



## The Outworking of Humility Pt 5: Mourning and Weeping

January 10, 2016

### Text: James 4:9-10

The whole point of this section of James (and an overarching theme of James) is to help the believer defeat pride through the cultivation of humility.

James outlines at least five things we can do to see the increased *Outworking of Humility* in our lives in verses 7-10:

1. Submit to God (4:7)
2. Resist the devil (4:7)
3. Draw near to God (4:8)
4. Cleanse our hands and purify our hearts (4:8)
5. Mourn and weep (over our sins, 4:9)

Today we have arrived at a text of Scripture that doesn't sound the best to modern ears. Who in the world wants to mourn and weep? James' straight-forward manner in addition to the context leaves little room to relegate this command as only applying to the Jerusalem church. Therefore, many are astonished that in the New Testament, under grace, blood-bought believers are exhorted to **mourn!**

What about joy? What about peace? What about blessings? Well the Christian life is absolutely filled with joy, peace and blessings...and praise God! Because of the blood of Jesus and the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, we have access to all these things and more:

*John 15:10-11 - If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.*

*Gal 5:22-25 - But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.*

*1 Pet 1:8-9 - Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.*

*John 10:9-10 - I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.*

Indeed friends, we've been given, in Christ, SO many **precious** promises! Promises concerning our eternal state, promises concerning multigenerational faithfulness, promises concerning contentment, and victory over spiritual enemies, and answered prayer, and healed hearts, and love one to another; promises concerning a right-now life that reflects His beauty and manifests His **Gospel!**

The Christian life, though sometimes hard, is filled to overflowing with what is true, what is honorable, what is just, what is pure, what is lovely, what is commendable, what is excellent, and what is worthy of praise! (Php 4:8)

## So what is James talking about?

1. The answer is actually quite simple, and is found in one of the basic interpretive rules: the **context**.
2. When we read the Bible, we always want to do so in context. Who is writing? To whom is he writing? What kind of text am I reading? Didactic? Prophetic? Narrative? History?
3. Instead of yanking a verse out in isolation, contextual exegesis (our pulling out of Scripture what is actually being said) looks at the whole of the work (in this case, an epistle), then to sections, then to the verse.
4. So then why is James asking his people to mourn and weep? Because of all the sins he has mentioned so far! It really is that simple!
  - James corrects their doubt and double-mindedness (1:6-8)
  - James corrects the rich for selfishness (1:9-11)
  - James corrects their view of “who tempts” and of personal responsibility for sin (1:12-15)
  - James corrects their tendency to be slow to hear and quick to get angry (1:19)
  - James corrects their disobedient attitude towards **Scripture** (1:21-25)
  - James corrects their false religion whereby they refused to meet tangible needs (1:26)
  - James corrects their sin of partiality, giving more honor to the rich (2:1-9)
  - James corrects their hyper-grace leanings, exhorting them to keep the Moral Law in love, by which all men will be **judged**. (2:10-13) As I said when we taught through these verses:

*Much of the fighting we do over grace versus law or Old Testament versus New Testament is unnecessary. Take biblical truths as is:*

<i>The OT has been superseded by the NT...</i>	<i>Yet the moral standards remain!</i>
<i>We are saved by grace alone...</i>	<i>But are still called to walk in righteousness!</i>
<i>When we fail, we are not condemned...</i>	<i>Yet we are still exhorted to “do” and not just “hear!”</i>
<i>We are commanded to love God and one another...</i>	<i>But that love must be tethered to Scripture; it must be “lawful.”</i>

- James corrects their view that one can have faith without work (2:14-26)
  - James corrects their unbridled tongues (3:1-12)
  - James corrects their jealousy and selfish ambition (3:13-18)
  - James corrects their prideful quarreling and fighting (4:1)
  - James corrects their selfish desires, murdering, and selfish prayers (4:2-3)
  - James corrects their idea that friendship with the world is good (4:4)
  - James corrects their devilish pride and lack of humility by exhorting **submission** to God (4:6-7)
5. Quite a list!! Now does the command to mourn and weep make sense?
  6. James’s point is this: **“You are supposed to be believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, redeemed by His blood. Look at what you have done! Look at what you allow in the church! Given what Christ has done for you, mourn and weep! Repent! Cry out to Him! Your hearts should be broken over such disobedience considering the greatness of His love!”**

## Applications for Us

So how can we very learned, very anointed believers apply such a verse? :)

1. Friends I submit that we have committed each and every one of these sins. I also submit that we often have a distorted view of grace, *as if our sin no longer hurts God, dishonors Christ, or grieves the Holy Spirit*.
2. Somehow, much of the Christian culture has taken the biblical moniker “saint” and applied it **practically** instead of positionally.

3. Because of these distortions, we've lost our **fear** of God, the ability to tremble, and our hatred of our own sin.
4. We don't mourn because we don't think we should. We don't weep because we cannot see sin from God's perspective. We are way too much like the "saints" in Corinth who had blatant wickedness in the church, and not only tolerated, but seemed to nearly celebrate it!

*1 Cor 5:1-2 - It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. **And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn?** Let him who has done this be removed from among you. (Emphasis mine)*

5. **Therefore true humility is VERY difficult for us.** If we cannot truly see ourselves...SINNERS saved only by GRACE...truly humbling ourselves before God...submitting ourselves will be next to impossible. How can we deal with the devil in a puffed up state, when pride is his power?
6. True repentance, true penitence and godly sorrow over our transgressions, escapes us, and humility right along with it.

#### **Suggestions:**

- Explore the connection between truly seeing one's own sin and true humility.
- In the glorious light of Christ's sacrifice, how should we feel when we blatantly and brazenly **disobey** God?
- Think through the ramifications of taking our own sin (even as those who've been forgiven) lightly. Can you see how easily pride can take us away when we can blow off sin?
- **When was the last time you were emotionally moved because of your own transgressions? Not because you weren't forgiven. Not because you weren't loved. But because He was dishonored.**

I'm reminded of Christ's words to the church in Laodicea:

*Rev 3:14-19 - "And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: 'The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's creation. "'I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see. Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent.*

Although he rebuked them, he wanted to be close to them...

*Rev 3:20 - Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.*

#### **Prayer:**

*Eternal Lord, we know you've cast our sin as far from us as east is from west. We are covered in the righteousness of Christ, declared not-guilty by His holy atonement. Yet, you call us who've been given so much to not only love much but to mourn much. May we never "trample underfoot the Son of God, profane the blood of the covenant by which [we are] sanctified, or outrage the Spirit of grace." (Heb 10:29)*

Help us to love you better Lord.

Amen.