

James – Humble Yourselfs Js. 4:7-10

Introduction:

- A. In our lives, we have two choices.
 - 1. We can follow after God; or we can follow after the devil.
 - 2. Notice what Jesus says.
 - a. **Mk. 9:40** - For he who is not against us is on our side.
 - b. **Mt. 12:30** - He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.
- B. As James goes throughout this paragraph, he makes it very obvious that we should be followers of Christ, not Satan.

I. Submit to God (4:7-8a).

- A. We must submit to God.
 - 1. To submit literally means “to obey” (Strong’s).
 - 2. If we submit to God, He promises to be there for us (4:8).
 - a. **Deut. 4:29** (to Israel) - But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul.
 - b. **Ps. 34:18** - The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit.
 - c. **Ps. 145:18** - The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth.
 - d. **II Chr. 15:1-2** - Now the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded. {2} And he went out to meet Asa, and said to him: "Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin. The LORD is with you while you are with Him. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you.
 - 3. God will always be there for us.
 - a. Even today, this promise is made to us.
 - b. **Heb. 13:5** - For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."
- B. By submitting to God, we will resist the devil.
 - 1. When we resist the devil, he will flee (lit. “to run away”) from us.
 - 2. We are told to resist the devil.
 - a. **Eph. 4:26-27** - "Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath, {27} nor give place to the devil.
 - b. **I Pet. 5:8-9** - Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. {9} Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.
 - 3. When we do resist the devil, he will run from us.
 - a. James says that he will flee (lit. “to run away”) from us (4:7).

- b. **Lk. 4:13** - Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time.
- C. In order to resist the devil, we must be prepared to face him.
 - 1. **Eph. 6:11** - Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

II. As James continues, he also deals with sinners who are not in a saved condition (4:8b-9).

- A. Notice the meaning of what James says.
 - 1. **“Cleanse your hands, you sinners” (4:8).**
 - a. To “cleanse your hands” was a phrase used to describe someone who would get rid of the guilt that they had.
 - 1) Typically, this was done by repenting of the evil that they had done.
 - 2) This would make them clean before God and men.
 - b. **Mt. 27:24** – Pilate washes his hands of the blood of Christ.
 - 1) While this did not justify Pilate before God, it did justify him before men.
 - 2) Pilate says, **“I am innocent of the blood of this just Person.”**
 - 2. **“Purify your hearts, you double-minded” (4:8).**
 - a. Again, the idea is that those who are living in sin need to make their hearts pure.
 - b. It is extremely important to have our hearts pure.
 - 1) **Ps. 24:3-4** - Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who may stand in His holy place? {4} He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn deceitfully.
 - 2) **Mt. 5:8** - Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
 - 3. **“Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom” (4:9).**
 - a. We should not rejoice when we fall into sin.
 - b. It is not something that we should want others to be proud of.
 - c. The idea behind lamenting and mourning and weeping is that we should be sorrowful for the sin that is ruling in our lives.
 - 1) Remember, James is not talking about the faithful Christian who slips up every once in a while.
 - 2) He is talking about Christians who have left the church and are living in sin (4:8).
 - d. The reason that they should be sorrowful is because they need to repent and come back to the Lord.
 - 1) **II Cor. 7:10** - For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.
 - 2) Notice the example of Peter.

- a) Jesus had predicted that Peter would deny Him three times.
 - b) After Peter denies Christ, notice what Peter does.
 - c) **Mt. 26:75** - And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." So he went out and wept bitterly.
 - d) Peter obviously repented because of the great things that he did in the early church.
- B. When we turn from God, there is a desperate need to repent.
- 1. James is encouraging those sinners to repent.
 - 2. There is no eternal joy to be found when living in sin.

III. The key, in all things, is to humble ourselves (4:10).

- A. We must be willing to humble ourselves.
- 1. **Is. 4:6**
 - 2. There are many passages that deal with humility.
 - a. **Rom. 12:3** - For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.
 - b. **Rom. 12:16** - Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.
 - c. **Phil. 2:3** - Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.
- B. If we humble ourselves before God, He will lift us up.
- 1. It is not us that does the lifting, it is God.
 - 2. Notice the words of Christ.
 - a. **Lk. 14:10-11** (the parable of the wedding feast) - "But when you are invited, go and sit down in the lowest place, so that when he who invited you comes he may say to you, 'Friend, go up higher.' Then you will have glory in the presence of those who sit at the table with you. {11} For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."
 - b. **Lk. 18:14** (parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector) - I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.
 - 3. **I Pet. 5:5-7** - Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." {6} Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, {7} casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

Conclusion:

There is a time in which we all are humbled by our sin and must submit to God. Hopefully, this will happen in baptism before it is eternally too late. Today, are you willing to humble yourself before God?