

A STUDY OF JAMES (15)

Wars Among You (2)
Submitting to God
James 4:1-12

The Book of James

- Continuing our study of James, we have addressed numerous practical applications.
- In our last lesson we addressed the “wars among you” (**James 4:1-6**).
- War is always a terrible thing.
- We noted spiritual wars – against God, one another and ourselves.
- Clearly, these brethren had some struggles. James described how these “wars” affected their relationship with God (and one another).
- Today, we want to address the solution (**4:7-12**)

Submit to God - 4:7

- Making yourself right, regardless of who the “war” is against (even the devil) begins with surrendering to God
- **Matthew 6:10**, “... Your will be done”
- **Hebrews 12:9** – in subjection to the Father and live
- **Romans 12:1** – present yourselves a living sacrifice
- **Luke 9:23** – deny self, take up his cross and follow
- **Romans 10:3** – the Jews failed to submit to God
- **Acts 9:6** – Paul submitted to Jesus
- **Matthew 26:39** – Jesus submitted to the Father
- Consider, you WILL submit to Him – **Romans 14:10-12**. The only question is – WHEN?

Resist the devil - **4:7**

- Submitting to God involves standing up to the enemy.
- True growth, involves quitting things that hinder.
Hebrews 12:1, Matthew 13:22
- **Matthew 6:24** – you cannot serve 2 masters.
- Resist the devil – **2 Corinthians 2:11, Ephesians 4:27** – give him no place in your life.
- Put on the armor of God – **Ephesians 6:10-18**
- **1 Peter 5:8-9** – resist him steadfast in the faith.

Resist the devil - **4:7**

- Resist him and he will flee from you. Satan is NOT all powerful. When his scheming is not working, he will move on to someone else.
- He CAN be resisted – **cf. Matthew 4:11**
BUT he will come back – **Luke 4:13**.
- But the more you resist, the easier it will become.

Draw near to God – **4:8**

- A frequent admonition in scripture -
- **1 Chronicles 28:8-9** – David speaking to Solomon as he prepares to build the temple
- **2 Chronicles 15:2-4** – the prophet Ahaziah speaks to righteous King Asa.
- To draw near to God means to seek to be like Him.
Ephesians 5:1
- And He will draw near to you – a logical conclusion (shorter distance).
- NOTE: The closer you are to God, the more difficult it will be for the devil to do anything to you.

Cleanse your hands you sinners – **4:8**

- A subpoint of drawing near to God
- A reference to you doing your part. You need to put forth effort.
- “Clean hands” is often associated with working, being busy
- The Levitical priests had to wash before entering the tabernacle or offering sacrifices – **Exodus 30:17-21**
- **Psalm 24:3-4** – who may dwell in His presence?
- NOTE: This comes BEFORE you can purify your heart. **Cf. Ephesians 4:20-32, Colossians 3:1-17, etc.**
- You cannot effectively work on “the heart” until you “clean house”!

Purify your hearts you double-minded – **4:8**

- Another subpoint of drawing near to God
- The heart is who we are within.
- Actions reveal the heart – **Matthew 12:33-37, 15:17-20, etc.**
- **Matthew 5:8**, Blessed are the pure in heart...
- NOTE: When you obey the gospel you are cleansed. But that is only the beginning, purifying the heart takes time and intensive effort. The heart is not pure UNTIL the filth that corrupts it stays away.

Purify your hearts you double-minded – **4:8**

- David prayed, “Create in me a clean heart...” – **Psalm 51:10**
- “You double-minded” – one trying to serve God with divided loyalties.
Cf. James 3:11-12 – the corrupted tongue.
Matthew 23:25-27 – the Pharisees and scribes – looked clean on the outside, but inwardly they were corrupted.
- You will NEVER purify your heart while you are trying to hold on to sin!

Lament, mourn and weep... – 4:9

- This describes genuine repentance. Necessary to make lasting changes in your life.
- **Luke 13:3 & 5** – unless you repent
- **Psalms 6, 32 & 51** – Penitential psalms of David.
6:6 notes, *I am weary with my groaning; All night I make my bed swim; I drench my couch with my tears. My eye wastes away because of grief; It grows old because of all my enemies.*

Lament, mourn and weep... – **4:9**

- **2 Corinthians 7:8-11** – what true repentance looks like
- We should NEVER rejoice at sin!
- NOTE how repentance precedes baptism – **Acts 2:38, 3:19, Luke 24:47**
- It also precedes forgiveness as Christians – **Acts 8:22, 1 John 1:9**

Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord... – **4:10**

- The necessary attitude that will lead us on the path to closeness with God.
- Humility – to be brought low. To set aside pride and realize one's standing
- **James 4:6**, God resists the proud... **1 Peter 5:5**
- **Matthew 5:3-4** – the first 2 “beatitudes”

Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord... – **4:10**

- *“In the sight of the Lord”* – He is watching! KNOW that!
- *And He will lift you up* – **1 Peter 5:6** – He may exalt you. Consider one who bows before a king or master (**cf. Matthew 18:24-27**)
- NOTE: Do NOT lift yourself up! (That is prideful)
Let the Lord do the lifting!

Treat your brother with kindness... – **4:11-12**

- Preventing “war” with one another.
- *Do not speak evil of one another* – **James 3:1-12, 1:19-20, etc.**
Ephesians 4:31-32 – put away bitterness, wrath, clamor, evil speaking, etc.
- *Do not be judges with evil thoughts* – **James 2:4, cf. Matthew 7:1-4**
- Let God be the judge!

Concluding thoughts- **4:7-12**

- When we apply these principles, it will lead to peace that is pleasing to God.
- **Romans 14:19** - *Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another.*
- This text is the crux of the letter of James.
- As Christians our goal is that God will draw near to us! But that will only happen if you draw near to Him!
- THEN the spiritual wars – with God, one another and ourselves - will cease

How near is God to you?