

Grace for the Humble

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BY Guest Writer

Scripture Reading: James 4:1-12, Psalm 9:19, John 4:23-24, Galatians 1:10, 1 John 5:13-15

I remember the last time that I humbled myself before the Lord. I didn't really have a choice. I woke up before the sun, an hour from home, stared at the ceiling, and writhed in the sheets, trying to get out of my own skin. I didn't want to be *me* anymore. "Me" had screwed everything up. I wanted to be someone else, or find a way to go back in time and undo all the wrong I had done.

I wanted to start over.

If I could just go back to the beginning of the year. Or, no, the beginning of last year. Really, if I could go back to before college, that would be best. Or, possibly back to childhood. I was happy then, right? Maybe back then I was okay. I turned to punch my pillow. I know I can never go back far enough. I am who I am. Because of sin, there wasn't a specific moment in time when things started to wrong. And that is humbling.

I eventually got out of bed and got in my car to drive home. There was an accident on the highway—the kind that makes you put your car in park. I screamed and slammed the steering wheel and didn't care who saw me in the next lane. The car was pointed home, but I didn't know where I was going. I just needed to be alone with God and scream at Him and apologize to Him and beg for His forgiveness. Every twenty minutes or so, my mom called to check in on me. She knew I was in a dark night of the soul. "Keep screaming," she said. "All God requires of us is to acknowledge we have done wrong and turn around."

Those words had never touched my soul so deeply.

This is the truth: The world seduces us with its material goods, its experiences, its flushes of beauty and its moments of lust. When we're proud, we walk along that destructive path, trying to feign confidence. We fill our hands with the world's pleasures, but like sand, it falls through our fingers. We dig and dig, but in the end, we're left dirty and empty-handed. All the castles we build are eventually swept away.

Humility is admitting the truth: *I have nothing*. That's what I screamed to God in the car. That's what James wants us to shout to the Lord, too. And thankfully, beautifully, God stands arms open wide, ready for us to turn to Him. He holds our hand when we let go of

everything else.

Do you know what's amazing about this kind of humility? Letting go of the world actually gives us the power—God's power—and strength to live in this world. It's a paradox. When we put our entire identity in God, we are no longer slaves to the world's trends or its approval. We can stand up for justice, at the risk of looking foolish. We can endure ridicule, rather than fight for our reputation. **When we have humbled ourselves before God, we don't need the world's applause, because our treasure is in heaven.**

Thank God for humility. And thank God that when we finally, *finally*, fall to our knees, screaming and ugly-crying before Him, He comes to lift us up.

Punch a pillow today, friend. Tell God the truth about who you are. He already knows. Still He waits for you. He longs to hold you, even though you have nothing but yourself to give.

Claire Gibson is a freelance writer and editor whose work has been featured both locally and nationally in publications including The Washington Post, and Entrepreneur Magazine. An Army kid who grew up at West Point, New York, Claire is currently growing roots in Nashville, Tennessee. She loves her husband, Patrick, and their dog, Winnie.