

Submit and Resist: James 4:7-10

The one who loves the world is an enemy of God and he has joined ranks with the enemy. James admonishes his readers by telling them to surrender and submit to the Lord and oppose the devil. Within these four verses James gives them a list of sound instructions : Submit to God, Resist the devil, Draw close to God, Wash your hands, Purify your hearts, Grieve, mourn and wail and finally, to Humble themselves before the Lord.

Submit yourselves to God: The Greek term "*Hiptaso*" has been used to convey the meaning of the word submit; it means a low ranking officer submitting himself to a high ranking officer. God wants his people to voluntarily submit themselves to him, not out of any kind of pressure. God opposes the proud but he gives grace to the humble. Therefore it is always ideal to submit to God. Submission is an act of will, and we ought to examine our lives to see whether there is any area of our lives that has not been submitted to the Lord. In order to resist the devil the very first thing we need to do is to submit to God. James tells his readers that we should not stop by submitting to God, but we must actively resist the devil in every arena of our lives that he tries to infiltrate. Apostles Paul and Peter give the same kind of instruction in the following scriptures (Eph 6:11, 4;27, 1 Peter 5:8-9). Therefore, if we submit to the Lord and put on the whole armor of God and continuously resist the devil, he can never have an upper hand against our lives. The strategy that Jesus used in his encounter with the devil was similar; opposing him with the word of God. Luke the physician records that Satan left him for an opportune time. Just because we overcame him once does not mean that he would leave us alone, but he is taking his time and repositioning himself for a fresh assault.

Draw near to God: James reminds his readers that when we take a step of faith and draw nigh to him, he will surely draw close to us. The secret of getting God to draw closer to us and getting the devil to flee from us lies with us. It is always based on our response and approach to them. If we want God to come closer to us we need to have an inward and an outward cleansing. Wash your hands and purify your hearts mean that we need to have an outward and an inward

cleansing. If we settle only for either one of them it is not a complete, but a partial cleansing.

Resist the Devil: We as children of God should be aware of the reality of the enemy that lurks around, planning and looking for an opportunity to bring about our downfall. To be aware of this is to be forewarned and forearmed. The only way that we can be sure of victory over our enemy, the devil, is by staying as close to our God as we can. James recommends that we recognize and submit to God's authority over every area of our life. He further suggests that we resist the devil with all of our being. As we draw near to God, God will draw near to us and we will have victory over the one who is seeking to destroy not only us, but others as well.

Humble yourselves before the Lord: How often we submit outwardly and yet are unwilling to be humble inside. Pride is one of the sins that God abhors (Prov. 6:16-17). The evidence of true humility is found in our approach and outlook towards sin. James exhorts his readers by reminding them that the sure way to be exalted by God is to humble ourselves before him. The Psalmist reminds us that promotion does not come from the east, west or from the south but it comes from the Lord. Apostle Peter in 1 Peter 5:6 says "Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time." God's timing is always the best time. Shall we wait patiently and with all humility for God's time and plan to be manifested in our lives?

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