

# James 4:10 Commentary

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See also [Overview Chart](#) by Charles Swindoll

## JAMES

### Faith for Living

Motives for Works	The Place of Works: Outward Demonstration of Inner Faith					Outreach of Works	
<b>Jas 1:1-18</b>	<b>Jas 1:19-2:13</b>		<b>Jas 2:14-25</b>	<b>Jas 3:1-12</b>	<b>Jas 3:13-4:12</b>	<b>Jas 4:13-5:12</b>	<b>Jas 5:13-19</b>
Trials & Temptations	Word & Works		Faith & Works	Tongue	Wars	Future	Others
Faith In Testings	Fulfill	Favor	Fallacy	Fountain	Factions	Faith and the Future	Faith and our Fellowship

### The Reactions of Living Faith to Worldliness

#### The reaction of living faith to selfish strife (James 4:1–5:12)

- A. The condition manifesting worldliness (James 4:1–6)
  1. The description of the condition (James 4:1–3)
    - a. The questions exposing the source (James 4:1)
    - b. The outcome of the condition (James 4:2a)
    - c. The reasons for the condition (James 4:2b–3)
  2. The rebuke for the condition (James 4:4–6)
    - a. The adulterous character of worldliness (James 4:4)
      - (1) The question of rebuke (James 4:4a)
      - (2) The significance of their attitude (James 4:4b)
    - b. The authoritative message of Scripture (James 4:5a)
    - c. The divine response to the worldly (James 4:5b–6)
      - (1) The yearning of the Spirit (James 4:5b–6a)

- (2) The verification from Scripture (James 4:6b)
- B. The exhortation to the worldly (James 4:7–12)
  - 1. The call to return to God (James 4:7–10)
    - a. The statement of the basic demand (James 4:7)
      - (1) Nearness to God (James 4:8a)
      - (2) Personal cleansing (James 4:8b)
      - (3) Open repentance (James 4:9)
      - (4) Godly humility (James 4:10)
    - 2. The injunction against censoriousness (James 4:11–12)
      - a. The statement of the prohibition (James 4:11a)
      - b. The justification for the prohibition (James 4:11b–12)

#### The reaction of living faith to presumptuous planning (4:13–17)

- A. The rebuke of their self-sufficient attitude (James 4:13–14)
  - 1. The delineation of the attitude (James 4:13)
  - 2. The presumption in the attitude (James 4:14)
- B. The indication of the proper attitude (James 4:15)
- C. The evil of their present attitude (James 4:16–17)
  - 1. The evil of their boasting (James 4:16)
  - 2. The sin of their inconsistency (James 4:17) (Hiebert - James Commentary)

James 4:10 **Humble** yourselves in the **presence** of the **Lord**, and He will **exalt** you. (NASB: Lockman)

**Greek:** [tapeinothete](#) (2PAPM) [enopion kuriou, kai hupsosei](#) (3SFAI) [humas](#).

**Amplified:** Humble yourselves [feeling very insignificant] in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you [He will lift you up and make your lives significant]. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**ASV:** Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall exalt you.

**BBE:** Make yourselves low in the eyes of the Lord and you will be lifted up by him.

**ESV:** Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you. ([ESV](#))

**KJV:** Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

**NET:** Humble yourselves before the Lord and he will exalt you. ([NET Bible](#))

**NJB:** Humble yourselves before the Lord and he will lift you up. ([NJB](#))

**NLT:** Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up in honor. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Phillips:** You will have to feel very small in the sight of God before he will set you on your feet once more. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** Permit yourselves to be humbled in the Lord's presence and He will exalt you.

**Weymouth:** Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.

**Young's Literal:** be made low before the Lord, and He shall exalt you.

**Humble** yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you: [tapeinothete](#) (2PAPM) [enopion kuriou, kai hupsosei](#) (3SFAI) [humas](#):

- Jas 4:7, 1Sa 2:9; Job 22:29; Ps 27:6; 28:9; 30:1; 113:7; 147:6; Mt 23:12; Lk 14:11; 18:14; 1Pe 5:6

### HUMBLING PRECEDES EXALTATION

This theme of God humbling the proud, but exalting the humble, runs throughout Scripture (1Sa 2:4, 5, 6, 7, 8; Job 22:29 Job 42:6, 10-17; Ps 34:18; 51:17; Pr 3:34; Pr 29:23, 25; Isa 57:15; 66:2; Ezek. 17:24; Mt. 23:12; Lk 14:11; Lk 18:14; Phil 2:5-11, 1Pe 5:6).

What a beautiful picture of the grace of God, God lifting up the one that has not earned it. God gives grace to the humble. As **Ross** says "The man who does not dare to lift up his eyes to heaven is raised to heights of glory to which the proud can never come; cf. Lk. 1:32+, Lk. 18:14+ and 1 Pet. 5:6+ for the word "exalt." (The Epistles of James and John)

A conditional promise,  
but oh, what a blessed promise it is!

As a tree must strike roots downward before it can grow upwards, so must we in our relationship to God. Mary is a good illustration of this matter of humbling herself as she is presented with the ministry God has for her. She says in Luke 1:38+ "I am the Lord's servant and I am willing to do whatever He says." James, too, is much the same in calling himself: "a bond slave of God and the Lord Jesus Christ." (James 1:1+)

**Humble... exalt** - Be made low so that you can be made high! This is a foundational Biblical principle. John the Baptist who Jesus said was greatest of men (Mt 11:11, Lk 7:28) understood this vital spiritual principle, as evidenced by his declaration that...

He (Jesus) must (speaks of necessity, present tense = continually must) increase (auxano in the present tense = continually), but I *must* decrease (present tense = continually decrease in dignity, authority, popularity). (John 3:30+)

**THOUGHT:** A Presbyterian pastor in Melbourne, Australia introduced J. Hudson Taylor by using many superlatives, especially the word great. Taylor stepped to the pulpit and quietly said, "Dear friends, I am the little servant of an illustrious Master." If John the Baptist in heaven heard that statement, he must have shouted "Hallelujah!" As an aside, it is notable that the verb **must (dei [word study])** is used three significant times in John 3 -- the "**must**" of the sinner (Jn 3:7), the "**must**" of the Savior (Jn 3:14), and the "**must**" of the servant (Jn 3:30). Note that the idea of **humility** permeates this section saturated with commands (cp, Appearing before the series of commands = Jas 4:6 [tapeinos] and as the last command = Jas 4:10 - [tapeinoo]).

The excellent Puritan expositor **Thomas Manton** writes that...

The apostle goes on inculcating and pressing the same duty upon them; and lest they should rest content with externals, he uses a word that particularly implies the internal acts of the soul.

Note from the context that it is not the outward expressions that God looks for in **mourning** (Jas 4:9-note), but the humble heart. God, who is a spirit, does not count bodily actions so much. Tears and wailing and beating the body may all be counterfeit, or else done without a principle of grace; and there may often be inward humiliation though an unemotional person does not yield tears. Godly sorrow (cp 2Co 7:10, 11) does not always vent itself through the eyes. (Some religious sects) place much importance on tears and afflicting the body. The spirit-work is the more difficult. Duties require much spirit, and soul-acts are too strong for weak people. I allude to Christ's expression concerning spiritual fasting in Matthew 9:15,16. Old worldly hearts cannot endure the rigor of such spiritual duties.

So then, in your first duties see that you not only **mourn** and **weep** but **humble** your souls. **When you confess sins, it is not words and tears that God looks for, but a deep shame of the evil of your nature, your iniquities of life, and your defects in obedience.**

When you pray, look not so much at the outward heat and strength—agitated spirits and earnestness of speech; but see that the soul reaches for God by holy ardor and desires. In confessing public sins, it is not the exact enumeration but zeal for God's glory, compassion for others' good, and holy desires of promoting righteousness that the Lord looks for. Ashes and sackcloth are nothing to the work of the soul: "Is that what you call a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord?" (Is 58:5, cp Ps 51:17-note, 1Sa 15:22, 23). ([A Practical Exposition of James](#)) (Bolding added for emphasis)

**Expositor's Bible Commentary** comments that in **context** James refers to "the specific form of humbling (as)... repentance for the sin of transferring affections from God to pleasures of the world (cp Jas 4:1, 2, 3, 4). However, the principle stated in this verse is much more comprehensive in its application. That God **exalts** those who **humble** themselves is a consistent biblical principle (cf. Mt 23:12; Lk 14:11; 18:14; Php 2:5-11; 1Pe 5:6.) ([Expositor's Bible Commentary](#))

**Spurgeon** warns that "If you exalt yourself, He will pull you down. If you lie down in the dust before Him, He will lift you up. It is according to God's usual way of acting to practice these reversals. Mary truly sang, "He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich He hath sent empty away." (Lk 1:52KJV+)

**Humble** (5013) (**tapeinoo** from **tapeinos** = low, not high, figuratively of one's attitude/social position) literally means to level, to cause something to be lower or to make low (eg, to level off a mountain in Lk 3:5 from Lxx of Is 40:4). **Tapeinoo** means to bow down, to make low, to humble. Most NT uses of **tapeinoo** are figurative and include the following meanings: To cause someone to

lose prestige, to reduce to a meaner condition or lower rank, to abase. To be ranked below others.

**Tapeinoo** is in the **orist imperative** which is like an order from a commanding general which calls for full attention and immediate obedience. It calls their being willing to accept this attitude. James commands his readers to submit voluntarily that they might be made low. The verb is **passive voice** which indicates that the subject acting upon the individual is an outside force, in this case God. The idea then is not be humbled but allow yourself to be humbled or placed in a lower position. Permit yourselves to be humbled. This work of God in humbling us is a work of His grace -- the "gravity of grace" always flows from higher to lower. You may be asking but how can I humble myself? My flesh fights with humility and to the contrary seeks to be recognized (continually)! You are on the right track beloved! You cannot humble yourself! The flesh is not able to humble the flesh! But you do have the Spirit of Christ indwelling your body and He is able to energize within your "new man" a desire to humble yourself and along with the desire, He provides the supernatural power enabling you to obey the command. You still have to make the personal decision to allow yourself to be humbled (i.e., it's **not** just "Let go and let God." but "Let God and let's go!"), but now you can do so with a supernaturally enabled desire and power. See Phil 2:13NLT-note for more on this very important spiritual dynamic. In fact I would go so far as to say for those who are already followers of Christ, Phil 2:13-note is one of the most important verses in the Bible to understand and to practice in concert with the preceding passage, Php 2:12-note "Work out your salvation."

- [See discussion of the Need for the Holy Spirit to obey NT commands](#)

**Hiebert** adds that "The orist **passive** may be understood in the sense of the **middle** "humble yourselves," but it could mean "allow yourselves to be humbled." It is not to be a forced humiliation, but a voluntary self-abasement.

**Archibald Alexander** once said that "Humility is to the Christian what ballast is to the ship; it keeps him in his proper position and regulates all his thoughts and feelings."

**MacArthur** notes that in the present context James uses **tapeinoo** meaning... to make oneself low, not in the self-put-downs that many people use in order to induce others to build them up, but in a genuine realization of complete unworthiness and lostness because of sin. As the penitent sinner submits to God and draws closer to Him, like Isaiah he cries out, "Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts" (Isa 6:5). The more an unbeliever sees God as He really is, glorious and holy, the more clearly he sees himself as he really is, sinful and depraved. ([MacArthur J. James. Moody](#))

In secular Greek, the person who was **tapeinos** described the one who was base, ignoble or of low birth, servile, held in low esteem. Obviously in the Bible, the supreme example of humility and humbling one's self is the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Wuest** says that **tapeinoo** means "to make low, bring low, to bring into a humble condition, to abase, to assign a lower rank or place to, to humble or abase one's self, to be ranked below others who are honored or rewarded, to have a modest opinion of one's self, to behave in an unassuming manner." ([Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: Erdmans](#))

The original sense of **low lying** soon gave rise to metaphorical uses, [NIDNTT \(online\)](#) listing several...

- (a) low socially, poor, of little social position and influence (Hdt., 5th cent. B.C. onwards), powerless, unimportant;
- (b) as a result of one's social standing, with slavish outlook, a synonym of not free;
- (c) despondent, downcast (Thuc., 5th cent. B.C. onwards; cf. Eng. "I'm feeling down");
- (d) in Socratic and post-Socratic ethical teaching the word was separated from its social links, but retained a depreciatory connotation. Men should avoid the two extremes of arrogance, provocation and pride (hybris), and of grovelling, servile behaviour and base flattery.
- (e) Occasionally the word is used with a good connotation in individual, social, ethical and religious contexts. Where this is so, it does not mean humble, but unassuming (in Xen.), obedient, conforming one's behaviour to the righteous laws of the gods (Aesch., Plato). In all these uses there remains the memory of the original physical meaning of below, low, in comparison with that which is above or higher.

The verb **tapeinoō** (from Hippocrates, 5th cent. B.C. onwards) represents in all its varieties of meaning the various shades of meaning of the adj.: to level, humble (socially, politically, economically), harm, make small, make humble, discourage (with fate or life as subject), make one obedient, or self-effacing, make a person obey a regulation (of the reason) (and also the appropriate pass. forms). The reflex. form with **heauton** and the **mid.** (from Diod.Sic., 1st cent. B.C. onwards used also for mental states) meaning humble oneself, demean oneself, are used normally only in a derogatory sense. Yet Philodemus of Gadara (1st cent. B.C.) demands

that those who humbled themselves, should be comforted and lifted up and Plut. (1st cent. A.D.) mentions the custom of humbling oneself before the gods by covering the head during sacrifice and prayer....

OT The fundamental difference between the Gk. and the biblical use of these words has already been indicated. In the Gk. world, with its anthropocentric view of man, lowliness is looked on as shameful, to be avoided and overcome by act and thought. In the NT, with its theocentric view of man, the words are used to describe those events that bring a man into a right relationship with God and his fellow-man (**From NIDNTT - [tapeinos](#)**)

#### Related Resource:

- [Older Articles on Humility](#) - Puritans, et al
- [Quotations on Humility](#)

**The Theological Lexicon of the NT** has the following note which although referring primarily to the noun *tapeinos* is helpful to discern the essence of the verb *tapeinoo*...

The humble are contrasted with potentates, the great (Mt 18:4; 23:12; Ro 12:16), the arrogant (Jas 4:6), the rich (Jas 1:9; cf. Php 4:12), with all that is lofty (Lk 3:5; 2Co 11:7; Jas 4:10; 1Pe 5:6) and glorious (Php 3:21; cf. Pr 29:23). Here is a profile of the humble:

- (a) They are "little people," of modest circumstances, who are regarded with favor by the Lord.
- (b) They are unfortunate sufferers (2Co 7:6; 12:21), whom God comforts (Php 2:8; Heb 6:6; 10:29).
- (c) They are discreet and self-effacing (Ep. Arist. 257; Ro 12:16; Gal 6:1, 2, 3; Eph 4:2; 1Ti 3:6; 1Pe 3:8).
- (d) They are humble before the Lord and reserved with respect to their brethren, persuaded of "the misery and emptiness of the whole creation." (Spicq, C., & Ernest, J. D. *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*. 3:370-371. Peabody, MA.: Hendrickson)

Notice the **NT** emphasis on the importance of humbling oneself that one might be exalted, a complete antithesis of what the fallen world believes. Human pride scoffs at and resists this basic Biblical principle.

There are 14 uses of *tapeinoo* in 11 verses in the NT...

Matthew 18:4 "Whoever then **humbles** himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

**Robertson** remarks that "It is not that the child humbled himself, but that the child is humble from the nature of the case in relation to older persons. That is true, however "bumptious" the child himself may be. Bruce observes that to humble oneself is "the most difficult thing in the world for saint as for sinner."

**Vincent**: "Not, as this little child humbles himself, but, shall make himself humble as this little child is lowly; shall willingly become by spiritual process what the child is by nature."

**MacArthur**: making low In God's eyes, the one who lowers himself is the one who is elevated; the one who genuinely considers himself to be the least is the one God considers to be the greatest. ([Matthew 8-15](#), [Matthew 16-23](#), Matthew 24-28)

**R. C. H. Lenski**: "He who thinks of making no claims shall have all that others claim and by claiming cannot obtain... Only an empty vessel can God fill with His gifts. And the emptier we are of anything that is due to ourselves, the more can God pour into these vessels His eternal riches, honors, and glories" (*The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1943).

Matthew 23:12 "And whoever exalts (lifts up) himself shall be **humbled**; and whoever **humbles** himself shall be exalted.

**Comment**: The story of the prodigal son and his older brother in Luke 15 provide an excellent portrayal of the principle Jesus is teaching in Mt 23:12. The prodigal came to his senses (Lk 15:18, 19, 21) and as a result of his genuine humility, he was exalted by the father (Lk 15:20, 22, 23, 24). The elder son in contrast reacted with anger (Lk 15:28, 29, 30). Is not the father's show of compassion (Lk 15:20ff) also a picture of our heavenly Father bestowing "**greater grace**" on humble, repentant sinners (Jas 4:6)?

**EBC**: The principle enunciated in these verses reflects not natural law but kingdom law: the eschatological reward will humble the self-exalted and exalt the self-humbled, after the pattern in Ezek 21:26. What is commended is humility, not humbug; service, not servility. The supreme example—the Messiah himself—makes this clear (Mt 20:26-28); for his astonishing humility and service to others was untainted by servility and was perfectly compatible with exercising the highest authority. Having done

the greatest service, he has been most highly exalted

Luke 3:5 'Every ravine shall be filled up, And every mountain and hill shall be brought low; And the crooked shall become straight, And the rough roads smooth (Quoting Isaiah 40:3)

**Comment:** Vincent writes "In allusion to the practice of Eastern monarchs. On occasions of their progress, heralds were sent out to call on the people to clear and improve the old roads or to make new ones."

**EBC:** Isaiah 40:3 was used by the community at Qumran as a rationale for leading a separated life in the desert, where they believed they were preparing the way of the Lord by means of a constant reading of the Law... What needs removal is the sin of the people.

Luke 14:11 "For everyone who exalts himself shall be **humbled**, and he who **humbles** himself shall be exalted."

**Comment:** "Humbles" is in the **present tense** which calls for this to be one's lifestyle (It is in the active voice = we make the choice to humble ourselves - although often it is God allowing circumstances/people in our life that give us the "opportunity" to make this choice)! Conversely everyone who continually exalts (also present tense) themselves will be humbled!

Luke 18:14 "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself shall be **humbled**, but he who **humbles** himself shall be exalted."

**Comment:** As with the previous use in Luke 14:11, the second use of tapeinoo is present tense, active voice, calling for the individual to continually make a choice of his or her will to humble themselves!

2Corinthians 11:7 Or did I commit a sin in **humbling** myself that you might be exalted, because I preached the gospel of God to you without charge?

**Comment:** Humbling myself by making tents for a living while preaching in Corinth.

**EBC:** Paul's purpose in "humbling" himself in the Corinthians' eyes to undertake manual labor while ministering to them (see Acts 18:3) was to "elevate" them above their inherited idolatry and vicious past (2Co 11:7; cf. 2Co 4:12; 8:9), just as his "robbing" other churches of money they could not really spare was motivated solely by his desire to serve the Corinthians gratuitously and more effectively (2Co 11:8). It was Paul's policy not to accept financial support from churches in which he was currently ministering (see note).

2Corinthians 12:21 I am afraid that when I come again my God may **humiliate** me before you, and I may mourn over many of those who have sinned in the past and not repented of the impurity, immorality and sensuality which they have practiced.

Philippians 2:8-note And being found in appearance as a man, He **humbled** Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

**Comment:** **Tapeinoo** is "Not the same as emptied Himself, Php 2:7-note. It defines that word, showing how the self-emptying manifests itself."

Philippians 4:12-note I know how to get along with **humble** means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.

**Comment:** Here **tapeinoo** has to do w. the physical rather than the moral or spiritual and is used in respect to the needs of daily life

James 4:10 **Humble** (aorist imperative - Do this now! The passive voice = let yourself be humbled) yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.

1Peter 5:6-note **Humble** (aorist imperative - Do this now! The passive voice = let yourself be humbled) yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time

**Comment:** **EBC:** Christians should, therefore, submit themselves to God's "mighty hand." In the OT, God's hand symbolizes discipline (Ex 3:19; 6:1; Job 30:21; Ps 32:4) and deliverance (Dt 9:26; Ezek 20:34). Both meanings are appropriate in view of the sufferings of the Asian Christians. Once more Peter ties his exhortation to humility to eschatology. The "due time" (en kairo) is the time God sets for Christ's appearing. Thus the whole destiny of Christians—whether suffering or glory—is God-ordained.

There are 138 uses of **tapeinoo** in the **Septuagint (LXX)**...

Ge 15:13; 16:9; 31:50; 34:2; Ex 1:12; Lev 16:29, 31; 23:27, 29, 32; 25:39; Deut 21:14; 22:24, 29; 26:6; Jdg 16:5, 6, 19; 19:24;

20:5; Ru 1:21; 1Sa 2:7; 7:13; 12:8; 26:9; 2Sa 7:10; 13:12, 14, 22, 32; 22:28; 1Ki 8:35; 1Chr 4:10; 17:9f; 20:4; 2Chr 6:26; 13:18; 28:19; 32:26; 33:12, 23; 34:27; Ezra 8:21; Esther 4:17; 6:13; Job 22:12, 23, 29; 24:9; 31:10; 34:25; 40:11; Ps 18:27; 35:13, 14; 38:8; 39:2; 44:19, 25; 51:8, 17; 55:19; 72:4; 74:21; 75:7; 81:14; 88:15; 89:10; 90:15; 94:5; 105:18; 106:42, 43; 107:12, 17; 116:6, 10; 119:67, 71, 75, 107; 142:6; 143:3; 147:6; Pr 10:4; 13:7; 18:12; 25:7; 29:23; Eccl 10:18; 12:4; Isa 1:25; 2:9, 11, 12, 17; 3:8, 17, 26; 5:15; 10:33; 13:11; 25:11, 12; 26:5; 29:4; 40:4; 51:21, 23; 57:9; 58:3, 5, 10; 60:14; 64:12; Jer 13:18; 31:37; Lam 1:5, 8, 12; 2:5; 3:32, 33, 34; 5:11; Ezek 17:24; 21:26; 22:10 Da 4:37; 5:19, 22; 7:24; 10:12; 11:30; Hos 2:15; 5:5; 7:10; 14:8; Mal 2:12.

**TDNT** comments on the frequent use of **tapeinoo** in the Lxx...

The prominence of the verb shows that the main reference is to an action rather than a state, and the chief Hebrew originals confirm this. Thus the group 'ānâ has the basic sense of "stooping," "bowing down," and then "humbling oneself" (or "being humbled" by sickness, poverty, want, etc.). From this we get such senses as humility, modesty, subservience, compliance, and affliction.

In fasting people humble themselves before God, but the OT never glorifies such self-abasement, stressing instead the humble attitude of the heart (cf. Pr 25:7; Joel 2:12, 13; Is. 58:5ff.). ([Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Eerdmans](#))

**Here are a few representative uses of tapeinoo in the Lxx...**

Genesis 15:13 And God said to Abram, "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be **enslaved** (Heb = abad; Lxx = tapeinoo) and oppressed four hundred years.

Genesis 16:9 Then the angel of the LORD said to her, **Return** (command) to your mistress, and **submit** (Command - Heb = anah = to be bowed down, afflicted; Lxx = tapeinoo) yourself to her authority."

Exodus 1:12 But the more they **afflicted** (Heb = anah = to be bowed down, afflicted; Lxx = tapeinoo) them, the more they multiplied and the more they spread out, so that they were in dread of the sons of Israel.

Leviticus 16:29 (**Context**: Instructions regarding the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur) "And this shall be a permanent statute for you: in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, **you shall humble** (Heb = anah = to be bowed down, afflicted; Lxx = tapeinoo) your souls, and not do any work, whether the native, or the alien who sojourns among you... 31 "It is to be a **Sabbath** of solemn rest (Heb = shabbathon; Lxx = anapausis = cessation from wearisome activity for the sake of rest,) for you, that **you may humble** (afflict) (Heb = anah = to be bowed down, afflicted; Lxx = tapeinoo) your souls; it is a permanent statute.

**Comment: Humble your souls** is literally "afflict his soul" which traditionally was understood by the Jews as signifying abstinence from all food. This is the only fast day prescribed in the Mosaic law.

**Constable:** All the Israelites were to humble their souls (fast) and refrain from work in preparation for this event. This self-affliction included spiritual humbling as well as going without food (cf. Isa 58:3). **Fasting was an indication that the practitioner regarded his need to seek God as more pressing than his need to feed his body.** It often accompanied prayer (cf. Ps 35:13). Refraining from work resulted from the same sense of priority. No human activity was necessary nor did God permit it in addition to the sacrifice that He provided to atone for sin. ([Leviticus](#)) (Bolding added)

Leviticus 23:27 (**Context**: Instructions regarding the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur) "On exactly the tenth day of this seventh month is the day of atonement; it shall be a holy convocation for you, and you **shall humble** (Heb = anah = to be bowed down, afflicted; Lxx = tapeinoo) your souls and present an offering by fire to the LORD... 29 "If there is any person who **will not humble** himself on this same day, he shall be cut off from his people... 32 "It is to be a Sabbath of complete rest to you, and **you shall humble** your souls; on the ninth of the month at evening, from evening until evening you shall keep your Sabbath."

Ru 1:21 "I went out full, but the LORD has brought me back empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since the LORD has witnessed against me and the Almighty **has afflicted** (Heb = raa = done harm/calamity; Lxx = tapeinoo) me?"

1Sa 2:7 "The LORD makes poor and rich; He **brings low** (Heb = shaphel = to be or become low or abased; Lxx = tapeinoo = present tense = continually), He also exalts.

1Ki 8:35 (cp 2Chr 6:26) "When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain, because they have sinned against Thee, and they pray toward this place and confess Thy name and turn from their sin when Thou **dost afflict** (Heb = anah = to be bowed down, afflicted; Lxx = tapeinoo) them,

1Chr 4:10 Now Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, "Oh that Thou wouldst bless me indeed, and enlarge my border, and that Thy hand might be with me, and that Thou wouldst keep me from harm, that it **may not pain** (Heb = atsab = hurt, pain, grieve; Lxx = tapeinoo) me!" And God granted him what he requested.

2Chr 28:19 For the LORD **humbled** (Heb = kana; Lxx = tapeinoo) Judah because of Ahaz king of Israel, for he had brought about a lack of restraint in Judah and was very unfaithful to the LORD.

2Chr 32:26 (Context = 2Chr 32:25 "his heart was proud" - Read the entire chapter for a better sense of the context of Hezekiah's pride 2Chr 32:1-33) However, Hezekiah **humbled** (Heb = kana; Lxx = tapeinoo) the pride (Heb = gobah = height, haughtiness, loftiness) of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the LORD did not come on them in the days of Hezekiah.

One of the most incredible Biblical records of someone humbling himself is evil [King Manasseh](#)...

2Chr 33:12 And when he was in distress, he entreated the LORD his God and **humbled** (Heb = kana; Lxx = tapeinoo) himself greatly before the God of his fathers. 13 When he prayed to Him, He was moved by his entreaty and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem to his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD was God.

2Chr 33:23 Moreover, he **did not humble** (Heb = kana; Lxx = tapeinoo) himself before the LORD as his father Manasseh had done, but Amon multiplied guilt.

2Chr 34:27 "Because your heart was tender and you **humbled** (Heb = kana; Lxx = tapeinoo) yourself before God, when you heard His words against this place and against its inhabitants, and because you **humbled** (Heb = kana; Lxx = tapeinoo) yourself before Me, tore your clothes, and wept before Me, I truly have heard you," declares the LORD.

Ezra 8:21 Then I proclaimed a fast there at the river of Ahava, that **wemight humble** (Heb = anah = to be bowed down, afflicted; Lxx = tapeinoo) ourselves before our God to seek from Him a safe journey for us, our little ones, and all our possessions.

**Comment:** This passage was the text of John Robinson's last sermon at Leiden before the Pilgrims sailed for the New World in 1620.

Job 40:11 "Pour out the overflowings of your anger; And look on everyone who is proud, and make him low.

Psalms 18:27 [ESV-note](#) For you save a humble (tapeinos) people, but the haughty (proud) eyes you **bring down** (low) (Heb = shaphel = to be or become low or abased; Lxx = tapeinoo).

Psalms 35:13 [note](#) But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth; **I humbled** my soul with fasting; and my prayer kept returning to my bosom. **14** I went about as though it were my friend or brother; **I bowed down** (Heb = shachach = bow down or crouch, Lxx = tapeinoo) mourning, as one who sorrows for a mother.

Psalms 51:17 [note](#) The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a **contrite** (Heb = dakah; Lxx = tapeinoo) heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise

Psalms 119:67 [note](#) Before I **was afflicted** (Heb = anah = to be bowed down, afflicted; Lxx = tapeinoo) I went astray, But now I keep Thy word.

Psalms 119:71 [note](#) It is good for me that I was afflicted (Heb = anah = to be bowed down, afflicted; Lxx = tapeinoo), That I may learn Thy statutes.

Psalms 119:107 [note](#) I am exceedingly afflicted (Heb = anah = to be bowed down, afflicted; Lxx = tapeinoo); Revive me, O LORD, according to Thy word.

### Phillip Brooks

The true way to be humble, is not to stoop until you are smaller than yourself, but to stand at your real height against some higher nature.

### C. H. Spurgeon

Let us be humble that we may not need to be humbled, but may be exalted by the grace of God.

**Ralph Martin** observes that "humility before God is the only way to true joy. Humility—that state of total dependence on God—is foreign to "the world." To seek to be exalted by the world is dangerous, as well as futile (Jas 1:9, 10, 11-note). But to humble oneself before God is to await his eschatological reversal and to look to him for his intervention (Luke 14:11). (Martin, R. P. Vol. 48: Word Biblical Commentary: James. Dallas: Word, Incorporated)

Humility is a biblical, honest appraisal of ourselves. It means we come to relationships with a focus on others and not on ourselves.

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**THOUGHT** - Perhaps you are in a season of humbling. If so, take a moment, listen closely, and be encouraged by the words of this song by Robin Mark...

### **All Is Well**

He lowers us to raise us  
So we can sing His praises  
Whatever is His way all is well

He makes us rich and poor  
That we might trust Him more  
Whatever is His way all is well

All my changes come from Him He who never changes  
I'm held firm in the grasp of the Rock of all the ages

All is well with my soul  
He is God in control  
I know not all His plans  
But I know I'm in His hands

He clothes us now then strips us  
Yet with His Word equips us  
Whatever is His way all is well  
And though our seasons change  
We still exalt His name  
Whatever is His way all is well

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### **THOMAS A KEMPIS: Having a Humble Opinion of Self**

EVERY man naturally desires knowledge; but what good is knowledge without fear of God? Indeed a humble rustic who serves God is better than a proud intellectual who neglects his soul to study the course of the stars. He who knows himself well becomes mean in his own eyes and is not happy when praised by men.

If I knew all things in the world and had not charity, what would it profit me before God Who will judge me by my deeds?

Shun too great a desire for knowledge, for in it there is much fretting and delusion. Intellectuals like to appear learned and to be called wise. Yet there are many things the knowledge of which does little or no good to the soul, and he who concerns himself about other things than those which lead to salvation is very unwise.

Many words do not satisfy the soul; but a good life eases the mind and a clean conscience inspires great trust in God.

The more you know and the better you understand, the more severely will you be judged, unless your life is also the more holy. Do not be proud, therefore, because of your learning or skill. Rather, fear because of the talent given you. If you think you know many things and understand them well enough, realize at the same time that there is much you do not know. Hence, do not affect wisdom, but admit your ignorance. Why prefer yourself to anyone else when many are more learned, more cultured than you?

If you wish to learn and appreciate something worth while, then love to be unknown and considered as nothing. Truly to know and despise self is the best and most perfect counsel. To think of oneself as nothing, and always to think well and highly of others is the best and most perfect wisdom. Wherefore, if you see another sin openly or commit a serious crime, do not consider yourself better, for you do not know how long you can remain in good estate. All men are frail, but you must admit that none is more frail than yourself.

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One of the most touching Biblical **illustrations** of the principle of exaltation after humbling is the prodigal son who was humbled in a pig pen and returned home to his father (reflecting repentance, humility and submission) -

“So he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. 21“And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ 22“But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; 23and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; 24for this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.’ And they began to celebrate. (Lk 15:20-23+)

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**Illustration** - A man who had just been elected to the British Parliament brought his family to London and was giving them a tour of the city. When they entered Westminster Abbey, his eight-year-old daughter seemed awe-struck by the size and beauty of that magnificent structure. Her proud father, curious about what was going on in her mind, asked, "And what, my child, are you thinking about?" She replied, "Daddy, I was just thinking about how big you are in our house, but how small you look here!"

Pride can creep into our lives without our awareness. From time to time it's good for us to be "cut down to size." We need to be reminded not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think. It's easy to become proud when we stay in our own circles of life. But when we are thrust into larger situations, with increased demands, pressures, and competition, we come to the shocking realization that "big fish in small ponds" shrink quickly in a large ocean.

One thing that stands out in the Word of God is that the Lord despises the haughty. Under inspiration the psalmist said, "One who has a haughty look and a proud heart, him I will not endure" (Psalm 101:5-note). And James said, "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (James 4:6).

If we ask the Holy Spirit to help us see ourselves as we really are, He will enable us to control our foolish pride. —R W De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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**In the presence of the Lord** - Note that the proper response to the Lord's presence is choosing humility, being willing to be humbled. A humble person lives his life knowing that God watches everything.

**Thomas Manton** writes that...

Duties are truly done when they are done as in God's sight. Fear and reverence of God make the heart more sincere (see Jas 1:27 and 1Pe 3:21). "I obey your precepts and your statutes, for all my ways are known to you" (Ps 119:168); that was David's motive. So then, in all duties of worship remember that you are before God; there is a broad and pure eye of glory fixed on you. You are dealing with God, who tells people his thoughts and who discerns your spirits better than you do yourselves. The right way to speak of this is described in Acts 10:33, "We are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us." We come to pray, to hear, to humble ourselves before God. The soul will have a double advantage from such thoughts: the work will be more spiritual, and more pure and upright. It will be more spiritual in that I am not to be humbled before man but before God. "Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (1Sa 16:7). Will this satisfy God? Is it the kind of fast he has chosen (Isaiah 58:5)? It will be more pure and upright in that whatever a person does to God, he will do it for God's sake; religious duties will be performed for reasons of religion, not because they are customary or to join in what other people are doing, but for God and to God.

**The sight of God is a special help to humiliation.** The soul becomes humble by the true knowledge of God and ourselves: "my eyes have seen you. Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:5, 6). When Job had a glorious vision of God, he vanished into nothing in his own thoughts. The stars vanish when the sun rises, and our poor candle is so slight that it disappears when the glory of God rises in our thoughts. We see our lack in God's fullness; the ocean makes us ashamed of our own little drop. We see our vileness in God's majesty. What is the dust on the scales compared to a mountain, and our wickedness in comparison with God's holiness? Elijah pulled his cloak over his face when God's glory passed by him (1Ki 19:13). Similarly, Isaiah cried out, "Woe to me! ... I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips" when God showed him his glory (Isa 6:5). Whenever God appeared to the faithful, men were filled with fear because of their own weakness and corruption.

So then, this tells us how to be humble in our addresses to God: get as large and comprehensive an idea of him as you can; see his glory if you want to know your own baseness. People are feeble in duties because they have low thoughts of God. They offered the Lord a blemished animal because they did not consider he was a great King (Malachi 1:14). The elders who saw God in his glory "fell on their faces" (Revelation 11:16). ([A Practical Exposition of James](#))

**Pastor Steven Cole** agrees writing that "The key to developing biblical humility is in the phrase, **in the presence of the Lord** (Jas 4:10). Only those with hardened hearts could be proud in the presence of the Lord! The holy angels in His presence cover their faces (Isa 6:2). When Isaiah had his vision of the Lord, he was undone—personally shattered—and immediately aware of his own sinfulness (Isa. 6:5). When God portrayed the wonders of creation before Job, he had no further arguments against God. Instead, he said (Job 42:6), "I retract, and I repent in dust and ashes." When the apostle John, who formerly had rested his head on Jesus' chest, saw Him in His glory on the Isle of Patmos, he fell at His feet as a dead man (Rev 1:17-note). ([Sermon](#))

**Pastor Phil Newton** offers this insight on why one would humble themselves in God's presence - "Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you." Why is this so? Consider the many times we see humility taking place in Scripture. It seems that there is a pattern of God's people recognizing the Lord's presence or something of his attributes, and then the response is humility (e.g., Isaiah, Joshua, David, Moses, Peter, John). (1) They caught a glimpse of God, as they had never had before; they

saw and experienced something of the divine character before them. (2) Consequently, each responded by seeing his own weakness, unworthiness, and helplessness (Mt 5:3-note). This is the very opposite of the pastor from another generation of whom it was said he could "strut sitting down." So, think upon the Lord; get a clear view of your own selfishness with time, money, conversation, and interests; acknowledge God's worth above all. ([Walking by Grace](#))

**Why is it so difficult to submit to God, to humble ourselves before Him?**(1) Self-reliance and independence are strong cultural values.(2) The systems of advertising and entertainment promote our self-reliance and independence. (3) Humility is a trait discouraged and ridiculed in the media. (4) All of this reinforces our natural tendency toward selfishness. (from Life Application Bible Commentary – James)

## IN THE EYE OF THE OMNISCIENT GOD

**Presence** (1799) (**enopion** from **en** = in + **ops** = the eye/see [cp optanomai = see, perceive with eyes, look at, implying not only the mere act of seeing but actual perception of what one sees]) means literally in sight, in front of, in the presence of. Being in sight. Before the face and thus the idea of face to face! Of doing something in someone's presence.

In the context of James 4:10, the humble person lives, as it were, in the eye of God!

A sense of our own utter unworthiness in God's holy presence can only induce humility.

What thou art in the sight of God, that thou truly art. -Thomas à Kempis

**Enopion** can be summarized into three basic meanings

- 1) **in front of, before, a position in a spatial sense, in the presence of**(Lk 1:19; Acts 10:30, Rev 3:8, 7:15)
- 2) **in the sight of, in the presence of**(Lk 23:14, Jn 20:30, Acts 10:33, 1Ti 6:12, Re 3:5, 13:13)
- 3) **in the opinion of, in the judgment of**(Lk 16:15, 2Co 8:21)

**Wuest** writes that **enopion**...

was used in such expressions as, "the case will be drawn up against you in the court at Heracleopolis in the presence of," "deliver personally," "I gave notice in person." It is used of one who does or says something in the presence of someone else, and does it with the consciousness that that one has him in sight and mind. Paul delivered this solemn charge to Timothy, conscious of the fact that he was doing so in the sight of God, and he wished Timothy to ever so regard the charge.

**Enopion** - 94x in 86v - The **NAS** translates **enopion** as before(46), from sight(1), in front of(1), in the presence of(20), in the sight of(21).

Lk 1:15, 17, 19, 75, 76; 4:7; 5:18, 25; 8:47; 12:6, 9; 13:26; 14:10; 15:10, 18, 21; 16:15; 23:14; 24:11, 43; Jn 20:30; Acts 2:25; 4:10, 19; 6:5, 6; 7:46; 9:15; 10:30, 31, 33; 19:9, 19; 27:35; Ro 3:20; 12:17; 14:22; 1Cor 1:29; 2Cor 4:2; 7:12; 8:21; Gal 1:20; 1Ti 2:3; 5:4, 20, 21; 6:12, 13; 2Ti 2:14; 4:1; Heb 4:13; 13:21; Jas 4:10; 1Pe 3:4; 1Jn 3:22; 3Jn 1:6; Rev 1:4; 2:14; 3:2, 5, 8, 9; 4:5, 6, 10; 5:8; 7:9, 11, 15; 8:2, 3, 4; 9:13; 11:4, 16; 12:4, 10; 13:12, 13, 14; 14:3, 10; 15:4; 16:19; 19:20; 20:12.

There are over 400 uses in the Septuagint (LXX) and here are a few representative uses...

Ex 21:1 "Now these are the ordinances which you are to set **before** (Heb = panim = face; Lxx = enopion) them.

Ex 23:17 "Three times a year all your males shall appear **before** (Heb = panim = face; Lxx = enopion) the Lord God.

Ex 34:10 Then God said, "Behold, I am going to make a covenant. **Before** (neged = in front of, in sight of, opposite to; Lxx = enopion) all your people I will perform miracles which have not been produced in all the earth, nor among any of the nations; and all the people among whom you live will see the working of the LORD, for it is a fearful thing that I am going to perform with you.

Psalms 19:14-[see notes](#) Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in **Thysight** (Heb = panim = face; Lxx = enopion), O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer.

Psalms 119:170-[see notes](#) Let my supplication come **before** (Heb = panim = face; Lxx = enopion) Thee;

Deliver me according to Thy word.

Daniel 1:9 Now God granted Daniel favor and compassion **in the sight** (Heb = panim = face; Lxx = enopion) of the commander of the officials,

**He will exalt you** - **Richison** writes that

The way down is the way up spiritually. Pride is our biggest spiritual problem. We carry pride of face, place and race. If we humble ourselves, God will not have to do it for us. This phrase is a promise that God will elevate us to new spiritual heights if we humble ourselves before Him. We will find ourselves in a new sphere of spirituality through humility. This is the result, not the cause, of God's lifting us to new spiritual heights... Revival comes when we humble ourselves before the majesty of God. Humility allows God to do His work of grace in us. (2Chr 7:14) ([Ref](#))

## GOD'S ELEVATOR

Up is down... and down is up in Christianity! What a precious promise and provision. (from Donald Barnhouse)

**John Blanchard** has a number of excellent relevant quotes from his book I highly recommended compilation of quotations [-The Complete Gathered Gold- A Treasury of Quotations](#))

**Rowland Hill** - If you want to see the height of the hill of God's eternal love you must go down into the valley of humility.

**Thomas Manton** - The way to rise is to fall.

**Roy Hession** the writer of the great little book on personal revival, [Calvary Road](#) (read it if you hungry for personal revival!!!), wrote that "God can only fill valleys, not mountains."

**Augustine** - The proud hilltops let the rain run off; the lowly valleys are richly watered.

**Thomas Adams** had it right when he said that "He that will be knighted must kneel for it."

**C. Campbell Morgan** - All God's thrones are reached by going downstairs.

**Hiebert** - The true way to exaltation leads through the valley of humility. It reflects Jesus' teaching in Mt 23:12 and Lk 14:11 and would be familiar to the Jewish readers from their Old Testament (Job 5:11; Ps 147:6; 149:4; Ezek 21:26). The promised exaltation begins with the experience of pardoning grace restoring the penitent sinner to a position of favor with God and producing an inner consciousness of liberty and exaltation; it will come to its outward future consummation when our Lord returns and His saints are manifested with Him in glory (Col 3:4; 2Th 1:10).

**Exalt** ([5312](#)) (**hupsoo** from **hupsos** = height, elevation) means to lift up spatially, to raise high. Figuratively, it can describe lifting one up to a place of honor, fame, power, or position (to exalt).

**Hupsoo** is used as a reference to the **crucifixion** in Jn 3:14, 8:28, 12:32, 34 (cp use in Lxx of Ps 9:13 where "affliction" in the Lxx = tapeinosis = low estate, humiliation, which again links "exaltation" [lift me up] with "humiliation"). **Hupsoo** in other contexts clearly alludes to Jesus' **ascension** to the right hand of His Father's throne (Acts 2:33, 5:31). It is possible to interpret Jn 12:32 with a "double meaning" as referring not only to His crucifixion but also His exaltation to heaven.

**Dauids** comments that here in Jas 4:10...

The picture is that of someone prostrate before an oriental monarch, begging mercy. The monarch leans down from the throne and lifts the petitioner's face from the dust. The person rises with grateful joy, knowing he or she is forgiven. (New International Biblical Commentary).

**Hupsoo** - 20x in 16v and is rendered in the **NAS** as exalt(2), exalted(9), exalts(3), lift(1), lifted(4), made great(1).

Matthew 11:23 "And you, Capernaum, will not be **exalted** to heaven, will you? You shall descend to Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day.

**Comment:** Capernaum was the "operation center" for Jesus while in Galilee and thus was continually exposed to the Light of the world (Mt 4:16, 17, Jn 1:5, 7, 3:19, 20, 21, 8:12, 9:5, 12:35, 36) Greater revelation always brings greater condemnation if the truth is rejected, thus Capernaum would suffer ever greater condemnation than Sodom (Mt 11:20, 21, 22, 23, 24, - this concept of differ "degrees" of eternal punishment - Mt 10:14, 15, 12:41, 42, Jn 19:11, Lk 10:12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 11:31,32, 12:47,48,

20:45,46,47, Mk 12:38,39,40, Heb10:29, 30, 31)

Matthew 23:12 "And whoever **exalts** himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be **exalted**."

**Comment:** Jesus discusses the "revolutionary" character of His coming Kingdom, in which greatness is the opposite of what the world supposes, for genuine greatness stoops to serve. The prideful Pharisees exalted themselves before men, but would be brought low before God in due time. And so Jesus repeatedly stressed the importance of humility to His disciples emphasizing that if one wanted to be great in the Kingdom, he must become the servant of all (cp Mt 20:20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28)

Luke 1:52 "He has brought down rulers from their thrones, and has **exalted** those who were humble."

Luke 10:15 "And you, Capernaum, will not be **exalted** to heaven, will you? You will be brought down to Hades!"

Luke 14:11 "For everyone who **exalts** himself shall be humbled, and he who humbles himself shall be **exalted**."

Luke 18:14 "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who **exalts** himself shall be humbled, but he who humbles himself shall be **exalted**."

**Comment:** One can either exalt one's self or allow God to exalt him, but only the latter man will be justified or declared righteous. In other words, Jesus is teaching that the humble man who acknowledges his lack of personal righteousness and looks to God for righteousness will be exalted, which in this context indicates that he will be declared righteous. Justification or being declared righteous depends on God's grace, not on human works or merit (cp Ro 3:24-note, Ro 3:28-note). . On the other hand those who exalt themselves and count on their own righteousness will be humbled by God.

John 3:14 "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man **be lifted up**;

**Comment:** Jesus is prophesying of His coming crucifixion, and points Nicodemus to an OT passage he would have been quite familiar with, Nu 21:5, 6, 7, 8, 9. In that passage the Israelites who had suffered a potentially fatal bite by the fiery serpents, were to look at the serpent lifted up that they might be healed. Jesus' main point is that He Himself would also be lifted up, so that just as all who looked at the serpent on the pole had been physically healed, so too all who looked by grace through faith at Christ lifted up on the Cross would spiritually live (cp Jn 3:3)

John 8:28 Jesus therefore said, "When you **lift up** the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me."

John 12:32 "And I, if I **be lifted up** from the earth, will draw all men to Myself."..34 The multitude therefore answered Him, "We have heard out of the Law that the Christ is to remain forever; and how can You say, 'The Son of Man must **be lifted up**'? Who is this Son of Man?"

**Comment:** As noted above while this use of **lift up** could refer to the crucifixion, it is difficult to exclude the possibility that it has a double meaning and also refers to Jesus' ascension and exaltation to the right hand of His Father in glory (cp Jn 12:23). By comparing Scripture with Scripture, we know without a doubt that Jesus was not saying all men would be saved when He said He would "draw all men to" Himself. As has been succinctly stated Jesus' being lifted up from the earth would draw all men without distinction but not all without exception. In other words, the idea is that all men who are saved will be saved in this way.

Acts 2:33 "Therefore having been **exalted** to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear."

Acts 5:31 "He is the one whom God **exalted** to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins."

Acts 13:17 "The God of this people Israel chose our fathers, and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with an **uplifted** arm He led them out from it."

2Corinthians 11:7 Or did I commit a sin in humbling myself that you might be **exalted**, because I preached the gospel of God to you without charge?

**Comment:** John MacArthur explains that "Greek culture measured the importance of a teacher by the fee he could command. The false apostles therefore accused Paul of being a counterfeit, since he refused to charge for his services (cf. 1Co. 9:1-15). They convinced the Corinthians to be offended by Paul's refusal to accept support from them, offering that as evidence that he did not love them (cf. 1Co 22:11). Paul's resort to manual labor to support himself (Acts 18:1, 2, 3) also embarrassed the Corinthians, who felt such work to be beneath the dignity of an apostle. With biting irony Paul asked his accusers how foregoing

his right to support could possibly be a sin. In fact, by refusing support he had humbled himself so they could be exalted; that is, lifted out of their sin and idolatry." ([MacArthur, J.: The MacArthur Study Bible Nashville: Word](#))

James 4:10 Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He **will exalt** you.

1 Peter 5:6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may **exalt** you at the proper time,

**Hupsoo** is used over 150 times in the Septuagint (LXX) and the **Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint** has this note...

A: to lift high, to raise up - Ezra 9:9; to set somebody upon something Ps 27:5; to take up 2Ki 2:13; to raise, to lift up (the voice) - Ge 39:15; to raise (a song) - Ezra 3:12; to set on high (metaphorical) 2Sa 22:49; to elevate, to exalt - Ex 15:2; to rise Job 39:27; to be lifted up Ge 7:17; to be exalted Dt 8:14 (Lust, J., Eynikel, E., & Hauspie, K. A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint: Revised Edition. Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft: Stuttgart)

Here are some uses from the **Septuagint**...

Genesis 7:17 Then the flood came upon the earth for forty days; and the water increased and lifted up the ark, so that **it rose above** (Heb = rum = to raise, to lift, to be exalted, indicates something is raised up high; Lxx = hupsoo) the earth.

Exodus 15:2 "The LORD is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation; This is my God, and I will praise Him; My father's God, and I will extol (Lxx = hupsoo = exalt) Him.

Psalms 27:5-[see notes](#) For in the day of trouble He will conceal me in His tabernacle; In the secret place of His tent He will hide me; He will **lift me up** (Heb = rum = to raise, to lift, to be exalted, indicates something is raised up high; Lxx = hupsoo) on a rock.

Isaiah 2:11-see notes The proud look of man will be abased (Lxx = tapeinos), And the loftiness of man will be humbled, And the LORD alone will be exalted in that day.

**Thomas Manton** asks what does **exaltation** imply?...

It means any kind of happiness, including deliverance out of trouble ("You hear, O Lord, the desire of the afflicted," Ps 10:17) or promotion to worldly honor or dignity ("A man's pride brings him low, but a man of lowly spirit gains honor," Pr 29:23). Though promotion brings us to slippery places, the humble will be sustained and upheld. It is the same with advancement in grace or glory: "Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 18:4); that is, he will have the most grace and glory.

**Learn from this that submission and humility are the true way to exaltation** This is often repeated in the Gospel: "Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted" (Lk 14:11; see also Mt 23:12). **We are all by nature proud and want to be exalted; but the way to rise is to fall** God gave us a pattern in Jesus Christ: first, he "made himself nothing ... he humbled himself and became obedient to death ... on a cross! Therefore God exalted him ... and gave him the name that is above every name" (see Php 2:5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11).

**So then, do you want deliverance? Humble yourself! Omnipotence will not be your terror but protection. Do you want grace? See more of God.**

Lastly, we may be encouraged from all this to wait upon God with a holy humility and confidence in our lowly state: "When men are brought low and you say, 'Lift them up!' then he will save the downcast" (Job 22:29). When all your affairs go to decay, you may rely on these hopes. Peter says, "that he may lift you up in due time" (1Pe 5:6). Wait for God, and the promise will surely be fulfilled; only be humble. **Gracious humiliation is a deep sense of our misery and vileness, with a desire to be reconciled to God on any terms.** ([A Practical Exposition of James](#))

**Dr. Bonar** once remarked that he could tell when a Christian was growing. In proportion to his growth in grace he would elevate his Master, talk less of what he was doing, and become smaller and smaller in his own esteem, until, like the morning star, he faded away before the rising sun. Jonathan was willing to decrease, that David might increase; and John the Baptist showed the same spirit of humility. -Anecdotes, Incidents and Illustrations.

**Illustrations and Meditations:** Flowers from a Puritan's Garden.

**The Spire** - "The best of God's people have abhorred themselves. Like the spire of a steeple, *minimus in summo*, we are least at the highest. David, a king, was yet like a weaned child."

Thomas Manton is not very clear about the steeple, but he means that the higher a spire rises toward heaven the smaller it becomes, and thus the more elevated are our spirits the less shall we be in our own esteem.

Great thoughts of self and great grace never go together.

**Self-consciousness** is a sure sign that there is not much depth of grace. He who overvalues himself undervalues his Saviour.

He who abounds in piety is sure to be filled with humility.

Light things, such as straws and feathers, are borne aloft; valuable goods keep their places, and remain below, not because they are chained or riveted there, but by virtue of their own weight.

When we begin to talk of our perfection, our imperfection is getting the upper hand.

The more full we become of the presence of the Lord the more shall we sink in our own esteem, even as laden vessels sink down to their water-mark, while empty ships float aloft.

**Lord, make and keep me humble.  
Lift me nearer and nearer to heaven,  
and then I shall grow less and less in my own esteem.**

**R Kent Hughes** sums up this great section of James writing...

The gravity of grace will always channel the rivers of divine favor to the lowly—to those

(1) who submit to God,

(2) whose soul's momentum is away from the Devil and toward God,

(3) who purify their inner and outer lives,

(4) who mourn over their sins, and

(5) who obey the final summary command, "Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up" (Jas 4:10).

We are not to wait passively for this to somehow happen. We are not to wait for someone else to humble us, nor should we wait for the vicissitudes of life to do it. Rather, self-humbling is our Christian duty. We must take inventory of our sinfulness and weakness, then bow in total submission to God, yielding our total being, our dreams, our future, our everything to him. It is then that he will pour on the grace—grace upon grace—grace heaped upon grace—"and he will lift you up."

**John Blanchard** summed up James 4:10 when he said that...

God thinks most of the man who thinks himself least.

**E. H. Blake**, in *The Missionary Worker*

The Mystery of Truth In the Christian life we must lose to gain; we must give to obtain; we must be last to be first; we must be humble to be exalted; we must be least to be greatest; we must die to live.

**Tony Evans** writes that...

A lot of people misinterpret the promise at the end of Jas 4:10. James is not saying that God will exalt you to some high position in society. He is saying that God will exalt you above your problem, above that which is keeping you down and making you a spiritual POW.

But before God can lift us up, He has to take us low. God wants us to weep and mourn over our sin. He wants us to start seeing our sin the way He sees it. When we do that, then we'll get the help that God gives. (Evans, A. T. (1998). *The Battle is the Lord's*: Chicago, Ill.: Moody Press)