbles and He exalts. He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap; He seats them with princes and has them inherit a throne of honor." (1 Samuel 2:7-8) The Psalmist writes of Yahweh, ""Who is like you, LORD? You rescue the poor from those too strong for them, the poor and needy from those who rob them." (Psalm 35:10)

There were many accomplishments that St. Paul could have boasted about. Instead, He wrote about his total dependence upon Jesus, "I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong." (2 Corinthians

12:9-10) Brother and sister in Christ, pray the Holy Spirit give you faith to “Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that He may lift you up in due time.” (1 Peter 5:6)

Prayer: Lord, grant me a faith that is submissive and dependent upon You in all things. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

One thing’s needful; Lord, this treasure Teach me highly to regard.
All else, though it first give pleasure, Is a yoke that presses hard!
Beneath it the heart is still fretting and striving,
No true, lasting happiness ever deriving.
This one thing is needful; all others are vain—
I count all but loss that I Christ may obtain!

Wisdom’s highest, noblest treasure, Jesus, is revealed in You.
Let me find in You my pleasure, And my wayward will subdue,
Humility three and simplicity reigning,
In paths of true wisdom my steps ever training.
If I learn from Jesus this knowledge divine,
The blessing of heavenly wisdom is mine.

Nothing have I, Christ, to offer, You alone, my highest good.
Nothing have I, Lord, to proffer But Your crimson-colored blood.
Your death on the cross has death wholly defeated
And thereby my righteousness fully completed;
Salvation’s white raiments I there did obtain,
And in them in glory with You I shall reign.

Therefore You alone, my Savior, Shall be all in all to me;
Search my heart and my behavior, Root out all hypocrisy.
Through all my life’s pilgrimage, guard and uphold me.
This one thing is needful; all others are vain—
I count all but loss that I Christ may obtain!
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