

Draw Near To God

Small Groups Fall 2008



Last week we talked about cleansing our hands and purifying our hearts in light of drawing near to God. Has there been something God has been talking to you about where you need to cleanse your hands or purify your heart? Remember the only way we can do this is we must first humble ourselves. If we don't think we need the cleansing or purifying, we won't ever get clean or pure. Pride will always get in the way.

INTRODUCTION

This week we are going to look at the bread of the verse, “draw near to God and He will draw near to you”. **James 4:6** says, “God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the *humble*.” And **James 4:10** says, “*Humble* yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.” Tonight, we are going to dig deeper into what it means to be humble and how we can be humble and draw near to God.

PRIDE

James 4:6 says, “God is opposed to the proud.” If we have a desire to draw near to God, we must first put away our pride. It is impossible to draw near to God and still be proud. If God opposes the proud, then He cannot draw near to the proud. Pride will keep us from drawing near to God. The Greek work for opposed is antitassomai {an-tee-tas'-som-ahee} and it means to range in battle against or to oppose one's self, resist.

It is common for an unbeliever to have pride, but once we become a Christian, does all our pride go away? If not, why doesn't it go away?

Why would God oppose the proud?

How do we diagnose pride in our lives? How do we even know if we are proud? Here are some thoughts.

- Prayer life – What is our prayer life like? Do we take time to sit with Jesus at His feet because it is vital for our Christian walk?
- What kind of view do we have of other believers?
- What are our secret thoughts about God?
- How do we worship God? Read **James Luke 18:10-14**. Who are you more like?

Read **James 4:1-5**. Is there anything in these verses that can help us diagnose pride in our lives?

HUMILITY

On the opposite side of God resisting the proud, we see God giving grace to the humble. We can get rid of our pride by humbling ourselves. It is not enough to just do away with pride. We must be humble. We must humble ourselves in the face of success, in the face of failures, in the face of victories and in the face of trials. God resists the proud because the proud do not think they need God. But He gives grace to the humble because the humble know of their need for God's grace.

If we can diagnose pride in our lives, how can we do away with the pride and humble ourselves and draw near to God? I think we can look at the same list on the first page under how we can diagnose pride in our lives.

GRACE

Hebrews 6:14 says, Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Humanly, we think we need pride to be able to do well in our lives. But truthfully, we need God's grace, and that grace will only flow to those who are humble.

Why do we need God's grace? It is by grace we have been saved through faith, but is grace needed beyond initial salvation?

When we think of grace, we should keep in mind power is close by. Read the following verses.

James Acts 4:33

Acts 6:8

2 Corinthians 12:9

Ephesians 3:7

We think we are being powerful in ourselves when we hold to our pride, but God wants to give us HIS power by giving us grace. And His grace is only available as we humble ourselves and put away our pride.

PRAYER

Remember to lift each-other up in prayer.