

August 23, 2020
Willerup United Methodist Church
Sermon Notes
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The Book of James, Lesson 7
Submit to God



The Book of James

This is the seventh in our series of meditations based on the book of James for the month of July and August. James was written by the brother of our Lord Jesus, who called himself a servant of God and Jesus Christ. It was primarily written to Jewish Christians who were scattered in many nations. James talks in this book about practical religion: trials and tribulations, how to apply the Word of God in our daily life, the worldliness in the church and Christian perspective.

SUBMIT TO GOD

James 4:1-10

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? ²You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. ³When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

⁴You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. ⁵Or do you think Scripture says without reason that the spirit he caused to live in us envies intensely? ⁶But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says:

"God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

⁷Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

⁸Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

The Lordship of God must be accepted. It means not my desires, but the desire of the Lord be fulfilled. It is not my will but His will be done.

Lesson Outline: How do I Submit to God?

- **Acknowledge the Sovereignty and Lordship of God**
- **Resist the Devil**
- **Draw Near to God**
- **Make your Hands Clean, and your Hearts Pure**
- **Humble Yourself**

Lesson: How to submit?

1. Sovereignty of the Lordship of God be acknowledged

There is no other God but the Lord God.

What causes fights & quarrels among us?

What are the hindrances in submitting to God?

Hindrances to Submission

Our own desires-

the battle within.

Our unanswered prayers,

we do not seek Him.

Friendship with the world is enmity with God.

1 John 2:15-17

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does-- comes not from the Father but from the world. ¹⁷The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

We are full of pride and arrogance – I know, I can handle, I am a self-made man. Because of our own desires, our battles within, and the things we covet - what we want.

“Christians should forsake the friendship of the world, and watch against that envy and pride which they see prevailing in natural man, and should by grace learn to glory in their submission to God.”

Mathew Henry

The hearts of the double-minded must become pure.

We need to choose either God or the world – to be sincere in choosing one.

When we are single-minded, our aim and purpose (principle) is to please God rather than seeking after anything in the world.

We need to choose whom we will serve, God or mammon (worldly desires)?

Because we do not ask, we do not get.

Seek, ask – it will be given to you. (Matthew 6:33)

We ask with wrong motives and desire to spend on our own pleasures.

* Your friendship with the world = hatred toward God. (James 4:4)

* “The spirit he caused to live in us envies intensely.” (James 4:5)

2. Resist the devil.

You may plead with man, you may reason with God but you must resist the devil.

Remember the devil ‘deceived’ Adam and Eve, ‘tempted’ our Lord Jesus Christ, ‘desired’ to have Peter, ‘entered into’ Judas Iscariot, and ‘hindered’ Paul. Cain did not resist the devil when the author of sin was allowed to enter and master him when he refused to listen the command of the Lord.

1 John 3:8

He who does what is sinful is of the devil because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.

Resist the devil and the promise is that he will flee from you. (James 4:7)

How do you resist the devil? You can quit this enemy’s service and enlist in God’s service and put on the **whole armor of God**, to stand and become more than a conqueror.

(See Ephesians 6:10-18 on the Armor of God)

We must know – who is the devil?

He is the arch-rebel in the kingdom of God, the leader of the hosts of sin, who leads the rebellion on earth as well as in hell.

He is an old foe, present before men came to the scene. He is full of malice and deception. He uses ‘wiles,’ ‘depths,’ ‘darts,’ ‘snares’ and all deceitfulness and unrighteousness. He is represented as the serpent with poisonous fangs and a dreadful coil to crush people. He is the roaring lion, a terror like the king of the forest. He is an old dragon. He brought death into the world and with it all our woes.

Don’t allow Satan to trick you. Be ready to combat his enticing and wily schemes. Remember Satan is already defeated on the cross. Jesus has conquered sin, Satan and death.

1 Corinthians 15:26, 55

²⁶The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

⁵⁵"Where, O death, is your victory?
Where, O death, is your sting?"

(See Revelation 12:7-12 on Satan’s fall from heaven)

When he sees you are ready for battle, when he sees you on your knees seeking God – He is a coward and runs away as soon you take the name of Jesus and declare that you are washed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ.

Galatians 5:16

So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

Remember he taunts us every time by leaving his fetters and will try to come back later. We should continue resisting him.

3. Draw near to God.

Continue to bow to all His decisions, and to all his dispositions. Approach the Lord in the name of Jesus, by faith and through prayer.

Zachariah 1:3

Therefore tell the people: This is what the Lord Almighty says: ‘Return to me,’ declares the Lord Almighty, ‘and I will return to you,’ says the Lord Almighty.

Hebrews 11:6

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who **comes** to him must believe that he **exists** and that he rewards those who earnestly **seek him**.

Return to God, to the life of communion and conversation with God which was broken.

Ephesians 2:13

But now in Christ Jesus you who were once far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.

Romans 5:1-2

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of glory of God.

Draw near to God and the promise is that He will draw near to you. (James 4:8)

4. Have Clean Hands & Pure Hearts

Clean hands:

Remembering what the Old Testament priests used to do, we too need to wash our hands, to seek forgiveness from sin. We must put away from us outward sins, and also the inner attitude must be made right. Our hearts are to be purified.

Joel 2:12-13

‘Even now,’ declares the Lord, ‘return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.’ Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity.

Be afflicted and mourn and weep.

Inward feelings of grief are to be seen and have outward expression.

Sometimes we must change our laughter to mourning, our joy to heaviness.

Mourn deeply with grief and sincerity for the sins that separate us from God. Do not ignore sin but seek the forgiveness of sin.

Psalm 24:3-4

Who may ascend the hill of the Lord?

Who may stand in his holy place?

He who has clean hands and a pure heart,

who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false.

Paul says:

1 Timothy 2:8

I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing.

Hands must be free from blood, bribes and everything that is unjust or cruel, and free from every defilement of sin. Our hands can be clean by faith, repentance and reformation.

Pure hearts:

Matthew 5:8

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

The inward purification of the heart will be depicted by the outward amendment of life.

Your whole conduct must be changed, cease to do evil and learn to do well.

Separate yourself from the world and consecrate yourself to God.

5. Humble yourself

Matthew 5:5

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Humble thyself in the sight of the Lord and He will lift you high. (James 4:10)
Humble yourself before your God.

Job 42:5-6

My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes.

Simon Peter – in Luke 5:8

When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, 'Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man.'

He accepts the humble but resists the proud. (James 4:6)
The cure for evil desire is humility.

Proverbs 16:18-19

Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall. Better to be lowly in spirit and among the oppressed than to share plunder with the proud.

1 Peter 5:5-9

Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." (Proverbs 3:34)

Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

Matthew 23:12

For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

God gives grace to the humble, because the humble are the recipients of his presence. All our possessions, intelligence and physical strength, social status, are God's gifts, and should be rightly used.

Remember Samson and his strength when he was submitting to God but when pride came that he could handle things on his own strength, he failed completely and lost his sight and strength.

Absalom (David's son with long hair.) His hair was weighed and rewarded, but his pride became his fall. While pursuing after his father King David, his hair was caught up in brush, and he was killed.

The shepherds were ordinary humble people and God disclosed to them through his angels to announce the birth of the Savior.

The unlearned fishermen were chosen to despise and shame the men of so-called wisdom.

God uses the humble, holy, and honest people who submit themselves wholly to God and depend on His will, his wisdom, and his strength.

Paul says, I can do everything through him who gives me strength. (Philippians 4:13)

King James Version – instead of “him,” Christ is mentioned.

New English Bible – “I have strength for anything through him who gives me power.”