

**HIS GRACE LEADS TO YOUR GOOD AND HIS
GLORY**

James 4:6-10

MEN'S CONFERENCE 2011

INTRODUCTION: Beware of an *Unguarded Strength*, *Unsurrendered Heart*, and *Unintentional Sin*. James, realizing our propensity to sin, gave 10 antidotes to deal with sin.

A devotion from L.B. Cowman from Sept. 7th

**Psalms 46:1, “God is our refuge and strength,
A very present help in trouble.”**

“Why didn’t God help me sooner?” This is a question that is often asked, but it is not His will to act on your schedule. He desires to change you through the trouble and causes you to learn a lesson from it. He has promised, **“I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him.” (Psalms 91:15)** He will be with you in trouble all day and through the night. Afterward, He will take you out of it, but not until you have stopped being restless and worried over it and have become calm and quiet. Then He will say, *“It is enough.”*

“God uses trouble to teach His children precious lessons. Difficulties are intended to educate us, and when their good work is done, a glorious reward will become ours through them. There is a sweet joy and a real value in difficulties,

for He regards them not as difficulties but as opportunities.”

*Not always out of our troubled times,
And the struggles fierce and grim,
But in, deeper in, to our sure rest
The place of our peace in Him.*

Annie Johnson Flint

I. COMMENCES WITH A CONTRAST. 6

A. THE LORD WILL RESIST THE PROUD.

B. THE LORD WILL ASSIST THE HUMBLE.

II. CONTINUES WITH COMMANDS. 7-9

In v.7-10 James uses 10 imperatives; some positive and some negative, all middle voice. All call for immediate response; in a forceful and demanding way they call for action.

These 10 imperatives are an antidote to work against the every present disease – *pride*. These could be considered as “pills” that could lead to healing. They are prerequisites to “greater grace.”

A. CONSECRATION. 7-8a

1. Submit. 7

Passive form indicates the submission to it be voluntary. Submission is not the same as obedience; instead, it is the surrender of one's will, which leads to obedience. The “**therefore**” in v.7 reminds us that if the believer is unwilling to submit to the control of God in his life, he will never be open to the grace of God which has been promised to the “**humble**” in v.6

Submit is the principle of **Proverbs 3:5-6**
**“Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
And lean not on your own understanding;
In all your ways acknowledge Him,
And He shall direct your paths.”**

Hard for a *proud* person to submit. A proud life is hard to grace.

In **Luke 6:24-26**, Jesus warns us that when we are rich, well-fed, laughing, those who are spoken well of, are naturally weighted with the relentless gravity of pride and can find it difficult to humble yourself and submit in order to receive greater grace.

**"But woe to you who are rich,
For you have received your consolation.
Woe to you who are full,
For you shall hunger.
Woe to you who laugh now,
For you shall mourn and weep.**

**Woe to you when all men speak well of you,
For so did their fathers to the false prophets.”**

Woodrow Wilson used the phrase can “*strut sitting down.*”

A perfect prayer, “*Lord, what You will, where You will, and when You will.*” *Richard Baxter*

Submit means to place under orders; place in rank. When we submit, we cease fighting and begin surrendering; our lives and our future.

If we resist God, instead of submitting to God, we may very well find ourselves submitting to the devil while resisting God. What a costly and tragic mistake that would be.

Remember, to submit is to arrange under, take your position under, subordinate yourself.

Most people’s problems exist from failure to submit to the Lordship of Christ.

Matthew 6:33, “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”

To get the victory in the war with your soul you must first surrender.

W.W. Wiersbe, *“Unconditional surrender is the only way to complete victory.”*

2. RESIST. 7

“Resist the devil and he will flee from you” – stand opposed, speaks of drawing a line, an imperative which means we have a choice (resist devil or resist God).

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

The devil is not submissive to God and seeks to prevent our submission to Him. Our resistance must be decisive and uncompromising.

As we humbly submit to God we are enabled to courageously stand against the enemy. When we submit ourselves unto God, that leaves the devil face-to-face with Him.

“Resist” – is a military metaphor which means to stand against, as in combat. In **Eph 6:12**, it speaks of **“wrestle”** or struggle.

“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”

The struggle is supernatural; struggle (wrestle) suggests hand-to-hand combat.

This battle is:

- ◆ **Supernatural**
- ◆ **Personal**
- ◆ **Futile with conventional weapons**
(we need the armor of God)

Jesus said, **“If you are not for me, you are against me.”** Satan reverses

“he will flee from you” – indicates the promised victory is based on active resistance to the devil.

NOTE: He cannot hold a Christian against that Christian’s will. He cannot lead a believer into sin without the consent of that believer’s will.

Thomas a Kempis wrote, *“A good, devout person first arranges inwardly the things to be done outwardly...Who has a fiercer struggle than the person who strives to master himself and daily to grow stronger and advance for good.”*

3. Draw Near.

Psalms 73:28, “it is good for me to draw near to God; I have put my trust in the Lord God, That I may declare all Your works.”

We draw near as worshippers.

Psalms 51:16-17

**“For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it;
You do not delight in burnt offering.
The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit,
A broken and a contrite heart —
These, O God, You will not despise.**

Ritual without genuine repentance is useless.

Isaiah 57:15, “For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy:”I dwell in the high and holy place, with him who has a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.”

**Isaiah 66:2, ““For all those things My hand has made, and all those things exist,’ says the Lord. But on this one will I look:
On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit,
And who trembles at My word.”**

God is looking for a heart to dwell in, a heart that is tender and broken, not one concerned with the externalities of religion.

God is looking to dwell in the heart of a person who takes His Word seriously.

Come near; restored fellowship; come close to God. Verb is used of priests approaching God with their sacrifices and man's approach to God in worship and communion. James' readers had drifted away from God. This passage carries the assurance that God will welcome them back.

“He will draw near to you”

- ◆ **We submit as servants**
- ◆ **We draw near as worshippers**

It is also important to understand that in the very act of calling us to draw near to Him, God has initiated our response. Through His grace, He has wooed us to Himself. John Calvin wrote, *“But if anyone concludes from this passage that the first part of the work belongs to us, and that afterwards the grace of God follows, the Apostle meant no such thing...but the very thing (the Spirit of God) bids us do, He Himself fulfills in us.”*

The Prodigal Son's Experience

Luke 15:20, “And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.”

Inch toward God, and He will step toward you. The essence of this passage is prayer. Prayer is the soul’s desire to come to Him, to receive His love, to feel His power and presence as we conform to His will.

Some refer to this passage as a “*nearer nearness.*”

In Ephesians 2:13, “But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ”- we are reminded that we came near in Christ. Now as believers, there are times that the Lord calls us to “*come near.*”

As we come near we can see clearer. Many are so far from Him they cannot see themselves.

ILL. Isa. 6

He went into the temple to mourn the death of a King (Uzziah), whose sin caused his death. Isaiah left the temple celebrating a nearness to God that led to this “death of self” in a prophet (himself).

◆ He saw the Lord for Who He Is

- ◆ He saw himself for who he was
- ◆ He saw others for who they are

Isaiah 6:1-8, "In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!"

And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke.

So I said: "Woe is me, for I am undone!

**Because I am a man of unclean lips,
And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips;**

**For my eyes have seen the King,
The LORD of hosts."**

Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth with it, and said:

**"Behold, this has touched your lips;
Your iniquity is taken away,
And your sin purged."**

Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying:

**'Whom shall I send,
And who will go for Us?'**

Then I said, 'Here am I! Send me'"

What a contrast to **Isaiah 1:16-18** – Isaiah responds to his message from the Lord.

**"Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean;
Put away the evil of your doings from before
My eyes.**

**Cease to do evil,
Learn to do good;
Seek justice,
Rebuke the oppressor;
Defend the fatherless,
Plead for the widow.**

**"Come now, and let us reason together,"
Says the LORD,
"Though your sins are like scarlet,
They shall be as white as snow;
Though they are red like crimson,
They shall be as wool."**

Once a person decides to *submit*, it is then time to *commit*. If you become aware that distance has grown between God and you, it is time for heart searching.

EXAMPLE OF KNOWING GOD MORE INTIMATELY.

Philippians 3:10, "that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death."

“know Him” – intimacy

“power of His resurrection” – same power that rose Jesus from the dead

“fellowship of His suffering” – note personal pronouns: Him, His, His. Same surrendering to the Father’s will Jesus rendered, led to His exaltation.

Philippians 2:5-11, “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

**No Cross – No Crown
No Battle – No Victory**

B. CLEANSING. 8b

Repentance clearly defined.

“cleanse your hands, you sinners” – outward conduct, our lifestyle must be clean. We must deal with anything in us that creates enmity with God. Sinners miss the mark.

Romans 3:23, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”

This is a call to clean up one’s acts and life. The priest had to wash his hands before he could approach the holy place of Almighty God. Many believe James startles his readers by calling them **“sinners.”** not unsaved but sinful. The **“hands”** speak of what we do; the heart speaks of what we are.

“purify your hearts, you double-minded”

Proverbs 4:23, “Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.”

“purify” – used here of moral, inward spiritual purity.

“heart” speaks of inner life. **“Double-minded”** speaks of divided loyalties between the world and God; divided allegiance. Expresses fickleness and vacillates. It is the attitude that will keep the grace of God from flowing in the life of the Christian.

Matthew 5:8, “Blessed are the pure in heart,

for they shall see God.”

“pure in heart” – the simple-minded, they see God in this life, this purity of focus invites deeper spiritual understanding.

Jesus is reminding them and us that the only way to experience God’s greater grace and bring His presence near to us, is the consciousness and confession of our sin.

Isaiah 59:1-2, “Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.”

Remember, the **“double-minded”** – they waver between two opinions, someone who cannot make up their mind.

C. CONTRITION. 9a

A clear picture of brokenness. Brokenness occurs when we see our sins the way our Lord views them. When you choose to sin, you choose to suffer!

“Lament and mourn and weep!” – genuine repentance and brokenness. Believe me; pride will raise its head here. Old-fashioned pride destroys like cancer, slowly eating away at a humble heart that was

once dependent on God, creating a sense of self-sufficiency and a façade that we are as good at what we do that we cannot fail.

When Paul saw himself for what he was, he cried out, **“O wretched man that I am” (Rom 7:24)**. The old-time preachers used to urge us to *“keep short accounts with God.”* The moment the Holy Spirit convicts us of something, we should confess it and seek cleansing.

James seems to use *funeral language*.

“Lament” – be afflicted; underlying the word is the root for the word *callous*. The word conveys the thought of something miserable and painful.

Afflicted can mean to bear a hard substance; to grieve. While gloom is not a Christian characteristic, mourning over our sin is. **Lament** describes the wretchedness one ought to experience when he falls into sin. Means to be devastated; to be miserable, to be wretched; to be shamed; distressed. The word is used for army that is without food.

Charles Spurgeon wrote, *“There is a vital connection between soul-distress and sound doctrine.”*

“Mourn” – grieve, be sorrowful; a grief that cannot be concealed. John Trapp refers to it as being like a funeral grief. Expresses inner grief and wail.

Matthew 5:4, “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.”

“To repent is to accuse and condemn ourselves; to charge upon ourselves the desert of hell; to take part with God against ourselves, and to justify him in all that he does against us; to be ashamed and confounded for our sins; to have them ever in our eyes, and at all times upon our hearts, that we may be in daily sorrow for them; to part with our right hands and eyes, that is, with those pleasurable sins which have been as dear to us as our lives, so as never to have to do with them more, and to hate them, so as to destroy them as things which by nature we are wholly disinclined to. For we naturally love and think well of ourselves, hide our deformities, lessen and excuse our faults, indulge ourselves in the things that please us, are mad upon our lusts, and follow them, though to our own destruction.

Francis Fuller

The word for **“mourn”** is used to describe the distress of the world’s merchants over the collapse and overthrow of Babylon and the loss of all of their investments and trade.

“weep”– the only reason we do not weep is that we are so ***insensitive*** to the horror of sin, so ***ignorant*** of its consequences, and so ***careless*** about the holiness of God. This is ***weeping*** produced by godly sorrow.

*There is a tear that spots the cheek,
And speaks more than the tongue can speak,
In words without a name,
That tells of many a pang within,*

*Of many a foul and deadly sin,
It is the tear of shame.
H. Caunter*

“weep” – word is used of an animal in pain crying out loudly.

D. CHANGE. 9b

“Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom” – sadness instead of laughter; this is a scathing denunciation of Christians who are so insensitive and superficial that they are laughing when they ought to be weeping.

“be turned” – to turn around, change completely. The context of this passage beginning in v.1 speaks of the hollow laughter of superficial pleasure seekers (hedonism). Instead of laughing, they should be mourning their condition with a broken and contrite spirit. True joy follows genuine repentance.

Psalms 51:8, “Make me hear joy and gladness, that the bones You have broken may rejoice.”

Psalms 51:12, “Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me by Your generous Spirit.”

An old preacher was informed that in one of his services a certain woman had gotten “*joy in the Lord.*” His penetrating question was, “*Did she ever get any sorrow?*”

David Jeremiah refers to this verse as dealing with a frivolous attitude toward evil. Sin is a laughter and joy silencer!

**Lamentations 5:15-16, “The joy of our heart has ceased;
Our dance has turned into mourning.
The crown has fallen from our head.
Woe to us, for we have sinned!”**

Again, in James, what has given rise to these commands? It was the burning desire for pleasures that led James to issue this powerful call to all-out repentance.

“joy to gloom” – when one realizes what he has done he can’t help but be saddened. Your empty joy into humiliation. **“Gloom”** – means a hanging down of the eyes.

In **Luke 18:13** it’s the contrition of the publican. A word for dejection and shame. These words describe the Christian when he realizes sin in his life and he returns to God in repentance and submission. The chastening of our hearts because of our sins is not provocative or careless laughter. Mourning and gloom (heaviness) always accompany a deep sense of sin.

This passage is simply a portrait of a person under deep conviction of sin.

E. CONDITION. 10

No proud Christian is living close to Jesus! This verse gives us the sweet secret of joy. Instead of the “*heady*” and dangerous exaltation of the proud, here is promised to true elevation of all that God counts high; and in this sense of the words, the lower to higher!

Micah 6:8, “He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?”

Remember, it is never God’s desire to “*put you down,*” He is out to “*lift you up.*” It is sin that leads us down to death and destruction. The Lord delights in lifting you up.

We who would share His glory must likewise walk the low path of personal humility in likeness. He lifts us out of any circumstance whether it be temptation, sin, or despair.

The truth of v.6 is now made an imperative command. It is not a forced humiliation, but a voluntary self-abasement. Pride and lofty attitude must be laid aside in consideration of our unworthiness.

NOTE: “in the sight of the Lord” – means in the eyes or presence of the Lord. A person may submit outwardly but be full of pride inwardly. Humility must be genuine.

Dr. Donald Barnhouse, ***“Down is Up”***

1 Peter 5:6-7, “Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.”

Humility calls for a genuine realization of complete unworthiness. **II Chron 7:14, “If my people.....humble themselves”**

**Psalms 10:17, “Lord, You have heard the desire of the humble;
You will prepare their heart;
You will cause Your ear to hear”**

CONCLUSION:

- ◆ Submit to God
- ◆ Resist the Devil
- ◆ Come Near to God
- ◆ Purify Inner and Outer Life

◆ Mourn Over Your Sins

◆ Humble Yourself

◆ He will Lift You Up