

## Humbly Submit to God

Sermon 14 in the James Series

### James 4:6-10

As we saw last week – James and Peter both cite Proverbs 3:34.

**Proverbs 3:34** -- *Surely He scorns the scornful, But gives grace to the humble.*

To quote Charles Bridges – in his commentary on Proverbs

*“Two Apostles (James and Peter) – have combined with wise men, to set out this rule of the Divine government. On no point is the mind of God more fully declared than against pride – which is the spirit of scorning.”*

Bridges goes on to note – as we mentioned that James appears to be quoting from the LXX version of the Scriptures.

Since humility is the main subject – James now goes on to talk about how to be humble.

Having given us his text – Proverbs 3:34

*God resists the proud*

*But gives grace to the humble*

He gives practical exhortation on what we should do – so that we can be those recipients of grace – and not be those who find that God is against them.

James has warned already that God was against some of his readers.

- double-minded individuals
- those that heard the word, but did not obey
- those who showed favoritism
- those who claimed to have faith, but had no works
- those who would not/could not bridle their tongues
- those engaged in bitter envy and self-seeking

James commentary on Proverbs 3:34 is found in verses 7-9.

James presents for us a “Sandwich”.

Two parallel truths – the bread -- surrounding the meat of 9 exhortations.

**Submit to God 7a**

He gives 9 Practical ways to submit to God

**Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord - 10**

**Submit** to God and **humble** yourselves before God have much the same meaning.

Submit = *hypotasso* – literally “*to put in order under*”.

It assumes there is an authority structure.

We find these authority structures throughout the Scriptures and throughout God’s created world.

- We are to submit to the governmental authorities.
- There is submission in marriage.
- There is submission to those who are our bosses.
- There is Christian submission to one another.

-- We are to submit to Christ – but we are told even Christ willingly submits to the Father.

Submission has to do with authority.

What was Satan’s great sin? – His desire to be as God.

To take God’s throne.

To usurp God’s authority.

To put himself in the place of God.

Why? Because of PRIDE.

It’s one thing to be HUMBLE.

It’s quite another to be HUMBLED.

-- We are humbled when someone puts us in our place.

-- We are humble when we WILLINGLY submit to the proper authority that God has placed over us – and of course – the ultimate authority is GOD HIMSELF!

## **I. Resisting and Drawing Near 7-8a**

James says to resist the devil and he will flee from you.  
The opposite is true -- draw near to God – and He will draw near to you.

### **A. Resist the Devil**

#### **1. Christ in the wilderness was tempted 3 times by the Devil.**

Each time, Christ withstood Satan with the Word of God.

Satan tried to attack Christ as he attacks us -- at the root of PRIDE.

Foolish.

How could he?

#### **John 14:28-31 – see esp. v. 30**

-- The hour of the cross was coming.

-- It was the hour of the power of darkness.

-- But Satan would not be triumphant – the cross would be his ultimate defeat as Christ rose again.

**READ** -- *“nothing in me”*.

This is an affirmation of Christ’s perfection.

As Satan tempted Christ – there was nothing IN CHRIST to which the temptation could lay hold.

He didn’t have a sinful nature – like you and I were born with.

We, as Christians, are no longer slaves to sin

But we still sin.

Christ was never a personal sinner.

He never actually sinned personally.

He was tempted – but the temptations did not take hold of Him.

He resisted the devil at every turn.  
We too are to resist the devil.

God prizes humility – and Christ was meek and lowly.  
There was no evil pride in his heart at all.  
He is the PERFECT example of perfect humility.

The attack failed – and as James said – the Devil departed.

**James says RESIST THE DEVIL and he will flee from you.**

## **2. Peter says much the same thing.**

**1 Peter 5:8-9** -- *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*

**RESIST HIM**

## **v. 10 – The God of all Grace.**

The similarities between **James 4:6-7, 10** and **1 Peter 5:5-10** are striking.  
Read 1 Peter – read James.

## **3. Paul agrees concerning our enemy – the devil. Eph. 4:27**

Resist the devil.

Paul reminds us that Satan is a DANGEROUS ENEMY.

**Ephesians 4:25-27** -- *Therefore, putting away lying, “Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,”<sup>[e]</sup> for we are members of one another.<sup>26</sup> “Be angry, and do not sin”:<sup>[f]</sup> do not let the sun go down on your wrath,<sup>27</sup> **nor give place to the devil***

**Lying** – the wrong use of our tongues is one way Satan gets an advantage over us.

Of course, James has this idea in mind

**Anger** is another way he attacks us  
As James reminds his readers.

**REIST HIM – STAND AGAINST HIM** wearing the full armor of God.  
**(6:11)**

## **B. Draw Near to God**

This is a call to Christians.  
Return you backsliders.  
Come to God.  
Draw near to God.

It's not enough to resist – we must **DRAW NEAR**.

There's many places we could turn – and this is part of **SUBMISSION**  
to **GOD**.

We draw near to Him – through His Word and through obedience **TO**  
His Word.

In this NT age – there is no better way to draw near to God than  
by exercising the means of grace.

-- Worshipping with the saints each Lord's Day – hearing **AND**  
**DOING** the Word of God.

-- Prayer – the public prayers of the people of God – and the private  
prayers that we should be diligent to maintain in our private prayer  
closets.

-- What about the private reading of God's Word. Where God speaks  
to us. We are privileged beyond almost all the former saints by  
having copies of the Scriptures at our easy reach – it's just we don't  
reach as often as we should.

-- Baptism – our own and witnessing the baptism of others – and of  
course the Lord's Supper – the only two ordinances of the NT.

Draw near to God – it’s a command.  
It’s also a promise – and HE WILL draw near to you!

## II. A Clean Body and a Clean Soul 8b

Literally – *Wash hands, sinners*  
*Purify hearts, double-minded*

We need single-minded loyalty to God.  
James has used this term “double-minded” before as we have seen.

You cannot be FRIENDS with the world and the friend of God. v. 4

You can see here – James allusion to keeping clean OUTWARDLY  
*Wash your hands*

And keeping clean inwardly – *purify your hearts.*

This idea of washing and purifying is a constant theme in the OT.  
There were priestly regulations on how to wash utensils,  
garments, all kinds of things – that had to do with literal  
cleanliness

AND ALSO how to purify things and people in order to make  
them ceremonially clean

### Psalm 24:3-4

<sup>3</sup> *Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD?  
Or who may stand in His holy place?*

<sup>4</sup> *He who has **clean hands** and a **pure heart**,  
Who has not lifted up his soul to an idol,  
Nor sworn deceitfully.*

<sup>5</sup> *He shall receive blessing from the LORD,  
And righteousness from the God of his salvation.*

<sup>6</sup> *This is Jacob, the generation of those who seek Him,  
Who seek Your face. Selah*

Idolatry is the chief sin of the OT.

Not being double-minded but having clean hands and a pure heart devoted only to God.

### **Psalm 26:1-8**

Integrity – not going after idols.

David was not sinlessly perfect – that is not his claim

But David was steadfastly faithful to God.

In the midst of a nation that too often turned to idols

David's own son Solomon would turn to idols in his later life.

Many of the Kings were idolators

But David, as a man after God's own heart – steadfastly maintained his faithfulness to the God as the only true God.

It's still true today.

-- There are a variety of idols that allure us.

-- There are a variety of idols that call us to unfaithfulness.

We need CLEAN HANDS and a PURE HEART.

By God's grace we need to daily wash our hands and have our hearts purified – while we are stranger and pilgrims in this land.

And this is the sanctifying work of the Spirit that we should humbly seek the Lord for:

### **Psalm 51:7, 10**

Which brings us to:

## **III. A Call to Repentance 9**

James gave us 7 positive characteristics of true wisdom – **3:17**.

Here he gives us the attitude and actions of a person who is humble before God and realizes the seriousness of sin.

He is exhorting the Christians who are friends with the world.

For our own sin – Lament, mourn and weep.  
For the sins of this world – Lament, mourn and weep.

**Nehemiah 1:5-9**

This world is going to be judged.  
This world is going to be changed.  
Those who are friends with this world – are going to lose their only friend.  
In Revelation – John pictures the nations weeping because Babylon the Great has fallen.

Weep now, so you will not need to weep then.  
*Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.*

The OT prophets continually called upon Israel to mourn for their sin.  
In Nehemiah, we find him confessing his sins and the sins of the people.

**READ**

Humility allows us to see our own sinfulness.  
It can also discourage us if we stop there.

Thankfully – remember what Pastor James said -- He giveth more grace.

As we remember our own unworthiness and sinfulness – God is magnified – because anything good that is in us is from Him.

Verse 9 is HOW we humble ourselves before God.  
We see ourselves are mere worms in the dust.  
He lifts us up.

Which brings us to the conclusion – **James 4:10**

**IV. Application v. 10**

James closes his comments on Proverbs 3:34 by applying the truth to it.



7 and verse 10 are like bookends.

**Submit to God** – Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord  
**God will draw near to you** – He will lift you up.

This is as sure and true as His faithful word is true.

PRAY

Closing Hymn 171

Benediction: 4:7