

When God Opposes You

Scripture Reference:

Romans 12:2-3 (NIV): *Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing, and perfect will. For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you.*

Main Idea: Scripture teaches that pride is not so much thinking that I'm better than another but rather thinking I'm better than myself. As God's children we are expected to examine ourselves carefully to see if Christ is in us. Naturally we measure what we do for God whether it's our church attendance or what we gave in the offering to gauge how we are doing spiritually. God, however, is more interested in who we are becoming on the inside.

Two Observations of Biblical Humility:

1. **Humility Is a Practice**— We are not born humble. Scripture teaches us to clothe ourselves in humility indicating it is a trait we earn from practice rather than a gene we inherit from birth. We must learn to love this process of becoming humble because doing the humble thing without humble motives is not pleasing to God.

1 Peter 5:5 (NIV): *In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.*

2. **God Honors The Humble**— Humility does the right thing for the right reason. God acknowledges his pleasure for pure motives by elevating us and bestowing His grace upon us in His Sovereign timing.

1 Peter 5:6-7 (NIV): *Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you.*

Question: Do you trust God's timing enough to wait for Him to lift you up? Or do you find it easier to manipulate situations to get your desired outcome in your own timing?

Two Things Humility Is Not:

1. **Humility Is Not Passive:** Humility does not just admit shortcomings and then play dead. Humility admits the fault and then does the difficult work to correct the behavior.

- 2. Humility Is Not Fearful:** It is arrogant to attempt to “protect” people from the truth. All we do is prolong an inevitable breakdown and make the fall worse. Humility is not afraid of confrontation because it is rooted in the love of God

Ephesians 4:11-15 (NIV): *So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.*

Three Ways To Practice Humility:

- 1. Embrace God’s Grace for Work:** God does not zap our situations and make them better. He gives us the grace sufficient to sustain us and enable us to do the work to build his kingdom and restore the areas of our lives that need repair.

1 Corinthians 15:10 (NIV): *But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.*

Question: Have you been surprised in your walk with God over how many things that He refuses to just fix for you? If so, have you come to find out that doing the work is to your benefit by allowing you to identify more with Jesus?

- 2. Commit To Being a Student:** It is when we say “I don’t know” that draws out the teacher in God. As children of God, we need to be committed to being life-long students so that we can be in position to be honored by God.

Proverbs 13:18 (NIV): *Whoever disregards discipline comes to poverty and shame, but whoever heeds correction is honored.*

- 3. Practice Honor:** Whatever you refuse to honor in your life will leave your life. Honor is not worship, rather it is putting something in its proper place.

2 Timothy 2:21 (ESV): *Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work.*

Closing Thoughts: Our Savior humbled Himself even to the point of death. This is the type of humility that we as believers strive for. Let's not forget that Jesus died in the right. It's our old nature that would have us sacrifice others when we are right. Jesus died and sent His Spirit so that a new nature would be possible. Humility allows us to become sacrificial and escape the selfish tendencies we were born into. Being prideful is easy. It takes true strength to walk in humility.

Call to Action: Humility does not just keep peace, it makes peace. Pray about what you can do or say that will help people in your realm of influence to stop living at a disadvantage. Sometimes these encounters can be uncomfortable at first so please remember to humbly speak the truth in love.