

# Beating The Bully (Part 2)

Ephesians 6:12-13

**Main focus of this series:** This series is a formulation of key teachings and understandings from the book of Ephesians. In an effort to decipher each statement of Paul in Ephesians we believe we will learn how to successfully operate in the three positions of the believer: to **sit (Ephesians 1-3)**, to **walk (Ephesians 4-6:9)** and over the next few weeks we will address the thought... **stand (Ephesians 6:10-24)** .

**The importance of this message today:** There is a widespread popularity of spiritual warfare among many churches today. This emphasis on the subject is a great study and powerful asset that causes us to know our adversary, the devil, and how he operates. It is important for us to understand his mode of operation so that we can win this war and overcome him. Paul made specific statements that are key to our success in this battle with our enemy. He told the Corinthians, "...we are not ignorant of Satan's devices" (II Corinthians 2:11). Satan's devices are manipulative, deceitful and divisive. He would love nothing more than having a church chase him around the spiritual block time and time again, totally distracted from the purpose and call of that specific fellowship. It is possible to be devil-minded believers imagining that the devil is behind everything that occurs distracting them from the true power and plan of God.

It is important that we clearly address this aspect of Satan's tactics, strengths and weaknesses so that we learn how to defeat this enemy of our soul. But he is not worthy of the infatuation that many give him, not because he has no power, but because "...greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world." To think nothing else other than the devil and spiritual warfare is a trick of the devil himself to make believer's magnify his power to a greater degree than it deserves.

Now, on the other hand, spiritual warfare is real. We are commanded in the scriptures to deal with the unseen forces directed by Satan himself that are set out to destroy nations, cities, families and you. Mark 16:17 tells us to cast out devils and to "pull down" the "strongholds" of the mind, (II Corinthians 10:3-5). We are to set the captive free, it is part of the Christian purpose that we were empowered for.

***"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."***

**Ephesians 6:12**

## The Power of God

I love to tell stories of my life, primarily because that is what I am most familiar with. But another reason is because I have seen the hand of God. I was thinking about this recently and immediately a memory came back to my mind of when I was at a youth camp as an eighth or ninth grader. I remember the speaker telling us, "I can tell you why I have great stories to tell, it's because I want to do great things for God and because I want to do great things for God I have great stories to tell of what my God has done." I remember him telling us of the hand of God as he stepped out in faith and watched God heal and bring people to the knowledge of Jesus Christ. He challenged all three hundred of us there to never settle for

less but to seek to do great things for God so that we could have great stories to tell.

I took that message to heart. As a matter of fact, I tell great stories because I have set out to do great things for God. My experiences are a reflection of how I live. I would say that as a young man I innocently concentrated more on being "great" in God's Kingdom and had much disappointment when things were not so great. I thought something was wrong, because things were supposed to be great. Through the years, being great developed into being "obedient" which at first seemed like living by the rules. But a pure and committed life toward God was the foundation for a supernatural ministry to be built on.

God has challenged me over and over again, daily, to obey Him by speaking His Word into those around me. He prompts me to speak leadership into some people and healing into others. He urges me to address difficult areas that need confrontation and then sends me promises that humbles and excites me to the core. This process of hearing God and obeying Him lends itself to filling my life experiences with story after story of the great things of God. I have great stories because I have a great God and I want to do great things for God.

### **Do You Want The Power of God?**

Do you want the power of God in your life? Do you really want the power of God to move on our community? Do you really want Him to move in our church? We cannot take it lightly when God wants to move and we cannot be more sober when we ask of Him to move in a great way. You do realize, don't you, that when God "shines His face on us" that His revealing light exposes all that is hid in the shadows? It is one thing to desire God to expose the power, strategies and deception of Satan in the world and another to expose the same in us. The Word of God says, "...*judgment begins in the house of God.*" To have the move of God all around us before we have the move of God fully within us will leave us vulnerable to being deceived, believing we are mature and in no need.

Malachi prophesied of Christ's coming as a purifying event,

*"But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like the refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify...and refine them like gold and silver."*

Malachi 3:2-3b

### **Sovereign Move of God**

Several years ago, I experienced a move of God like I have never seen since in my life. I was a youth pastor for eight years in this particular church and on this certain Sunday, we came to service just like we had for years. Nothing out of the unusual was happening, there were no special prayer meetings or focus on the move of God outside of our normal prayer and conversation. But during the worship, there was what we call a sovereign move of God.

It was an awesome sweet presence of God mixed with the heaviness of repentance. It was so strong people began to weep. It wasn't one of those times when you are overwhelmed with the love of God or the joy of the Lord is revealed in a greater way. This time was so heavy, it was drawing us to our knees. It moved us to mourning. There was a revelation there, not of His presence, but of our flesh. It was not a revelation of God's judgment on us, but of our pride, our stubbornness, our confidence in ourselves. It was not condemning yet it revealed glaringly our unworthiness.

After at least two hours of corporately worshipping and seeking God, we did not know what to do other than to encourage everyone to go home and come back later that evening.

Again that evening during worship God's presence was so strong hardly anyone could stand. Some ran down to the front of the church and prayed on the steps, some laid face down on the floor. Others knelt at their seats while others sat there stunned as the Holy Spirit's presence overwhelmed us all. We were not caught up in exuberant celebration nor smitten by condemning rebuke, but we were all overwhelmed, we couldn't stop crying, repenting, and eventually...confessing!

This is where the story steps up a few notches. We went over our usual service time that evening, some staying late, an hour or two past midnight. Stories kept coming in that people were unable to sleep because their heart was so heavy. Some talked about weeping as they drove their car, washed their dishes or worked on their job. This occurred all throughout the week. In one way everyone was asking each other, "What is going on?" While at the same time we were afraid to talk about it because we didn't know what to say about it.

The following weekend you could say that either God had a breakthrough in us or we were coming apart at the seams. People started confessing what was going on in their life and it was an overwhelming event, and in some cases it was not a pretty picture.

One elder stood up and told us he had been driving to Dallas during the day and going to a strip bar and porno shops. Another elder confessed about his library of pornography that he had hidden in the trunk of his car. Another man confessed his pornography stashed inside his house. All of these revealings shocked and rocked the homes. One man confessed his adulterous affair a year and a half earlier. And one young man, probably in his early to mid-twenties, two kids and a beautiful and talented wife, confessed to me.

He was a standout athlete at the local Christian college where he and his wife were dorm directors. He was only 5'6" but he could dunk a basket ball every time he went to the net. Skip, this was his name. He worked part time as a policeman in our town to help ends meet. He was considered a valiant warrior for God. He was always talking about spiritual warfare, casting out demons and taking our city for God. Every student that I knew of considered him someone to aspire to be like and a great example.

Skip pulled me aside the second Sunday all this occurred in our church and he said, "I have to confess something to you." I had was not prepared for what I was about to hear. He began telling me that when he carrying a full load at the local Christian College, he took on the responsibility of dorm director and a part time police man to help out on their school bills. With all the time that it took, he was running out of energy. Someone offered him a few pills, just to pick him up. That led to speed and eventually to every kind of drug that he could find.

Here he was, Bible college student, leading prayer meetings, dorm director and advocate for the Kingdom of God, a drug addict, a liar and a thief. He said that he was able to get some of his drugs through some of the local drug busts but, deeply confessing, he had been doing tricks, working as a male prostitute within the homosexual community in Dallas for the past year and half. This is before we knew much about AIDS. Two years later he died of AIDS.

Within the four walls of our church, you could say, "All hell was breaking loose," or "God was bringing everything to light."

**I want everyone to come to this complete understanding. Do you realize that any punishment you have received for wrong doing here on this earth is an extension of the grace of God?** If you have ever been give a ticket, been thrown in jail or been penalized in some form or fashion in response to wrong doing on your part is in direct result of the grace of God working in your life? Do you know that if you had not had that grace of God in your life and you would have gone on unchecked, unchallenged without an awareness of the consequences or penalty of your sin, crime or activity that you would have to stand before God one day without opportunity to change your ways? Do you know that it's the grace of God right now that you have the opportunity to hear a call for repentance in your heart or humility to allow yourself to pay the consequences of your wrong doings. Also do you realize that we live daily without ever realizing the full extent of the grace of God in our life. How His Sons blood cleanses us and purifies us from all unrighteousness?

This particular season of revival, purity and repentance was a painful time, a shocking time. A revealing time, one that I will never forget. And a memory that I hold with great reverence and wonder. There were some who did not survive that move of God. There were some whose marriage did not survive the flashing, revealing light of God in their life. There were some who became angry and disillusioned attempting a church split. The true presence of God, His real light is a revealing light and the cost is a high price.

**"...if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?"**

**1 Peter 4:16-17**

### **Do you really want God to show up?**

To get ahead of God when trying to break the strongholds of a city could be fatal to a church or a group of churches, a pastor and even the people within that church. There are many places where the power of God moved on a body of believer's and revival broke out, but there were a high toll of casualties to the church who was not ready for it. Because of a God-given hunger for the supernatural move of God it is possible that we step into Spiritual territory that is without the assistance of God. He didn't led us there, our ambition, excitement and faith led us there. We wanted to kick the devils booty but with all the excitement of what God *could* do, we left Him behind not realizing what God *wanted* to do.

We must walk in balance and proceed with care when it comes to spiritual warfare. The judgment of God begins in the house of the Lord. It simply means that God's light is first show in His own house. Our strategies toward winning a city for God has typically been to gather all the church together, pray to bind the devil and lose the goodness of God till we are blue in the face. And I do believe that until we engage strategically together we will not see the great results our hearts cry out for. The beginning stage is a pure heart, a heart for God and a heart of God. James calls us to respond with God's power against Satan in this way,

**"Submit yourselves, then to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded."**

**James 4:7-8**

For some reason I cannot visualize James sitting cross-legged in his robe eating grapes and

cheese talking this over with the people around him. My picture of James in this scripture is a firm look, like the look of a commander of troops on D-day. He knew the potential of casualties and the price that must be paid to win the battle. He was not suggesting anything here, he was telling what it was like and the process of how it must happen.

1. **Submit Yourselves...to God**- It is one thing to be excited about a certain idea, but it's another thing to commit yourself to it's purpose, no matter how much it costs your reputation, your relationships, your finances, or your pride. You are in it at the expense of your life. As a matter of fact, you are laying down your life for this cause. What does submitting to God mean? I've got **three things I believe Submission means:**

1. **Submission is a commitment to serve under God's *direction*.**
2. **Submission is a commitment to serve under God's *judgment*.**
3. **Submission is a commitment to serve under God's *time restraints*.**

#### **Proclamation of A Submitted Believer**

**I will allow Him to determine how I should live according to the direction He has for me strategically and geographically. I will allow Him to direct my steps and lead me as I live my life for Him in this world.**

**I will live according to the judgments that He makes within and around me socially, morally and spiritually. I will Utilize His voice that interjects through the work of the Holy Spirit through His Word Biblically and His Spiritual insight supernaturally. Simply, I will agree with His Word and live accordingly. I will call evil, evil. I will call truth, truth, all in accordance with the Word of God. I will trust, agree, and support His judgment of things in my life personally and of the life around me globally.**

**I will live according to His season and timing. I will set my heart to mature so that I will respond immediately when He says move, go, give, be silent, speak, stop and listen. I will live restrained, defined, disciplined, determined, dignified and worthy of the calling of God on my life while at the same time live freely, flexible, spontaneous, unreserved and undignified at the request of my God.**

**I do not have to know where my next step is strategically or geographically for me to step out and respond to His voice or command. My faith is not in the knowledge of the journey but it is in the one who leads the journey. He knows the way. There is no need for me to compete with the judgments of God through my limited and tainted knowledge. He knows the truth. I should not be afraid of the when, how or why God calls me out of my daily routine. He is my life. But to submit to God, I have to be convinced that when the question comes to me, "WILL YOU RESPOND TO MY COMMAND?" My deepest desire is that my first response will resound within me, "YES I WILL!"**

***"Submit yourselves, then to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded."***

**James 4:7-8**

2. **Resist The Devil**- It's not about getting caught up with him, it's about getting over him. I'm not sure if you have ever had a bad break up, but getting over that person can be difficult. It's hard to believe that person is moving on and that you may not be as significant or important to them as you once were. Some of us need to get over Satan. We have to move on in our relationship with God. How many times would you date a person who continually talked about their ex?

Now picture this with me. Let's say that you were dating someone who terribly abused you, tried to destroy your confidence, squashed your joy and laughed at your potential while at the same time tried to kill you on more than one occasion.

Then comes this "special" person into your life. They speak life-giving words into your life as a matter of fact, with their assistance and confidence, you feel like you have a new lease on life, actually, you have never lived like this before. He or she says that you are special, they keep helping you realize how gifted you are and continues to nurture your potential. But this hurtful and unhealthy past relationship will not leave you alone. They keep interfering with your day to day living. After a little discussion this new person in your life says, "You know what you need? A restraining order to keep that person at a distance from interfering with your future." And you happily agree. This person says, "Let me help you with that." And you say, "Thank you very much!"

A day or so later this person meets with you and says, "I've got something for you." You open it up and it says, "This is a restraining order, refusing to allow...(whatever your name is) to be within 200 feet of...(name of the one trying to hurt you)." You say, "Hey, wait a minute, I thought you were going to get a restraining order to keep them away from me." And this person said, "Well it does, see, don't go to them." "But I don't want them to interfere with my life." "Oh, of course it will not work if it continues to be *your* life. See, *your* life gives full right for this person to be in *your* life. As long as you live *your* life, pretty much this person has full reign in *your* life. But if you want a *new* life, we can do something about that!"

See, when my life is totally submitted to God, it is no longer "my" life. So the restraining order is on us, don't go back there. Every decision you make from that moment on is going to be reflected with this question, **"Is Jesus going to be Lord of my life?"**

*"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."*

**Galatians 2:20**

Here's the truth. Satan's attempt to destroy, rape, manipulate, mutilate and hold you hostage is over if Jesus Christ has come into your life. He no longer holds the power over your life. You are victor not victim. But the truth be, there are restraining orders that are placed in order to set you free, but they are not given to Satan, they are given to you. Stop going there!

**"Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one who you obey- whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?"**

**Romans 6:16**

According to Romans 6:16 there is no such thing as "my life." There is either a life under the restraints and confines of Satan's power or there is a life that comes with it restraining orders for you, to keep you from your old co-dependent life of sin and destruction which cannot save. Paul says that when you do not honor the restraining order, you actually offer yourself back to take the beatings and the abuse.

James 4:7-8 is such an incredible scripture because it says if you will honor your restraining order Satan will flee from you. Why? Because you have come under the authority of God. What most people don't understand is that the restraining order goes both ways. When either person does not honor it, they come under the same order. Why would Satan flee? Because his engagement with you has the same consequences as your engagement with him. And both will come under the scrutiny and judgment of God, which is additional to the abuse and suffering of the evil one.

**"Submit yourselves, then to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded."**

**James 4:7-8**

- 3. Come Near To God...He Will Come Near You-** Coming near to God is an aggressive act. It is a move on our part, not on God's. He is respondent to our action toward toward Him. The scripture here is action on our part without any bidding from God or expression of promise or revelation. This action is a clear response of faith, falling unrestrained upon the mercy of God.

- **Humble Yourself**

**"But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.""**

**James 4:6**

The scriptures say, "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble." Coming to Him first is an act of humility. The expectation of God showing up in your situation is based upon an arrogant thought, one Satan loves to manipulate. Of course, if God really loved you He would come running every time you scratched your knee...yes? No! That's not the way of God. Have you ever thought that God is actually not in need of you? Of course, this is not to say He doesn't love you or sent His Son to die on the cross for us. This truth is without argument, but God is in a higher position, one of authority, one of position...a King. What King humbles Himself before man?

David Guzik comments,

Grace and pride are eternal enemies. Pride demands that God bless me in light of my merits, whether real or imagined. But grace will not deal with me on the basis of anything in me, good or bad, but only on the basis of

who God is.

- **Bring A Real Heart, Real Faith, Real Redemption and A Real Purity**

**"...let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water."**

Hebrews 10:22

By the four methods of drawing near to God defined in Hebrews 10:22, which one is an action from God? None, they are all an action on our part:

1. **A heart that is sincere is sincere to the core**, all the way to the bottom of your heart. There is no pretension, no styling or mimicking a true believer...it is a response from the heart.
2. **A faith that is set on Jesus Christ as the way the truth and the life**. Here there is no doubt in your mind that He, Jesus Christ is the one. Much like a relationship that is unstable because of the lack of confidence that this is "the right one," we must have not doubts that Jesus is the key to our relationship with God.
3. **A redemption that is sound, grounded on the Word of God**. This purifying process takes place when the truth of God's Word and His way enters your "heart," the core of you, and it helps you realize your helpless estate, your independence from God and your cover-up by asserting your flesh which is reeks with pride.
4. **A purity that is expressed as an everyday lifestyle**. In some sense, out of the abundance of the heart the body functions, here, the body is pure in living because the conscience is not antagonized by a distraught heart. We have settled our account, we have received our substitute redeemer and we fully know the grace of an almighty God.

- **Solomon's Caution- Proverbs 1:20-33**

**"Wisdom calls aloud in the street, she raises her voice in the public squares; at the head of the noisy streets she cries out, in the gateways of the city she makes her speech:**

**"How long will you simple ones love your simple ways? How long will mockers delight in mockery and fools hate knowledge?"**

Proverbs 1:20-22

- **Three Types Of People Identified:**

1. **Simple**: These people love the simplicity, the naivety of their life. It is not that simple is not good, it is that they refuse to complicate their life with any truth at all. They just don't want to go there. They are inactive in making any judgment at all, of themselves or others. Solomon says, "You are in love with these simple ways...not in love with the wisdom of God." You don't want to be bothered with the inconvenience of thinking or pursuing truth.
2. **Mockers**: These people delight to mock and deride those around

them. They get a thrill to be inflated and to scoff as a scorner. They are active in making judgment of others for whatever stance the other individual might take, for truth or wrong. Mockers get a kick out of mocking others. It brings them great pleasure. Mocking is entertaining, with unending resources and a constant platform is easy to find. How they delight in it.

3. **Fools:** The fool, the commentary calls them a stupid fellow, dullard, simpleton, arrogant one. This person probably has a foundation of a mocker, but they are a step above, they are telling everyone what you should think and what you should do. They are a fool because they believe what they think is the truth and everyone else is ignorant. They are active in making everyone else inferior to their own perspective of right and wrong without the basis of any foundational support. He is a fool! Now a fool, they just hate any opinion that is not their own. They resent any other thought other than the ones generated by their own mind and horribly never understanding that even those thoughts are not their own, but they are inserts of lies and death planted by Satan and his imps.

***"If you had responded to my rebuke, I would have poured out my heart to you and made my thoughts known to you. But since you rejected me when I called and no one gave heed when I stretched out my hand, since you ignored all my advice and would not accept my rebuke..."***

**Proverbs 1:23-25**

***"I in turn will laugh at your disaster; I will mock when calamity overtakes you- when calamity overtakes you like a storm, when disaster sweeps over you like a whirlwind, when distress and trouble overwhelm you. "Then they will call to me but I will not answer; they will look for me but will not find me."***

**Proverbs 1:26-28**

***"Since they hated knowledge and did not choose to fear the LORD, since they would not accept my advice and spurned my rebuke, they will eat the fruit of their ways and be filled with the fruit of their schemes. For the waywardness of the simple will kill them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them; but whoever listens to me will live in safety and be at ease, without fear of harm."***

**Proverbs 1:29-33**

Do you see God's desire Himself into your? Verse 23 tells us that His heart is to make his thoughts known to you. He wants you to know and understand the wonders of God. But you reject Him by not responding to Him, ignoring His advice and refuse to humble yourself. There are consequences, disaster will come your way and God will feel like a million miles away. It seems that He is absolutely unreachable and impossible to find. Simply because they actually hated knowledge, any advice to do life. I'll do it my way. They chose not to fear the Lord and because of that they will get to eat the fruit of their ways. For the simple, their life will kill them. For the fool, it will destroy them. BUT IF YOU LISTEN TO GOD...YOU WILL LIVE IN SAFETY, BE AT EASE AND WILL NOT

BE TERRIFIED OF HARM.

***"Submit yourselves, then to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded."***

James 4:7-8

#### 4. Wash Your Hands, You Sinners

***"When you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide my eyes from you; even if you offer many prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are full of blood; wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight! Stop doing wrong, learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow. "Come now, let us reason together," says the LORD. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool."***

Isaiah 1:15-18

Why hands? Because hands are the symbols of behavior, of deeds done. Our iniquities separate us from God.

***"But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear."***

Isaiah 59:2

So in approaching God we remember the promise of 1 John 1:9,

***"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."***

1 John 1:9

When we submit to the Lordship of God on the outside of our life, when our heart commits itself to worship the true and living God outwardly and we long to display that personal relationship outwardly, we will know Him and love Him, that heart will be moved to the recognition of its own sin. Confession of sin is part of the freedom of the believer. And it makes our hands clean.

***"Submit yourselves, then to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded."***

James 4:7-8

#### 5. Purify Your Hearts, You Double-minded

Purifying our hearts implied that God is not asking that you only turn from the act of outwardly sinning, but that you turn from the sin that is active on the inside." Who we are, our inner thoughts, motives, desires, are all activated in the heart. Jeremiah says that our heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. We are not only repentant of the things we have done wrong but we also repent of what's wrong within us. Davids asks a question and then answers it in Psalm 24:

*"Who may ascend the hill of the LORD ? Who may stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by*

*what is false."*

Psalm 24:3-4

*"He will receive blessing from the LORD and vindication from God his Savior."*

Psalm 24:5

When you hear the gospel, does it compel you to submit to God as your Lord and master and turn your back, resist and take your stand against your former master, Satan? Do we approach God's throne room with anticipation knowing He will respond to us? Do you have a heart that longs for Him? Do we turn from sinful ways? Do you have a heart to rid yourself from dirty hands? Do you want a heart that is pure, that finally enables you to rest from the chaos and confusion of the mind.

***"Submit yourselves, then to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded."***

James 4:7-8

***"Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy into gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up."***

James 4:9-10

As we draw near to God, the revelation of who He is becomes an indictment of who we are. We will be convicted of our sin. So we either scatter in shame, hide in fear or we will lament and mourn and weep as appropriate under the conviction of sin, and we will come to Him, humbled, naked and bare, knowing that our only hope is in the mercy of God and the grace found in the blood of Jesus at the foot of the cross.

Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up, because *God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble*, and grace - the unmerited favor of God - always lifts us up.