

Humility Cures worldliness (James 4:6-10)

James 4:6-10 NKJV

But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

⁷ 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.

Hi all, the answer to worldliness is grace. This is a longer read, but I strongly encourage you to get to a quiet spot and make some time to read these verses and commentary from James 4:6-10. We all desperately need to come to a deeper understanding of how God's grace, which can only be received by the humble person, always leads to genuine repentance and change, starting on the inside.

Personally, I repeatedly read through these verses and commentary slowly, several times, over a few days, taking the time to meditate on them (think it through, or chew the cud). I've come back to them since as well. The result, my heart is softer, more teachable, and more humble than it was before. Put simply, I love Jesus more than I did before and I have no regrets choosing to spend my time meditating on these precious promises.

Remember that true, lasting, and genuine repentance requires humility. Humility is necessarily very painful, because it requires us to recognise and accept our inherent sinfulness. Genuine repentance will always require us to recognise and give up a worldly attitude (and also often a habit or sinful behaviour), but it will always lead to a greater love for the Lord and us experiencing true joy.

May God's Spirit, the Wonderful Counsellor, reveal to us those areas in our lives where our pride is preventing us from loving and living God's way to the full potential of our new nature. Remember that the absolutely beautiful and fantastic promise — "BUT HE GIVES MORE GRACE", is conditional, "...TO THE HUMBLE".

May God give us the grace and humility to accept the hard fact that there is only one reason why a person continues sinning, or keeps going back to a sin, and it's pride. They are not willing to humble themselves to receive God's help. Why? The truth is that deep down they don't want to change and so refuse to submit to God (see John 3:19-21). May this hard realisation that we prefer living part of our lives in the darkness (and actually don't really want to come into the light, and so have those dark deeds exposed), lead to tears of sorrow, which God will turn into tears of joy as we experience more of His love and our joy becomes full (John 15:7-11).

With much love and concern for you all personally
David

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The solutions for strife: in humility, get right with God (David Guzik)

a. But He gives more grace: The same Holy Spirit convicting us of our compromise will also grant us the grace to serve God as we should. This wonderful statement—but He gives more grace—stands in strong contrast to the previous words.

i. "Note that contrast; note it always. Observe how weak we are, how strong he is; how proud we are, how condescending he is; how erring we are, and how infallible he is; how changing we are, and how immutable he is; how provoking we are, and how forgiving he is. Observe how in us there is only ill, and how in him there is only good. Yet our ill but draws his goodness forth, and still he blesseth. Oh! What a rich contrast!" (Spurgeon)

ii. "Sin seeks to enter, grace shuts the door; sin tries to get the mastery, but grace, which is stronger than sin, resists, and will not permit it. Sin gets us down at times, and puts its foot on our neck; grace comes to the rescue ... Sin comes up like Noah's flood, but grace rides over the tops of the mountains like the ark." (Spurgeon)

iii. "Do you suffer from spiritual poverty? It is your own fault, for he giveth more grace. If you have not got it, it is not because it is not to be had, but because you have not gone for it." (Spurgeon)

b. God resists the proud: At the same time, James reminds us that this grace only comes to the humble. Grace and pride are eternal enemies. Pride demands that God bless me in light of my merits, whether real or imagined. But grace will not deal with me on the basis of anything in me—good or bad—but only on the basis of who God is.

i. James used a powerful word in the phrase, resists the proud: "Sets himself in battle array against him." (Clarke) "God resisteth the proud, 'setteth himself in battle-array against such,' above all other sorts of sinner, as invaders of his territories, and foragers or plunderers of his chief treasures." (Trapp)

c. But gives grace to the humble: It isn't as if our humility earns the grace of God. Humility merely puts us in a position to receive the gift He freely gives.

d. Therefore submit to God: In light of the grace offered to the humble, there is only one thing to do: submit to God. This means to order yourself under God, to surrender to Him as a conquering King, and start receiving the benefits of His reign.

i. It is a wonder that the world does not submit to God. "I have heard much of the rights of man: but it were well also to consider the rights of God, which are the first, highest, surest, and most solemn rights in the universe, and lie at the base of all other rights.... Alas, great God, how art thou a stranger even in the world which thou hast thyself made! Thy creatures, who could not see if thou hadst not given them eyes, look everywhere except to thee. Creatures who could not think if thou hadst not given them minds, think of all things except thee; and beings who could not live if thou didst not keep them in being, forget thee utterly, or if they remember thine existence, and see thy power, are foolhardy enough to become thy foes!" (Spurgeon)

ii. "If he were a tyrant it might be courageous to resist, but since he is a Father it is ungrateful to rebel." (Spurgeon) Instead, Spurgeon (in another sermon) suggested reasons why we should submit to God:

- We should submit to God because He created us.
- We should submit to God because His rule is good for us.
- We should submit to God because all resistance to Him is futile.
- We should submit to God because such submission is absolutely necessary to salvation.
- We should submit to God because it is the only way to have peace with God.

iii. "I desire to whisper one little truth in your ear, and I pray that it may startle you: You are submitting even now. You say, 'Not I; am lord of myself.' I know you think so, but all the while you are submitting to the devil. The verse before us hints at this. 'Submit yourselves unto God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.' If you do not submit to God you never will resist the devil, and you will remain constantly under his tyrannical power. Which shall be your master, God or devil, for one of these must? No man is without a master." (Spurgeon)

e. Resist the devil and he will flee from you: To solve the problems of carnality and the strife it causes, we must also resist the devil. This means to stand against devil's deceptions and his efforts to intimidate. As we resist the devil, we are promised that he will flee from you.

i. Significantly, James does not recommend that demons should be cast out of believers by a third party. Instead, James simply challenges individual Christians to deal with Satan as a conquered foe who can and must be personally resisted. "He who, in the terrible name of JESUS, opposes even the devil himself is sure to have speedy and glorious conquest. He flees from that name, and from his conquering blood." (Clarke)

ii. Resist comes from two Greek words: stand and against. James tells us to stand against the devil. Satan can be set running by the resistance of the lowliest believer who comes in the authority of what Jesus did on the cross.

iii. “Resist, by faith, and the rest of the spiritual armour, Ephesians 6:13, 14, etc. Or, resist i.e. comply not with his motions and temptations.” (Poole)

iv. “And he will flee from you; as to that particular assault in which you resist him; and though he return again, and tempt you again, yet you still resisting, he will still be overcome; ye are never conquered so long as you do not consent.” (Poole)

v. A famous ancient Christian writer named Hermas wrote, “The devil can wrestle against the Christian, but he cannot pin him.” (Cited in Barclay)

f. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you: The call to draw near to God is both an invitation and a promise. It is no good to submit to God’s authority and to resist the devil’s attack and then fail to draw near to God. We have it as a promise: God will draw near to us as we draw near to Him.

i. “When a soul sets out to seek God, God sets out to meet that soul; so that while we are drawing near to him, he is drawing near to us.” (Clarke)

ii. What does it mean to draw near to God? Spurgeon considered a few ways:

- It means to draw near in worship, praise, and in prayer.
- It means to draw near by asking counsel of God.
- It means to draw near in enjoying communion with God.
- It means to draw near in the general course and tenor of your life.

iii. In one way, this text illustrates the difference between the old covenant and the new covenant. In the old covenant, God told Moses to not come any closer to the burning bush and take off his shoes. Under the new covenant, God says to the sinner: “Draw near to Me and I will draw near to you.” Now the ground between God and the sinner has been sprinkled with the blood of Jesus, and we can come close to God on the basis of that blood.

iv. This also shows what God wants to do for the sinner. It doesn’t say, “Draw near to God and He will save you” or “Draw near to God and He will forgive you,” though both of those are true. But what God really wants is to be near man; to have a close relationship and fellowship with the individual.

v. From the rest of the chapter we see the results of drawing near to God:

- Drawing near to God helps us to resist the devil.
- Drawing near to God helps us to become pure.
- Drawing near to God helps us to sorrow for sin.
- Drawing near to God helps us to speak well of other people.
- Drawing near to God helps us to think of eternal things.

g. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Lament and mourn and weep! As we draw near to God, we will be convicted of our sin. So we lament and mourn and weep as appropriate under the conviction of sin, and we are compelled to find cleansing at the cross.

i. “The word used for sinner is hamartolos, which means the hardened sinner, the man whose sin is obvious and notorious.” (Barclay)

ii. In using terms like lament and mourn and weep, “James speaks in terms of the Hebrew prophets’ language about the anguish of repentance.” (Moffatt)

h. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up: As we come as sinners before the holy God (not as self righteous religionists, as Jesus explained in Luke 18:10–14), we appropriately humble ourselves before Him. Then He will lift us up, because God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble, and grace—the unmerited favor of God—always lifts us up.

i. In this passage James has powerfully described both the duty and the blessing of repentance.