



# Helping people encounter God in His Word



For use on Sunday, November 2, 2003

## Introduction

# 30

### Core Competencies of a follower of Christ

#### 10 Core Beliefs

TRINITY  
SALVATION BY GRACE  
AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE  
PERSONAL GOD  
IDENTITY IN CHRIST  
CHURCH  
HUMANITY  
COMPASSION  
ETERNITY  
STEWARDSHIP

#### 10 Core Practices

WORSHIP  
PRAYER  
BIBLE STUDY  
SINGLE-MINDEDNESS  
BIBLICAL COMMUNITY  
SPIRITUAL GIFTS  
GIVING AWAY MY TIME  
GIVING AWAY MY MONEY  
GIVING AWAY MY FAITH  
GIVING AWAY MY LIFE

#### 10 Core Virtues

LOVE  
JOY  
PEACE  
PATIENCE  
KINDNESS/GOODNESS  
FAITHFULNESS  
GENTLENESS  
SELF-CONTROL  
HOPE  
HUMILITY

#### This week's Core Competency:

##### Humility

I choose to esteem  
others above myself.

## Reality Check: When Life Requires a Balance *Bake a Humble Pie . . . When Pride Brings Humiliation*

"I believe that my qualifications make me best suited to become the deacon chair, and I would ask that you pray that the church sees it that way too," said Jack Teller.

An uncomfortable silence was evident on the phone until Bob Gibson on the other end asked, "Weren't there other men who were up for that position too, Jack?"

"Yes, but they don't have the background I do in the church. I know everyone and have served in the church for twenty-five years. One of the guys they are considering has only been at the church for four years and is thirty something. It is obvious that I know what is best for the church. Who else would they turn to when they need help? I mean I have proven myself over and over again. I'd be surprised if I didn't get it," said Jack assuredly.

"Jack, I have known you for forty years; I'm surprised to hear this from you," said Bob.

"What do you mean? I'm just being logical. I'm the logical choice that's all," said Jack.

"That may be Jack. You are qualified, but I'm hearing something else that troubles me," said Bob cautiously.

"I know you too, Bob, and I know with that tone in your voice you are not going to let me get off the phone until you tell me what you're thinking," said Jack disgustedly.

"Now Jack, don't get riled up. I just want to explore something with you," said Bob.

"Yeah, okay, I know were friends, even when we disagree," replied Jack disconcertedly.

"I'm concerned about your confidence, Jack. It seems to me that you think you have this chairman position all locked up. I'm not sure that is the best position to take," said Bob.

"What? *Now* I'm not qualified?" asked Jack in a challenging way.

"No, that is not what I mean, Jack. You are very qualified. It is just a deacon, as I have studied, is someone who serves. It is a position of honor and respect, but it is not to be obtained by power and past experience," advised Bob.

"What do you mean? The church in Acts voted who would be their deacons. The men they voted for had some record of service in the church. How is that obtaining a position by power?" asked Jack, uncertain what Bob was meaning.

"It's not the vote, Jack. It is the attitude of the men in Acts who served as deacons.

They did not seek the position themselves, but it was evident to the church through their humble service and godly attitude. That is what made them the right choice to serve," directed Bob.

"Do you think that I am not being humble? I have served in the church for twenty-five years! That is showing my humility to this congregation," insisted Jack.

"It isn't when you are boasting about your years of service and expecting to be recognized for it by getting a powerful position," said Bob flatly.

"Well, I do deserve it. I have paid my dues and should get it," said Jack defensively.

"Jack, listen to yourself. You said you 'deserve,' the position. 'Deserving' and 'serving' are two different things, and they are not compatible for a person who is called to serve humbly," cautioned Bob.

"Hmmp," huffed Jack, "You always come up with the negative."

Bob encouraged, "Jack, you'll always be my friend. I just want what is best for you and the church. Just think about it."

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## Observation

What do you see?

## Proverbs 16:18

<sup>18</sup> Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.

## James 4:1-12 *Submit Yourselves to God*

<sup>1</sup>What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? <sup>2</sup>You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. <sup>3</sup>When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. <sup>4</sup>You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. <sup>5</sup>Or do you think Scripture says without reason that the spirit he caused to live in us envies intensely? <sup>6</sup>But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

<sup>7</sup>Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. <sup>8</sup>Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. <sup>9</sup>Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. <sup>10</sup>Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up. <sup>11</sup>Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it. <sup>12</sup>There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you--who are you to judge your neighbor?

**Record your first impressions from what you read.**

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## Interact with the passages

- Circle the "do not," and "don't" phrases throughout the James passage.
- Put a square around each question mark and answer the question James poses.
- In James underline the contrast emphasizing word "but."
- Double underline each word you believe is a command in the passage.
- Highlight verse 6.
- Circle each derivative of the term "judge."
- In Proverbs highlight "pride" and "haughty."
- Draw arrows from "pride" to "destruction" and "haughty" to "fall."

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## Interpretation

What does it mean?

**Considering oneself more highly than one should brings God's opposition. Only when someone genuinely humbles themselves before the Lord does God grant additional grace and honor to the believer so they can serve others impartially.**

## Insights

- The first verse of James 4 literally reflects military terms referring to lustful desires waging a campaign of war and battles against the body itself.
- The verbs proclaiming the defects of the people in v. 2 are all present active verbs. This indicates the active ongoing actions of the people. It indicates that frustrated desires can lead up to violence. V. 2 reads "you do not ask," while v. 3 clarifies that they ask, but ask with incorrect motives. The key to what the people ask for is in v. 3 "you may spend" or money.
- The term "adulterous people" makes one consider Old Testament teachings from Hosea of the people straying from their vows to God much like Gomer broke her marriage vows in adultery. Ultimately choosing friendship with the world makes God an enemy.

- The words “envious intensely” is a present active verb and could mean the Spirit currently desires us to follow God with zealousness. This phrase though can lead us to translate the sentence, as the NIV has, that the human spirit can envy and be strongly jealous. Both have support within Greek usage.
- The phrase “opposes the proud” has two significant points. The “proud” can mean the arrogant rich, and the “opposes” is present verb indicating this is always true.
- There are 11 commands found from v. 7 to v. 12.
- The Proverbs term “pride” is the bad sense of the Hebrew term “exaltation.” “Destruction” can be interpreted “crushing”
- “Haughty” in Hebrew refers great height, but this means someone thinks their “moral character” or spirit, as better than it is. The term “fall” refers to “calamity.”

### Answering Questions of Interpretation

V. 2 is very troubling in James 4. Does this really say that the church is murdering others? Do we have any indication that this is only an attitude instead of an actual act? How does the attitude of coveting others money and possessions lead people to murderous actions or thoughts? What do we do with this verse?

Is the friendship with the world something that is ordinary to the natural spirit that lives in us? How does one become a friend to the world as a believer? By choosing to follow the world, the passage says we become enemies of God... is that even possible for a believer after being saved through Christ? What are the implications of receiving “more grace” to either interpretation? What does receiving “more grace” mean?

James uses a logical progression of lesser to greater when speaking of judgment and judges. How does his progression of “our judging words,” to “God’s Word,” and “God himself,” exemplify our need to be humble? What implications does James indicate if we choose to become judges? Does humility keep us “safe” from God’s judgment? Does the Proverbs passage shed light on this, or does it confuse the issue brought up by James? Why?

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### Application

What do I do?

What do I covet that others have and I do not? Is it power, rights, money, position, a relationship, or something else? Has the lack of having this thing made my mind become envious and jealous? What have been the effects on my relationships and desires because of this ongoing envy? List the effects in behaviors and attitudes towards others. How can I allow the grace of God to help me deal with this desire?

How well do I accept that God has given me not only what I have, but the means to accept not obtaining all I want? Why? How does my humility before God play into my attitude of gratitude for what I have? How can I begin to come near to God and allow Him to come near to me? What do I sense I need to do to purify my heart in humility before God?

How do I talk about other people? Do I talk down to others? Do I look for others misdeeds and faults? If I were to ask my friends would they tell me I am critical and judgmental? Now actually ask your friends to let you know if you are critical and judgmental of others. Take their thoughts to heart. Ask the Spirit to help make changes as needed.

## Correlation

How do we work this into our Home Group, Family, youth group, ministry, class, small group?

## Core Competency: Humility

**Creed:** I choose to esteem others above myself.

### Commentary:

Here is a question posed to William A Thrall and Bruce McNicol founders of Leadership Catalyst.

### What is the relationship between trust, humility, and submission?

“We teach that humility is trusting God and others with who I am. We do not believe we can experience submission without trust. We believe humility cannot be experienced without trust. In order for me to be humble before God, I must learn to trust my God. In order for me to be humble for the benefit of others, I need to be able to trust others with our relationship. Submission is the humility of heart that allows me to place myself under God’s influence and under the influence of others. Without trust, I cannot be humble. People who lack humility cannot submit. In performance-based environments, humility and trust are not necessary, because compliance can get the task done. In such an environment no one ever matures. Trust, humility, and submission can only be practiced in a relational process. When I come under the influence of those I trust, I will begin to mature. In my maturity, I become a vehicle for the purposes of God and for the benefit of others. The purposes of God are for truth to be lived out through me for the benefit of others.”

*Forming the High Trust Culture*, p, 59; 2002.

**Question:** How well do I trust God with me? Do I sense that I allow myself to trust God? Are there limits to my humility before Him? How well do I humble myself before others? Are there limits to how much I trust others to speak into my life? How can I humble myself to allow others to speak more into my life so as to put them first rather than myself?

### Kid’s Corner – Guest of Honor

**Prepare** for the skit by having a nice chair in a prominent place available for someone to sit in. Have another chair available for someone to sit in just outside the room where you are meeting, ideally a folding or plastic chair

**Say:** “Tonight we are going to have a special celebration in our Home Group for the children. All of the children have been so good during our Home Group gatherings that we would like to spend some time praising them.”

**Ask:** “I need one of the children to volunteer to be the guest of honor. As you can see we only have one special chair so which one of you would like to have the place of honor and sit here in the front?”

**Choose:** The child who is the first and/or most eager to have the place of honor and make a big deal out of them coming forward and sitting down.

**Say:** “I just remembered we have a more important guest that sits here.”

**Choose:** The child who didn’t raise their hand to come forward and take the place of honor. Make a bigger deal of them sitting in the place of honor.

**Say to the first child:** “As you can see the place of honor has been taken by someone else so you will need to sit over in the least important place.”

**Say:** “Everybody here is equal, but sometimes we want to be first. Jesus told a parable about how the first shall be last and the last shall be first.”

**Read Luke 14:8-11**



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