

James 4:7-10
Drawing Near to God - 2

1

Introduction

These four verses contain ten commands. James's purpose is for Christians to test their faith to find out whether it is genuine or false. He wants no one to be deceived. For those who discover that they belong to the world, there is the offer of salvation.

There is also the charge for believers to put away any remaining vestiges of their former worldly living that continue to tarnish their spiritual lives.

2

James 4:7-10

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.

3

Submission

James 4:7a

Therefore submit to God.

The word “submit” was primarily a military term meaning literally “to rank under.”

Last week we saw that sin and submission are directly linked. As humans, we will submit to God or evil.

4

Resistance

James 4:7b

Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

To submit to God, your new Lord, is to resist the devil, your old lord. **Resist** means “to stand against”, “to oppose.” There is no middle ground, no neutrality.

5

Fellowship

James 4:8a

Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

The third command is to draw near to God in intimate fellowship and communion.

There are two aspects to look at. James has been giving a series of tests to make sure his readers are truly saved. For those who realize they are involved in religion, but not a relationship with God, the call is for them to come and draw near to God. The barrier of sin that separated us from God has been removed through the sacrifice of Jesus upon the cross.

6

Fellowship

James 4:8a

Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

Salvation involves submitting to God as Lord and Savior, but also brings the desire for a true relationship with Him. Seeking salvation is seeking God (cf. Ps. 42:1; Matt. 7:7–11).

7

Fellowship

James 4:8a

Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

One of the primary functions of Old Testament priests was to “come near to the Lord [and] consecrate themselves” (Ex. 19:22; cf. Lev. 10:3; Ezek. 43:9; 44:13). Jesus gave this definition of eternal life, “Now this is eternal life: **that they know you**, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.” (John 17:3)

8

Fellowship

James 4:8a

Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

Jesus prayed “that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.” (John 17:21).

Paul sought to “know him [Christ], and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death”
(Phil. 3:10).

9

Fellowship

James 4:8a

Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

To the believer, James is calling to leave the world behind and follow Jesus.

Remember his argument. We are not to be friends with the world. We are in enemy territory and we have been left in this world that we might be a light and witness to Jesus.

10

Fellowship

James 4:8a

Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

We are to submit to God and resist the devil.

You will submit to one and resist the other. How can a person draw near to God if he is activity resisting God and chasing after the things of the world?

11

Fellowship

James 4:8a

Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

So the question is “how does one draw near to God?”

Let's do a caution check...

Drawing near to God is not a series of steps, it is an attitude of your heart.

You can do the things presented, and not draw near to God.

12

Fellowship

James 4:8a

Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

Check the course of your heart!

Make a decision which way you really want to go and these things will fall into place.

Remember, God wants to have a close intimate relationship with you!

13

Fellowship

James 4:8a

Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

Drawing near to God is spending time with Him, worshiping Him, praying and talking to Him, inviting Him into every aspect of your live.

14

Fellowship

James 4:8a

Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

Have a time to meet with God daily.

Think about what you study and how to apply it to your life.

Develop your prayer life. Do more than just make your requests but share your heart and struggles and concerns.

Pray back scripture, praising God for who He is.

15

Fellowship

James 4:8a

Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

Spend time worshipping Him.

This is more than just singing on Sunday. It is recognizing who God is and giving Him the praise He is worthy of.

All you do, the choices that you make are worship. The question is what are you worshipping?

16

Cleansing

James 4:8b

Cleanse your hands, you sinners.

The fourth command is to “Cleanse your hands, you sinners”. The origin of this idea was in the Jewish ceremonial prescription for priests before they came before the Lord to offer sacrifices in the tabernacle or temple. God commanded them to wash their hands and feet in the bronze laver (Exodus 30:18-21; Lev. 16:4). The same illustration was used by Isaiah to represent unrepented sin in those who came to worship God (Isaiah 1:15-16).

17

Cleansing

James 4:8b

Cleanse your hands, you sinners.

The command to “cleanse your hands” is a command to submit to God’s commands for holiness. Though every believer needs to surrender himself to obedience to God, this command is specifically addressed to “sinners”.

The word used here is always used of unbelievers throughout the New Testament.

18

Cleansing

James 4:8b

Cleanse your hands, you sinners.

The command here is clear. There are those who come to church and are deceived into believing that they belong to God. Yet upon examination, their trust is not in Christ, but in the wisdom of this world. The offer is unconditional. The unsaved must come to Christ and be made clean (1 John 1:9).

19

Purification

James 4:8c

Purify *your* hearts, *you* double-minded.

“Purify your hearts, you double minded.” In Hebrew parallelism, “purify your hearts” corresponds to “cleanse your hands” and “you double-minded” corresponds to “you sinners”. James associates the outward sins of the hands with the inner sins of the heart.
(Ps. 24:3–4; 51:10).

20

Purification

James 4:8c

Purify *your* hearts, *you* double-minded.

The unbeliever not only is to turn from outward sin but, even more important, from the inner sin of the heart from which all outward sin springs (Matt. 15:19). The call throughout Scripture is for mankind to come and be purified (Jer. 4:14; Ezek. 18:31, 36:25–27).

21

Purification

James 4:8c

Purify *your* hearts, *you* double-minded.

A “double-minded” person is one who lacks integrity, who claims one thing and lives another. This is the hypocrite in the assembly of believers who is being confronted in James.

“Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon” (Isa. 55:6–7).

22

So What ...

Let's review God's Will here for your life:

- Don't be friends with the world – it is enemy territory
 - Resist the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh
 - Submit ourselves to obedience to God
 - Draw near to God in fellowship
 - Clean up your outward actions
 - Purify your heart

What about You? How is your relationship with God?