



Exaltation

The world races through the rat race, desperately striving to become the best rat—clawing for supremacy as the strongest, the greatest, the coolest, the prettiest, and the richest.

Religion, meanwhile, spins endlessly on the hamster wheel of endless performance, striving to be holy, obedient, worthy, faithful and divinely blessed by self-effort. In the end, it's all and the same: futile attempts to exalt the self through pride.

James 4:6, ESV

“But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.””

God's Kingdom runs on a radically different system than the world's rule: “Do good, get good; do bad, get bad.” Yet much of the Church still misses this truth. We long to walk in grace—to experience God's favor, power, and blessing—but we keep trying to earn them through our own works and performance. This is the subtle pride that James (James 4:6) and Peter (1 Peter 5:5) warned against. Pride isn't only arrogance; it's trusting our own efforts more than God's unmerited favor. The moment we stop striving and lay our performance to rest, grace flows in our lives. James and Peter wrote primarily to Jewish believers who obsessed over obedience to the law. Their temptation was to focus on performance rather than by simply trusting and resting in the finished work of Christ.

Humility is one of the most misunderstood virtues, especially in religious circles. Many equate it with self-deprecation—constantly putting yourself down, keeping yourself small, and viewing yourself as inferior. But that's not biblical humility at all. True humility is simply agreeing with God about who you are in Christ and depending entirely on His grace. It means seeing yourself exactly as God sees you: completely forgiven, eternally righteous, and abundantly blessed. To insist that God sees you as less than the righteousness of God in Christ is actually a form of rebellion against His grace. On the other hand, embracing your new identity as a new creation places you in joyful dependence on that same grace. From this place of security, humility naturally flows outward: lifting others above you (Phil. 2:3) and serve freely. Above all, you live with Jesus at the center—not yourself.

James 4:10, ESV

“Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.”

When we stop trying to exalt ourselves before God through our own performance and strength, He begins to exalt us—because we are finally honoring the finished work and grace of Christ. Whenever we insist on depending on ourselves, God steps back and lets us try. His grace is

lavished on the humble—those who openly admit they cannot earn or merit His blessings, favor, or righteousness. The moment we release our self-effort and rest fully in His grace, He steps in. He takes over and accomplishes in us and through us what we could never do on our own.

Notice how the verse says we must humble ourselves—it's our action. Yet many teachers claim God will “break” you or orchestrate hardship until you finally submit. Imagine a husband trying that approach with his wife: forcing submission through pressure and pain. The truth is the opposite: God is not in the business of tearing you down. He is passionately committed to building you up, restoring you, and exalting you in His timing. True humility isn't the result of divine breakage; it's the willing response of a heart that trusts and rests in His grace.

The Greek word translated *exalt* is *hupsōō*, meaning to lift up or elevate—either literally (in position or status) or figuratively (in honor and influence).

The book of Esther beautifully illustrates this divine principle. And there is no clearer picture of God's exaltation than Queen Esther herself: an orphaned Jewish girl in exile with a hidden identity lifted up by the gracious hand of God to the throne of Persia.

Esther 2:17, NKJV

“The king loved Esther more than all the other women, and she obtained grace and favor in his sight more than all the virgins; so he set the royal crown upon her head and made her queen instead of Vashti.”

The story of Esther opens with a profound illustration of how true obedience isn't coerced or commanded—it's empowered by grace. Esther's Hebrew name, Hadassah, means “myrtle tree,” a biblical symbol of righteousness (Zech. 1:8-11). This is no coincidence. The path to receiving God's grace and favor begins when we believe we already are the righteousness of God in Christ—completely apart from our performance or works.

Esther 4:14, NKJV

“...Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”

The word *come* in the Greek Septuagint is the word *hupsoó*, which is the same word found in James 4:10 for *exalt*. God will exalt you publicly in a position of influence to fulfill His purpose in your life—“for such a time as this.”

King Ahasuerus poses a form of the question—“What is your petition?” or “What is your request?” (often adding, “it shall be granted you, even to half my kingdom”)—four times to Esther and once to Haman (though the honor ultimately went to Mordecai). That makes five invitations in total. Five is the biblical number of grace. As Esther stepped into an age of extraordinary, unmerited favor before the king, so will you. God is opening doors of supernatural favor—with Him and with people. Expect to be strategically positioned in your career, business, ministry, and personal life. Where you were once overlooked or opposed, prepare for divine reversal: sudden promotion, honor, and acceleration. This is your season of exaltation—a time of breakthrough and celebration as God lifts you up in His perfect timing. By: Joyner Briceño