

# DAY SIXTEEN:

# HUMBLE OURSELVES

## INTRODUCTION

I have preached through the book of James quite a few times in the last 40 years and today's reading is my least favourite passage in the whole book. James tackles challenging issues right through his letter, but in this passage he really lets fly. "You are proud. You are committing adultery. You are an enemy of God." Try preaching that to a busy and committed congregation. It is not what they expect or want to hear. They are thinking, "Are we really that bad?" Well as we saw yesterday, the first step in 2 Chron. 7:14 to prepare for revival is to desperately humble ourselves. That is what this Scripture is about. James tells us why we need to humble ourselves and how to do it. See if you agree with his observations and challenges. Does the shoe fit?

## SCRIPTURE: JAMES 4:4-10

*You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. Or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us? But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but shows favour to the humble."*

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

## DEVOTION

An adulterer is someone who commits themselves totally to their partner through their wedding vows and then chooses to have sex with someone else. Adultery is so painful and damaging that Jesus even suggests that it is grounds for the dissolution of a marriage (Matt. 19:9). God sees our friendship with the world as committing adultery. It is being unfaithful to our Saviour. It is abandoning our promises. It is breaking God's heart. The more we move away from dependence on and trust in Jesus and the deeper we entrench our relationship with the world, the stronger the adulterous affair becomes.

In life, adultery frequently leads to divorce, but not always. Sometimes the adulterer recognises their dreadful betrayal and humbly seeks forgiveness. Sometimes the victim of the infidelity can accept the offered confession and begin to rebuild relationship and trust. Occasionally the marriage even ends up stronger. But this does not happen without humility and repentance on the part of the adulterer.



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When we read a challenge like this, we can justify and protect ourselves. We can conclude that we are better than these people James is calling out. And maybe we are. Maybe we are not as adulterous as them. Maybe our friendship with the world is not as entrenched as theirs. Maybe we are closer to God than they were. We can compare our adultery with their adultery and possibly feel okay.

Or we can humble ourselves. We can admit our friendship with the world. We can confess our adulterous ways. We can repent of our sin. We can cry out for God's mercy. We can grieve over our unfaithfulness. We can be truly sorry for our duplicity. We can humble ourselves and wait for God to lift us up. This is how we prepare for revival.

## PRAYER RESPONSE

I am an adulterer Lord and I am truly sorry. I am more entrenched in and reliant on this world than you want. I so easily neglect you, even abandon you when the world offers me its pleasures. I have chased after other partners and broken your heart. I am truly sorry. Please forgive my disloyalty and deceitfulness. I am not a good person. Please wash me clean and restore our precious marriage.

## PRAYER FOR REVIVAL

Please forgive the church, your bride, for our adultery. We have loved our comfort and convenience more than we have loved you. We think we are doing okay but we are not living close to your heart. Please may you forgive and heal and restore and revive us.

