



Colossians 3:12

(12) Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;

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Unlike [pride](#), humility does not come naturally; it must, in the Bible's terminology, be "put on." It must be added to our character by means of [God's Spirit](#) and *consistent, conscious decisions* to submit to [God](#) because we [love](#) Him, because we are sincerely seeking to be like Him, and because we greatly desire to glorify Him. In this manner, by God's power and our cooperation, humility is *created* as part of our character, enabling us to grow stronger toward overcoming pride's evil influences.

Because of exposure to [Satan](#) and [this world](#), pride is within us almost from birth. Humility is most definitely not that way but is a created attribute of character. A carnal humility can be created within a child living under the supervision of loving parents who are making the effort to train their children in good character qualities. In like manner, spiritual humility is most definitely a developed characteristic because of [contact with God](#) and our willing cooperation. [James 4:6-10](#) asserts:

But He gives more [grace](#). Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to [mourning](#) and your [joy](#) to gloom. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

Once we understand some of the Bible's instruction regarding spiritual humility, this clear series of commands becomes important. They must be commanded because these actions are not natural to human nature and because the pride dwelling within us is so strong and influential.

Humbling ourselves is commanded just as surely as resisting the Devil, cleansing our hands, purifying our hearts, lamenting, mourning, and weeping. This means that humbling ourselves in submission to God is a choice that can—indeed, must—be exercised. Humility is important enough that God repeats this command briefly in [Proverbs 3:34](#) and in [1 Peter 5:5-6](#).

Humility is dealt with somewhat differently in each testament, but at the same time, there is a tight similarity between the two treatments. In the Old Testament, it is shown less as a good quality of an honorable person's character than as a condition or situation an individual finds himself in because of poverty, affliction, or [persecution](#). In this approach, a humble person is one in a humble circumstance.

In other words, the humble person has been brought low in a social sense. This perspective provides an understandable illustration that visibly portrays the more important spiritual attitude of the heart. People in a humble circumstance project degrees of attitude and conduct that may even approach obsequiousness, portrayed to an extreme in the movie *Lord of the Rings*, when the conniving counselor, Wormtongue, is confronted and embarrassingly corrected by Gandalf.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

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