

The Narrow Way - Humility

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 07 April 2024

Preacher: Sam Bunnell

[0 : 00] Well, y'all, thank you for your participation in the service so far. We're going to be, as many of you know, we concluded our series in talking about the Lord's Prayer recently, and then, of course, we talked about Easter Sunday last week and the resurrection of Jesus from the dead and how that is the basis, the foundation for our faith.

Well, this Sunday, we're kind of concluding the D-Now theme, so we're going to be in James chapter 4 today, so if you would take your Bibles with me, turn to the book of James chapter 4. While you're turning there, let me quiz the teenagers for a minute. What was the theme of Pastor Nate's first message from the Bible on Friday night?

Do you guys remember? Happiness. There we go. How to Find True Happiness in Jesus. And then Saturday morning, what did he talk about? Holiness. There you go.

How to live that holy life before God and man. And then last night, what was he talking about? Habits. There you go. How many of you guys remember something specific from the habits section last night?

[1 : 12] Anybody? You're all scared to raise your hand. I know what it is. There you go. We got some brave junior hires back there. Either one of y'all, what do you think? Just shout it out. Somebody with a louder voice.

What did she say? What did she say? What did she say? What did she say? What did she say? What did she say? There you go.

Thank you. Turning your phone off. Yes. Thank you. Thank you for that. That was. He talked about that for a while. I got under conviction about that. He's like, the last thing we do before we go to bed is look at our phone.

So much of the time, the first thing we do when we wake up is look at our phone. He sleeps with his phone in the other room. I'm like, man, how do you do that? But that's amazing. I love that.

And talking about habits that help us walk closer to God. Yeah, Cajun. That's right.

[2 : 23] Pluck it out. Yes, he did. He talked about it. He had a lot of humor in there. All right. Last one, Aubrey. That's right.

There you go. There you go. All right. Yeah, he did. He talked about the phone a lot. And y'all know why? This generation coming up right now, teenagers and into early 20s, they have, obviously, with the way of the world, they have the highest phone usage rate that's ever been in recorded history, right?

And, of course, probably the one coming up behind them, the alphas, will probably take that crown from them. But that is, obviously, the way our world is going. And so, while technology can certainly be a blessing, and so many of us have come to depend on our cell phones, smartphones every day for so much of our lives, we also recognize that it can become something that stands in between us and pursuing God more, or in between us and our relationships, et cetera.

So, we have to kind of give that to God and develop healthy habits. So, today, we're concluding this series by talking about humility, humility. So, that's kind of the theme for today.

Let's turn to James chapter 4 and verse 10, if you're not already there. And if you're able to, would you join us in standing? Let's read this verse, this one verse together, verse 10. I'm reading from the New Living Translation this morning.

[3 : 58] Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

Would you say those last three words with me when we conclude this verse? I'm going to read it one more time. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will, ready, lift you up.

That's right. Let's bow our heads and ask God to speak to us from his word today. God, we ask for just that. We ask that you would remove any walls between us and you right now. There's people

with all kinds of things on their minds, and that can get in the way of what you have for us from your word.

God, let this not be my thoughts and my opinions, but the revelation of the truth of Scripture speaking to our hearts and changing us. We'll give you all the glory for it.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. So, James chapter 4 and verse 10. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up in honor. What a powerful thought that God would honor us.

[5 : 03] God would lift us up in honor. All throughout Scripture, we're taught to lift him up, right? To honor God. To praise him. That's what we do when we come to church, and we sing those songs.

Maybe you drive down the road in the car, and you turn on Christian radio. Or maybe you've got a, you know, playlist on your phone or something that you listen to that has songs that honor God.

Maybe throughout your day, you try to think thoughts that are honoring to God, or you stop and pray and give that glory back to God. Throughout our day, we are supposed to be doing that, right?

But in this verse, it says, If we humble ourselves before God, then he will actually take us and lift us up. Man, what a powerful thought that God would do that for us.

So, what's he talking about with humility? First, I'm going to take you in a direction that you didn't think you were going to go this morning. Ready? I got to get this thing working. For those of y'all who aren't here every Sunday, this is like a regular thing that happens.

[6 : 09] I push buttons and nothing happens. And then they're looking at me like, dude, you're doing it wrong. It's just, it's how we do it, all right? All right, Josh, would you take me to the next slide? Thanks.

Yep, one more. There we go. Anybody know what hashtag OOTD means? Just say it if you know it. Outfit of the day. Why did this crowd say it right here? And like, nobody from back there. Yeah, that's what it means. First of all, some of you were still trying to figure out what I meant by hashtag. Because you're like, I see the pound sign up there. Why are y'all laughing? You don't even know what that is. Yeah, back, you know, back on the old telephones that were actually on a wall and had buttons that you push, you know.

That was the pound sign. Now it's hashtag. And this is OOTD, outfit of the day. There were a lot of pictures that could have gone up there.

[7 : 07] And I tried to go with the least controversial one that I could find. So we rolled with that today. On social media, whether it's TikTok or, you know, Instagram or whatever, the social media outlet happens to be that people are posting on.

That is a common thing that gets posted out there. People try it on different outfits saying, here's my outfit of the day. There's another one that goes along with it. GRWM.

What does that mean? Get ready with me. Right. Which is weird. Like, why? Why do I want to get ready with you? I get ready by myself. You know, this is weird.

But, you know, that's what it is. It's like people, you know, going through. Here I am brushing my teeth and doing my hair and doing my makeup. Y'all like my makeup this morning? You're like, no, you really did a bad job if you were.

Yeah, so that is a very common trend. Why is that? Why do people care so much about their outfit of the day or having people watch them try on different outfits or whatever they planned before that they're going to wear that day?

[8 : 15] Why is that? Well, could it be that the attention is on us? The whole point is to lift up me and make me look better.

One of our high school girls earlier this morning, I wasn't even going to mention this until you gave it to me. She said that she loved the part of Pastor Nate's preaching where he talked about social media as glorifying me instead of glorifying God.

Even if it's not something inappropriate that you're posting, even if it's not, you know, something that runs down someone else or harms someone else or it's just purely fine. But really the whole point of it is to draw attention to me, to lift me up and make me look better.

I'm not saying all social media is bad. And I'm not saying that all posts that involve you or tell the world about you are innately bad all by themselves. I'm not saying that.

But there is a truth that the whole purpose of social media is to draw attention to yourself. So that's kind of the idea behind this.

[9 : 24] And a recent study showed, ready, women spend 17 minutes per day choosing an outfit. Men spend 13 minutes per day choosing an outfit.

Can I just get a show of hands from the guys? How many of y'all spent 13 minutes choosing your outfit today? I didn't think so. I spent like, you know, 45 seconds maybe choosing my outfit.

It's like, yeah. Bill's like, yes and amen. Like, okay. You know, high was going to be a little lower today. So I'm like, I'll wear the vest. It's D now weekend.

I'm going a little more casual today, you know, than I do sometimes on a Sunday. And that's all right. But God doesn't judge. It's okay. But yeah, I'm like, here's a shirt. Here's a vest.

Here's pants. I got a belt. What shoes do I need? All right, we're good. But 17 minutes per day was the average. And for men, 13 minutes.

[10:22] That's a lot of attention to how we look, isn't it? It's a lot of attention to ourselves, to us. So what are we trying to do? Why are we so concerned with how we look and how we present ourselves to the world?

Number one, let's write this down. If you've got your bulletin with you, there's some blanks in there you can fill out. There should be church pens in the pew back in front of you. Humility doesn't come naturally.

We've got to understand that humility is not something that we were already equipped with, right? When you're buying a car, there's things that come standard.

And then there's like factory options that you can add in. There's like packages you can add in. How many of you guys have bought a car new right here in this section? Anybody? I'd be like, wow.

Have you? Have you? I'm not talking about Hot Wheels. We talked about that a few weeks ago.

Yeah. I bought one car new in my life, and I regretted it instantly.

[11:24] And it was when we were missionaries down in Panama. And I kind of had to because like the used car deal down there is a little sketchier than what we find up here. So I kind of had to buy a brand new car down there.

And, man, I hated the decrease in value as soon as it drove off the lot. But there you go. I got like the lowest end. I didn't add on any specialty packages or anything like that. But, man, do you understand that you and I, we don't come standard with humility?

That's something that God has to give to us. Oftentimes, you'll find people that it seems like they're humble. Why do you think that is?

Talk back to me. Why do you think that sometimes we see people and we think those are humble people? Yeah? Because of how they act?

Because maybe they're a little more quiet, right? They don't always like draw attention to themselves? What were you going to say? How they talk about themselves? Yeah.

[12:25] They're not always like building themselves up. Right. That could be a sign of godly humility or it could just be a personality thing. Right? Doesn't necessarily mean that they're humble. Sometimes, when you always degrade yourself and you're always tearing yourself down, the truth is, you're not humble at all.

Because you're constantly consumed with yourself. Even though you're not necessarily saying, I'm better than somebody else. You might be saying the opposite. You might be saying, man, I'm worth nothing.

Oh, my life is the worst. I'm a terrible person. No one should trust me for anything. I can't do anything right. Has anybody ever thought those thoughts?

I can't do anything right. In that voice, too, with that expression on your face, you know. I can't do anything right. Probably not. If so, that would be really weird. Humility does not come naturally.

The truth is, all of us are equipped with pride. We all come standard with pride. That's what we're equipped with. Right? And that might express itself in different ways.

[13:33] Sometimes we're the one that wants all the attention. Or sometimes we want none of the attention. Either way, we're trying to please ourselves. We're trying to satisfy ourselves. And all our attention is on ourselves.

So humility doesn't come naturally. We have to choose to put it on. We got to choose to, instead of thinking, how is the world going to see me?

How is everybody going to look at me? What are they going to think when they see me today?

Which could spawn an OOTD post. Or a GRWM post.

Or it could produce something completely different. But regardless, it's that same line of thinking that all revolves around me. So humility doesn't come naturally. We have to choose to put it on.

What does the Bible say about this? Would you turn over to 1 Peter 5 and verse 5? And then we'll go to verse 6 as well. This is kind of a parallel passage with what we're talking about in James chapter 4.

[14:36] It's talking about humility here. 1 Peter 5, verses 5 and 6. If you don't have time to turn there, it's on the screen as well. All of you, dress yourselves in humility as you relate to one another.

Isn't that interesting? We're talking about outfits and getting ready in the day. And then God literally tells us, dress yourself. Your Bible might say, clothe yourself. Same deal, okay?

All of you got to put on humility every day. As you relate to each other. That means it's not just a quiet personality thing.

It means in your dealings with other people. As you talk to other people. As you're around other people. The vibe you're giving off.

It's got to be humility. Why? Because God opposes the proud. Man, those are harsh words. God opposes the proud.

[15:39] That's hardcore. But he gives grace to the humble. Y'all want God to oppose you? Or do you want God's grace? Is it that hard to decide?

Come on, that wasn't a rhetorical question. Let's go. Do you want God to oppose you? Or do you want God's grace? Yes, right? That's an easy decision. Okay, well then we've got to close ourselves in humility.

We got to get dressed in the morning with humility. We got to put on this mind. Philippians says, Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.

Who? Being in the form of God. I mean, he was God. He said it wasn't robbery to be thought equal as God. But instead, because why would that be? Why would that be inappropriate for people to call him God?

Jesus was God. But instead, it says he made himself of no reputation. Like he killed his reputation. He was God. He was absolutely at the top.

[16:43] And it says he made himself of no reputation. And he took upon him the form of a servant. And he was made in the likeness of men. He went from the top to the bottom. And he did that willingly.

He humbled himself. So if it's good enough for Jesus to humble himself, we can handle it. We don't have as big of a drop, right?

We're not already at the top like Jesus was. That's really not that big of a drop for us to humble ourselves. And make ourselves of no reputation.

But what are we constantly trying to do? We're trying to build our reputation. You don't have to raise your hands right now. Young people especially. But look, the people on the sides and in the back, y'all are right in here with us too.

How many of us care about our reputation? You don't have to raise your hands. I already know. I already know. You do. Of course you do. We all do. We care about our reputation.

[17:42] I care about my reputation. And there are some good to that. The Bible says we should live in good standing with God and man. But we can care about our reputation way too much.

Jesus was willing to kill his reputation. And if you read the Gospels about Jesus walking on this earth, you see that he made a lot of enemies.

There were a lot of people who didn't like him. Didn't like him at all. Didn't like what he was talking about. He made them uncomfortable. They didn't like his message.

Thought he was calling them out. There were all kinds of things that made Jesus unpopular with certain things. But he laid, with certain types of people.

But he laid all that aside. That wasn't important to him anymore. He came with a message. And that message would only be heard if he humbled himself. So he did.

[18:37] So, verse 6. Humble yourselves. Under the mighty power of God. And at the right time. At the right time.

Jesus will lift you up in honor. That's literally the same words that we just read in James chapter 4. If you humble yourselves, Jesus will lift you up. But I love that it includes here in 1 Peter.

At the right time. We don't know when that time will be. Young people, you don't know when that time will be. You might hope that God will lift you up at this moment. Or this moment.

Because you've got a lot going on. You've got a lot riding on this. Your reputation might be endangered if God doesn't lift you up at this moment. You're like, God, I really need you to come

through for me. I really need you to not let me embarrass myself in this moment.

Whatever it is. But you must wait and rest and trust in God's timing. Because at the right time, he will lift you up. And it will be so much better than anything you could have achieved on your own.

[19 : 39] C.S. Lewis, great Christian writer, said this. Humility is not thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less. I think that is a great little boiled down, kind of stripped down, bare bones definition of humility.

It's not thinking less of yourself like, oh, I'm the worst. That's not what humility is. Humility is thinking of yourself less. It's thinking of God first.

Others that he's put into your life next. And then lastly, finally, third place, yourself. That is humility.

And that's what Jesus did. That's what Jesus modeled for us. That's why he endured the cross.

That's why he went through all that pain, all that torture, all that horrible physical experience of dying on the cross, being crucified.

God, taking on all the sins of you and me because he put himself last. He put God's plan first. He put us next.

[20 : 50] And our salvation, our hope, our freedom, our liberty, our forgiveness. He put that above his own physical experience.

But how many of us do the same? Boy, that's hard to think of. Because usually we don't, right?

Usually we don't. Usually we think of ourselves more than others.

God is saying he's challenging us to a different way of thinking. Romans 12 and verse 2. We've been talking about it for a long time. It says God can transform you by changing the way you think.

So if you want God to make a difference in your life, then let him change the way you think about humility, about yourself.

Why? Because Jesus is better. Number two, Jesus is better. Humility is not natural to us, right? We have to put it on. Why would we do that? Because Jesus can take us higher.

[21 : 52] Jesus is better. He is better than any outcome that you could receive. Last night, Pastor Nate talked about the different outcomes of your habits.

He said never once has he gotten up in the morning or right before he goes to bed at night and said, yeah, man, I can't wait to brush my teeth, right? Have any of y'all ever had a good time brushing your teeth?

Just really, it was a satisfying, awesome experience. Like, I can't wait until next time. Jacob, you're so weird, man. Jacob Browning's like, dude, it's my highlight of the day.

Other than Jacob, have any of the rest of us normal people ever had that? No. I was just like, dude, unless maybe you got like a new toothbrush and it was really cool. But even after that, after a while, you know, it's like, eh.

Some of the experience is not the same. I did get a new toothbrush recently. And I got my wife a new toothbrush at Christmas. And shortly after that, I was tired of her like enjoying her new toothbrush.

[22 : 56] So I got myself one. And it is, it is a better experience. But there's like a ceiling on how much enjoyment you can get from brushing your teeth. You know, it's like, hey, this is better than what it used to be.

But it's still like not that great. But you do it anyway, right? There's a habit. And that's what Pastor Nate was talking to us about last night. He's like, why do we do some of the things we do over and over and over and over again, even if they aren't the greatest thing we've ever enjoyed?

Because we want the outcome that those habits produce, right? We want healthy teeth. He said he wanted to stay married. And apparently brushing your teeth is a big deal with his wife.

So he's trying to save his marriage. Anyway, Jesus produces the best outcomes that we could ever possibly experience.

So much better than anything that you or I could ever achieve. Jesus' fruit is so much better than our fruit.

[24 : 02] If he's a tree, he's the vine, we're the branches. He wants us to bear fruit. He wants us to produce fruit. He talks about that in the book of John. The kind of fruit that he produces is so much better than the kind of fruit that you and I can produce in our life.

So that's why we choose to think his way. That's why we choose to do something unnatural to us and put on humility because Jesus is better. He can take us higher.

I put this in here because he can take us higher. Anybody follow the Rangers last year? Anybody know about the Creed song? What was the name of it?

Yes. Nobody? Wow. I thought y'all were Rangers fans. Come on now. The whole stadium would sing this. And it started in the locker room with the Rangers on their run to World Series champions for the first time ever.

They would sing, can you take me higher? That was amazing, wasn't it? You guys enjoy that? A little creed this morning. But it was really cool.

[25 : 13] And so the Dallas Morning News headline after they won the World Series was, these Rangers can go no higher because they reached the top. Do you realize that there is a ceiling on everything you can achieve in this world?

These guys reached the absolute top. Now, obviously, they're going to win it again this year, so they're going to reach the top again. Bill, just hang with me.

We'll get past this part in just a second. He's just got to endure it for a minute. I'm not going to talk about the last two games, all right, and how the Astros lost both of them when the Rangers won the last two.

Anyway, all right, sorry. We're getting way off from the Holy Spirit here. All right, so they can't go any higher than they did last year. Now, they could reach that pinnacle again like the Astros actually have.

There's other dynasties. You know, the Yankees won three in a row one time. But once you reach that top, that's as high as you can go. There's always a limit.

[26 : 15] There's always a ceiling that you bump up against in anything in this world. But I can promise you there's no limit with God. There's no ceiling with God. He's so much higher, he can take us as high as he wants us to go.

What does that mean? He can fill your heart with as much love as he wants to, as much joy, as much peace. He can provide for you limitlessly if he chooses to.

You just got to leave your life in his hands. Say, okay, God, I recognize that you're better. You can take me higher. So let's go to Luke chapter 14 and we'll be done.

Luke 14, okay? I didn't put the verses on the screen. I just put the passage up there because I'd love for you to turn in your Bibles there. If you need to use a Bible app on your phone or borrow a Bible from the seat back in front of you, that's fine.

Luke chapter 14, verse 7. For sake of time, I'm going to go ahead and start reading. We'll read down through verse 11. When Jesus noticed that all who had come to the dinner were trying to sit in seats of honor near the head of the table, he gave them this advice.

[27 : 21] When you are invited to a wedding feast, don't sit in the seat of distinguished. I'm sorry. Here we go. Don't sit in the seat of honor. What if someone who is more distinguished than you has already been invited?

Then the host will come and say, give this person your seat. And then you'll be embarrassed and you'll have to take whatever seat is left at the foot of the table. Instead, take the lowest place at the foot of the table.

Then when your host sees you, he will come and say, friend, we have a better place for you. Then you'll be honored in front of all the other guests. Watch this. Verse 11.

Ready? For those who exalt themselves will be humbled. And those who humble themselves will be exalted, lifted up with honor.

That's what we heard about in 1 Peter and James. God will lift you up. He will exalt you. But you've got to take the step of humbling yourself. It comes down to a matter of trust.

[28 : 23] Do you trust that God will actually come through? Do you trust that his way is better? Do you really believe that Jesus can take you higher and wants to?

He wants to. I'm going to ask a sensitive question. Would you guys mind bowing your heads and closing your eyes for a minute? How many of you would say, we're not praying right now.

How many of you would say, I grew up with a parent who maybe didn't love me in a way that most parents try to love their kids?

Yeah. Thank you. You can slip your hand up real quick. Thank you. You can put your hand down.

All right. Look up here. God wants to be a better parent to you than you ever had. Those who raised your hand.

God wants to love you better than those parents ever could.

[29 : 33] God is a good, good father. It's not just a worship song that Chris Tomlin wrote. He's a good, good father. He really is. He's really the best father you could ever think of beyond what you could ever ask or think.

So God says, I want to love you in the way that a parent should love their child. I will never abandon you. I'll always seek your good. I'll always seek my glory, which will always result in your good. God has set us up to take us higher than we could ever go. So our takeaway today is today I will choose humility so Jesus can take me higher for his glory.

Do you understand that when God's children do well, it makes God look good? When my children succeed at something, people look at me, hey, man, you're doing a good job with your kids. I'm like, oh, yeah, man, I taught them everything they ever knew. And when they don't do well at something, I'm like, that was their mama. But everybody knows better, so they're like, they don't believe me. It makes God look great when we do well.

[30 : 45] It brings glory to him. He wants us to thrive. He wants us to succeed. He wants us because of his great matchless love for us. He doesn't want that to go to waste.

He's not saying, man, you're going to have the worst life ever on earth, but then it'll all be great in heaven someday. He says instead, sometimes it's going to be tough on this earth, but I can take you higher on this earth than you could ever go.

I can give more meaning to your life than you could ever get on your own. I can help you through the struggles in ways that you can't even imagine. But you've got to trust me.

And every day, you've got to remember, it's not about me. It's not about me. It's about God. I'm going to put on humility today. I'm going to get dressed in humility. Would you bow your heads? God, I pray that you would touch our hearts. I know for me, I know this hits home for me. I don't always wake up every day and think, it's not about me. It's about God.

[31 : 46] So today, today, right now, along with, I pray, many in this building, I choose humility. Because I know that you can take me higher for your glory.

Let your name be lifted up. Yet, let your name, not ours, be lifted up for the glory that is due to you and you alone. We'll give you all the praise, all the glory.

And you'll do wonderful things in our body, in our church, in these young people's lives, in these not-so-young people's lives, in every one of our lives.

God, we want you to be lifted up. We know you are better. Your way is better. Remind us of that. Church, with our heads bowed and our eyes closed, I'm going to ask this question.

How many of you would be able to say that there's a moment in your life when you remember that you cried out to Jesus for the forgiveness of your sin to become his child?

[32 : 45] Would you be able to testify to that by raising your hand and join me? I know there's many all across the room say, I know that I'm a child of God. You can put your hand down. Thank you. If you couldn't raise your hand a moment ago, would you mind slipping it up now?

People's heads are bowed. We have some privacy. But I would love to know, and I'd love to talk to you later about it. Maybe pray with you and show you from the Bible what it means to be a child of God. How many of you would say, I've never done that before.

I've come to church, maybe. I know some things about God. But I've never turned to him for the forgiveness of my sins. Once and for all to become his child. Would you slip your hand up if that's you?

Say, I've never done that. Thank you. Thank you. You can put your hands down. Thank you. Thank you. God, you've seen these hands. You know every situation.

You know every young person. You know every older person. You know exactly what their lives have been like and what's going to come. I pray that right now in this moment, you would draw them to yourself. If you just raised your hand a moment ago, when the music begins, I'm going to be in the back.

[33 : 49] If you wouldn't mind slipping out of your seat, come join me. Go past those double doors. Meet me back there. And we'll talk for a minute about what it means to be a child of God.

Have the boldness. Have the courage to step out and make this a priority for you at this moment. Today is the day. For the rest of us, I want to invite you to join us in standing.

We're going to sing together. If you're able to, go ahead and join us in standing. We're going to sing together. How great the chasm that lay between us. How high the mountain we could not climb. In desperation, I cried out to heaven and spoke your name, Jesus, into the night.

And then he stepped in. What a testimony of what God can do in your life. Would you join us in singing? And if God wants to work in you, if he's talking to you right now, come down here. Take a moment of prayer during the song. It's going to be just fine. That's what these steps are for. You go back to your seat and join everybody in singing. But let's let God have a few minutes here before we close today. Amen.