

## DISCUSSION GUIDE :: SESSION 8

LIVING WHAT WE BELIEVE  
INTIMACY AND HUMILITY  
JAMES 4:6-10  
03/19/2017



### MAIN POINT

Intimacy with God results in humility before men.

### INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**When have you been most proud of yourself? What were the circumstances surrounding that moment?**

**In contrast, what is the most humbling experience you've ever had? How did that experience change you?**

Most of us love feeling proud of ourselves. Rarely do we choose, much less enjoy, humbling experiences. Yet humility is a key characteristic of a mature believer, and it comes as we deepen our intimacy with God.

### UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

**HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JAMES 4:6-10.**

Last week, we finished with verse 6 as it told us that the grace from God was the solution to worldliness and the power to get along with one another. Not only is God's grace the solution to worldliness, it is the way that we become intimate with Him. We have an intimate relationship with God because His grace brought us to Him, and by His grace we can live a life of intimacy.

**What does it mean to submit? What does it look like to submit to God?**

**Why might submitting not be a popular activity in our culture?**

That we should submit to God means we should make important to us what is important to God. We should arrange our lives to be in harmony with God's priorities for us. To submit to God means to surrender one's will, which results in obedience to God and His will.

**What is the relationship between resisting the Devil and the traits of humility and submission?**

**Think of all the weaknesses the Devil knows are yours. How has he been successful in exploiting these weaknesses? How has he failed?**

James also said to resist the Devil. When we do, James said the victory over his temptation is certain—he will flee from you. The Greek word translated “resist” means “to oppose,” “to stand against.” James made it clear that in regard to the Devil (the word means “slanderer” or “accuser”) and our yielding to his temptations, there can be no neutrality.

Imagine yourself standing between God and the Devil. You must totally submit to God, as if prostrate before Him. At the same time you must resist the Devil, as if standing with sword and shield during battle. Submitting to God does not weaken us. Rather, God gives us the sword and shield, strength, and moral authority to resist the Devil (see Eph. 6:11).

**What does it mean to be “double-minded?”**

**What practical things must we do to grow closer to God and imitate Him rather than the world?**

We must resist the Devil on the one hand and draw near to God on the other. James promised that the closer we get to God, the closer He gets to us, as the opposite ends of two magnets attract each other. To get closer to God we must cleanse our hands and purify our hearts. James had in mind that we need to clean up our outward actions as well as our inner attitudes and motives. We cleanse ourselves when we confess our sins and repent of our sins.

We must not be double-minded; rather we must remove duplicity from our lives, both inward and outward. A double-minded person is one who claims one thing but lives another. Single-mindedness for God’s glory is His desire for believers, not the satisfying of our own selfish pride and desires. Flip-flopping loyalty to God must go, and stability of purpose must come and stay. Centuries before James’s day, Isaiah poured out his heart saying to God’s people, “Seek the LORD while He may be found; call to Him while He is near. Let the wicked one abandon his way, and the sinful one his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, so He may have compassion on him, and to our God, for He will freely forgive” (Isa. 55:6-7).

**How does humility combat double-mindedness?**

**How can humility make us more intimate with God?**

In concluding this section, James called us to submit ourselves to God in humility, putting Him before ourselves. The key to getting things right with God is to humble ourselves—understanding our weakness and His strength, our sinfulness and His righteousness. God will exalt those so humbled. Jesus said, “Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted” (Matt. 23:12). Humbling ourselves before God is a good thing. It’s good because doing so shows real faith and also gives us victory over selfish pride that stands in the way of doing good.

## APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**How does James’s view of intimacy differ from modern views of intimacy?**

**Which of the commands that James gave do you think is the easiest? Which is the hardest? Why?**

**How would you explain the concept of seeking humility to a non-believer?**

**Can you think of at least one specific relationship where more humility on your part would help nurture a better relationship? Pray for an opportunity to show humility to that person this week.**

## PRAY

Ask God to help you draw near to Him. Ask God to give you grace to live out the commands that James gives regarding humility in your relationships.

## COMMENTARY

### JAMES 4:6-10

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4:6. We do not have to continue in a state of bitter, selfish conflict. In contrast to destructive infighting, greater grace is available to overcome hostility and restore relationships. The term “grace” has the sense of God’s free gift and here refers to the necessary power to end chronic conflict with others, renew loyalty to Christ, and relate in love. James quoted Proverbs 3:34 to remind us of the peril of pride and the need for humility: God goes on setting Himself in opposition to the haughty and arrogant, but He continually extends His favor to people who are conscious of their need for His resources.

4:7. Ten urgent imperatives appear in verses 7-10. This extensive call for immediate, remedial action shows the seriousness of the situation being addressed. The first command is submit to God. By deliberate choice, these Christians were to align themselves under God’s leadership and be obedient to His directives. In their renewed obedience to God, they were to set themselves in opposition to the Devil. Because of God’s presence and power with them, the Devil would flee from them. Evil would be vanquished from the battlefield.

4:8. In rapid-fire succession James gave three additional imperatives. He urged believers to draw near to God for the purpose of offering Him reverence and worship. To do so would strengthen or repair their personal relationship with Him.

4:9. James piled up terms to stress the sincere repentance believers should demonstrate because of their sins. They should be so distressed that they are moved to lament with tears. Their frivolous laughter should become lamenting; and their shallow, worldly joy should be changed to dejection. Only deep, genuine repentance would lead to the forgiveness they needed to remedy their situation.

4:10. James repeated the emphasis he had made in verses 6-7. He called on these readers to confess to God their sins, weaknesses, and inadequacies. They were to admit their need for His grace and be open to receive it. As a result of this change in attitude, God would lift conflict and divided loyalty from them. He would enhance their relationship with Him, and they would have moral and spiritual power necessary for Christian living. God’s exaltation would be the polar opposite of the worldly prestige, honor, and recognition for which they fought one another.

## READING ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK

James 5:7-20