

Humble and Kind

Our nation's history over the last four hundred years has generated a broad spectrum of musical genres expressing many heartfelt feelings, many based on past and present trials we all have in life. Over 5000 Black Spirituals authored by slaves, were at first sung, then written and passed down from generation to generation. Their lyrics described both the despair and the faith in God generated under the often brutal bondage, with hundreds of thousands of black slaves suffering under that tyranny. As conditions changed after their emancipation, black music generated into the blues and jazz with those new genres describing the hard times and continued persecutions the former slaves endured, including lynching, that were rampant before and during the Great Depression. Concurrent to these music types, many hymns were written by northern Europeans settling in the Appalachian Mountain valleys and into regions further west in America. During the last seventy-five years, this often soulful, religiously oriented music included work songs and hymns that many generally labeled blue grass. Along with the black hymns, the music of Appalachia has become mainstream, being immensely popular, long established as beloved parts of Americana. From blue grass and western cowboy ballads, country music has melded together successfully and has become the musical spokesman describing love, love lost, the high points and low points of life, inherent in relationships and with God. Many country song lyrics strike a chord in our heart as to how God wants us as His children to act; the attitude we are to exhibit to others in our reaction to life's elations and points of despair.

The following quote from the Book of James offers salient advice in maintaining a proactive relationship with Our Savior.

James 4:6-10 *But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble." 7 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.*

It is only through God's gift of grace, defined as the unmerited pardon, that He alone affords us that which rescues man from the power of sin. James tells us how to receive His grace. He shows us man's response to God's gracious offer of salvation and tells us what it means to be humble.

1. **Submit to God** - This literally means to "line up under." Strongs #5293: upotassw hupotasso, hoop-ot-as'-so to subordinate; reflexively, to obey:—be under obedience (obedient), put under, subdue unto, (be, make) subject (to, unto), be (put) in subjection (to, under), submit self unto. It describes a willing, conscious submission to God's authority as Sovereign Ruler. A truly humble person will give his allegiance to God by obeying His commands and following His leadership.

2. **Resist the devil** - We are literally to take a stand against Satan. This also takes a conscious effort on our part to act against Satan and his dark powers through the power of the Lord. **Eph 6:10-13:** *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*
3. **Draw near to God** - We are to pursue a relationship with God and He in turn will draw near to us. He makes this possible through His Son-Yashua as we see in **Heb 7:18-19:** *For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness, 19 for the law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, there is the bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.* And also in **Heb 4:14-16:** *Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.* Salvation involves more than just submitting to God and resisting the devil, we must also have a longing to seek Him and to have communion or a joining with God. In **Ps 63:1-2,** David writes of being in the wilderness of Judah: *O God, You are my God; Early will I seek You; My soul thirsts for You; My flesh longs for You In a dry and thirsty land Where there is no water. 2 So I have looked for You in the sanctuary, To see Your power and Your glory.*
4. **Cleanse your hands** - Just as in the Old Testament when the priests ceremonially washed their hands before approaching God in His tabernacle to **physically cleanse themselves of sin, we must also recognize and confess our sins.**
5. **Purify your hearts you double minded** - As the washing of the hands symbolized the cleansing of the outside or our external behavior, we must also cleanse the inside referring to our inner thoughts, motives and desires of the heart. A double minded person is one whose mind is divided between God and the world. He may believe in God but fails to trust Him when trials come.
6. **Lament, mourn and weep** - We are to be afflicted and miserable showing we are truly broken over the sins in our lives. God will not turn away a heart that is broken and contrite over sin. **Ps 51:17** states *the sacrifices of God constitute a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart: These, O God, You will not despise.* Mourning is the inner response to the brokenness over our sin and weeping is the outward manifestation of the inner sorrow. When we realize our sinful state, laughter turns to mourning and joy to gloom.

Humble yourselves in the sight of God. Humble comes from a word meaning “to make yourself low.” Strong's #5013: tapeinow tapeinoo, tap-i-no'-o to depress; figuratively, to humiliate (in condition or heart):--abase, bring low, humble (self). – This sums up what we were just told – look at yourself both inwardly and outwardly and compare that to the standard God sets for us – His son Yashua. If you bring yourself low – He will lift you up!

I have chosen a popular country western song, “Humble and Kind” by Tim McGraw that exemplifies many of the above points. See if you agree!

You know there's a lot that goes by the front door
Don't forget the keys under the mat
Childhood stars shine, always stay humble and kind
Go to church 'cause your momma says to
Visit grandpa every chance that you can
It won't be a waste of time
Always stay humble and kind

Hold the door say please say thank you
Don't steal, don't cheat, and don't lie
I know you got mountains to climb but
Always stay humble and kind
When the dreams you're dreamin' come to you
When the work you put in is realized
Let yourself feel the pride but
Always stay humble and kind

Don't expect a free ride from no one
Don't hold a grudge or a chip and here's why
Bitterness keeps you from flying
Always stay humble and kind
Know the difference between sleeping with someone
And sleeping with someone you love
I love you ain't no pick up line so
Always stay humble and kind

Hold the door say please say thank you
Don't steal, don't cheat, and don't lie
I know you got mountains to climb but
Always stay humble and kind
When those dreams you're dreamin' come to you
When the work you put in is realized
Let yourself feel the pride but
Always stay humble and kind
When it's hot, eat a root beer, a popsicle
Shut off the AC and roll the windows down
Let that summer sun shine
Always stay humble and kind
Don't take for granted the love this life gives you
When you get where you're goin'
Don't forget turn back around
Help the next one in line
Always stay humble and kind