

James 4:8-12: "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you."

It is a wonderful "divine invitation" extended to every child of God! O that it would be our heart's desire every day! We talked about this passage a bit on Sunday, but the Lord would not let me leave it off just yet.

I began to ask the Lord over and over again: How do I draw nigh to you, Lord? By devoting myself TO YOU, Lord, through "the means of grace" that you have given me?

If you and I would draw nigh to God, it is going to take some spiritual effort on your part! When we come to our reading, devotions, and prayers, we must come with a desire to draw near to and commune with God ...

We must not come to simply do our religious duties like chores, to gain knowledge for knowledge's sake, but to "draw nigh to God"!

How often do we open the Word, pray, or come to the gathering, and yet, we are no nearer to God than before we did these things? We learn theology and doctrine, and we gain knowledge, but we are no closer to God than before we knew these things!

THIS MUST NOT be your normal Christian!

Every one of us as believers ought to be "advancing, growing, maturing" both in knowledge, wisdom, and practice as we march toward heaven, drawing near to God with every step... NOT depending on our strength to continue but on God's strength! Psalm 84:1-7.

Always keep 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 CLOSE to your heart!

When the people of Israel gathered for worship, it was (CHS): "Not merely to be in the assembly, but to appear before God, (THAT must be why we open our Bibles, pray, gather with the saints) ... that was the object of each devout Israelite. Would to God it was the sincere desire of all who these days mingle in our religious gatherings. Unless we realize the presence of God, we have done nothing; the mere gathering together is nothing worth".

You cannot draw nigh to God without being affected, changed, and sanctified in your souls and spirits, Christian, and God will not draw nigh to you for no purpose! Philippians 2:12-13

And finally, on this thought, we live in the world, but we MUST NOT draw nigh to the world, but resist it ... we MUST NOT pitch our tents toward Sodom, we MUST NOT allow the world to influence us, we must not learn the customs and ways of the world ... The world is one of the great hindrances to keep you from "drawing nigh to God."

Friendship with the world is enmity with God!

Don't forget Psalm 73:27-28 from Sunday: "For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them

that go a whoring from thee. But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all thy works."

Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye doubleminded."

To CLEANSE your hands is like saying, cleanse yourself, your sinful ways, and your sinful doings. Psalm 9:16, Isaiah 3:11, Acts 2:23

1 John 2:29, Job 17:9, Psalm 24:3-5, 119:9

Psalm 24 then leads us to James' next command to the believers of his day, and us! "Purify your hearts, ye doubleminded." And how do you purify your hearts... 1 Peter 1:22-23, 2:1-2, John 15:3, 17:14-17

I cannot help but think of the 6th Beatitude: "Blessed or happy are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

And then, perhaps the greatest personal roadblock to "drawing nigh to God" to which each of us is prone... to be snared by doublemindedness!

To be doubleminded is to have two hearts and two loves...and to go back and forth between the one and the other. I can't help thinking of Jacob's two wives, Leah and Rachel! Genesis 29:31-34

How do you know if you are doubleminded? Double hearted?

You give your love and attention and your time to something or someone or to yourself in such a way that Christ is diminished and minimized. You enthrone something or someone else! In your mind, you haven't forsaken Christ; you just don't serve Him with your whole heart!

You CANNOT nor will you draw nigh to God with a double heart!

Elijah rebuked the children of Israel with the words: "How long halt ye between two opinions?"

Joshua 24:15-24. We must not forget the Words of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 6:24, 10:37, 1 Chronicles 12:33, 38

Next time: James 4:9: "Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness."

Afflict yourself, mourn, and weep over YOUR SINS!