

Pt 12 James Series (Faith Made Perfect) – Draw Nigh to God

A sermon series by Pastor Byron Chesney 05-02-2018

± James 4:7-12

- 7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.
- 8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *ye* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *ye* double minded.
- 9 Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and *your* joy to heaviness.
- 10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.
- 11 Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of *his* brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.
- 12 There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?

As we continue on in Chapter 4 of James, tonight, Lord willing, we will look at verses 7-12 which deals with drawing nigh to God.

Before we expound upon these verses I want to draw your attention to something. As I was studying through this I couldn't help but notice that there are numerous things that James is saying that we, as believers, need to do.

- Verse 7 = Submit and Resist
- Verse 8 = Draw nigh, Cleanse, and Purify
- Verse 9 = Be afflicted, mourn, weep, and turn
- Verse 10 = Humble
- Verse 11 = Don't Speak and Don't judge

That's 13 actions that we are told to put into motion in just 5 verses.

Many people state that the Book of James is Faith in Motion, and that's a good description for it. We've titled this series "Faith Made Perfect," because all of these things that we are to put into motion are for the purpose of perfecting our faith.

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

One thing that we must be well aware of in this Christian life is the fact that we have an enemy, and that enemy is the devil, also known as Satan. Over in **1 Peter 5:8** he is called our "**adversary**." Peter writes: **8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:**

That word **adversary** has the meaning as someone that opposes you in court. He's against you. He opposes everything you do.

Also notice that he said the devil is "**YOUR**" adversary. That makes it very personal. It's one thing to say the devil hates the Church, or the devil hates the LORD Jesus, but it's another thing to say the devil hates YOU! We need to always remember that the devil hates us individually. He personally wants to defeat you.

Knowing that fact, James tells us that we must "**submit**" ourselves therefore to God. To submit means "**to obey, to be subject to, to be controlled by.**" That means our thoughts, our conversation, our sight, our hearing, our lives, must be controlled by God. To submit ourselves to Him means that we agree with His Word and His Spirit and agree that we will be obedient and compliant to His Word and His Spirit. That is the very first part of resisting the devil. Don't ever think you can resist the devil on your own. He's much stronger than you are.

Not only are we to submit ourselves to God but we are to "**resist the devil.**" To **resist** means to "**oppose, to stand against.**" You cannot resist something that you are giving in to. You cannot resist something that you stand up with or allow. To resist you have to stand against it, guard against it, and to always be aware and ready to oppose it.

Perhaps you think you are immune to the devil and that he cannot get to you? Are you a better man than Simon Peter? Remember what the Lord said to him: **Luke 22:31 And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:**

You better believe that the devil would like nothing better than to sift us like wheat. Therefore, we must follow James' instructions to "**Resist the devil.**" Peter also said in **1 Peter 5: 9 Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.**

So, we are not told to fight the devil, we are told to "**resist**" the devil.

Then James follows that up with what happens when we resist: "**and he will flee from you.**" When we resist we are of no use to the devil. He is looking for someone that he can control. As long as you are resisting him and submitting yourself to God the devil doesn't have a chance. It's not until you let him get his foot in the door that he is able to control you. I like that James says the devil will "flee" from us. Not just walk away or sulk away but "flee" away from us. That means he RUNS from us. We become dangerous at that point.

8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *ye* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *ye* double minded.

When we submit ourselves to God and resist the devil we are to "**draw nigh to God.**" like that phrase "draw nigh to." It means to "**approach, to be at hand, to come up along side of.**" That is how we naturally react to something or someone that we love. That's what you do with your wife or your husband, your girlfriend or boyfriend, you draw up close to them because you want to be near to them. That's the way we need to be with God. James says when we draw nigh to him that "**he will draw nigh to**" us. Isn't that a beautiful picture? Look, if there is anyone that we need to be close to it is the LORD. I'm reminded of Enoch. He drew so nigh to God that God just took him on home with him: **Genesis 5:24 And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.** Talk about drawing nigh!

Then James adds; **Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.**

To have fellowship with God we must repent of our sins and let him cleanse us from our unrighteousness. He wants a clean vessel with a pure heart. Don't think you can have it both ways. James says you are "**double minded**" if you think you can have fellowship with God and be undefiled at the same time.

9 Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and *your* joy to heaviness.

You will never know true joy in salvation until you become afflicted and mourn and weep over your own sins. One of the biggest stumbling blocks with witnessing to people these days is getting them to realize how wretched they are in their sins. There is no longer any affliction, mourning, or weeping over sins. Instead, today, sin is celebrated, praised, and encouraged. If we could ever see sin the way that God sees sin, you better believe it would cause us to mourn and weep.

10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

Here is the key to recognizing ourselves as the sinful creatures we are. We must humble ourselves. Man today is the most prideful creature on earth. The whole world celebrates the pride of man. With the invention of social media it has only made things worse. As I have preached before, we have become a “Self-Absorbed, Selfie-World.”

You don’t believe everything you see on Social Media do you? It never ceases to amaze me at the lies that I see posted on places such as Facebook. You can’t believe half of what you see or read on there. All of these “perfect” families and the pictures where everyone is smiling and looks like they could be on a magazine cover. That’s not real. Just use software and manipulate everything. Nowadays you can make yourself skinnier, tanner, teeth whiter, eyes more colorful, you name it you can do it. Facebook should be renamed “Fakebook.”

But, with the invention of Social Media it has only led to an increase of pride. It wouldn’t surprise me at all to see someone kneeling down taking a selfie and titling it “**humbling myself.**”

The Bible has plenty to say about man’s pride:

Proverbs 8:13 The fear of the LORD *is* to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.

Proverbs 21:4 An high look, and a proud heart, *and* the plowing of the wicked, *is* sin.

Proverbs 16:5 Every one *that is* proud in heart *is* an abomination to the LORD: *though* hand *join* in hand, he shall not be unpunished.

Proverbs 26:12: Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? *there is* more hope of a fool than of him.

Psalms 73:6 Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment.

Jesus says **Mark 7:21-23** For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, 22 Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, **pride**, foolishness: 23 All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

We ought not to ever think we will have fellowship with God and be puffed up full of pride at the same time. James says **Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.**

We don’t have to lift ourselves up, He will lift us up. And, it’s not to bring us glory, it is to bring HIM glory.

11 Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.

Apparently, the Church in James’ day had the same problem the Church in our day has; we don’t know how to keep our mouth shut. James says: **Speak not evil one of another, brethren.** So, he’s talking about Church members talking about another Church member. When he says “**evil,**” you can interpret that to mean **negatively** or **falsely**, or **without authority.** It could be about their actions, their motives, their manner of living, their families, or whatever.

Did you know that more Churches split up over somebody running their mouth than they do over the color of the carpet or the type of hymn book used in the pew? We can work through those kind of things but once you open your mouth and say something about somebody there’s no taking it back. They may forgive you but they will never forget you.

All it takes is one person to allow the devil to use them to talk about somebody to cause an entire Church to split up; for a pastor to resign, for a deacon to quit, for a Sunday school teacher to walk off. I’ve seen it happen and it’s never pretty. It’s always ugly because evil is involved.

James says that when we do that we are making ourselves judges. We’ve taken it upon ourselves to put somebody on trial even though we have no authority whatsoever to do that. The problem with it is not only do we make ourselves judge but we also become our own jury. He says when we do that we have become “**judges of the law.**” We do not have that right, the law was not given by us and we have no authority to judge the law. And that is why James says what he does in the next verse:

12 There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?

The “**one lawgiver**” he is referring to is the Lord Jesus. The Prophet Isaiah writes this: **Isaiah 33:22** For the LORD *is* our judge, the LORD *is* our lawgiver, the LORD *is* our king; he will save us.

Ever since God introduced the law to mankind, mankind has attempted to make his own laws. The religious crowd wants to add laws on top of God’s laws and claim that we must follow them. Most of the time these manmade laws are only preferences of the person making them.

I invited a young man to come and preach here a few years ago and he asked me what color suit I allowed visiting preachers to wear and if a light blue suit would be okay? I asked him why he would wonder such a thing and he said that he had been invited to a Church to preach one time and when it came time for him to preach the pastor of that Church wouldn’t allow him to because he wasn’t wearing a black suit, a white shirt, and a red tie.

My oh my, we are no better than the Pharisees and Saducees were. They had created over 600 manmade laws and added them to the law of God and forced the people to keep them. That’s why my dad always said, “**that’s why they were Sad You See.**”

Listen, there’s only one lawgiver and it ain’t us. The Bible says that all judgment comes through Jesus Christ: **John 5:22** For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:

James says “**who is able to save and to destroy.**” Remember the words of Jesus: **Matthew 10:28** And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

And James ends it with **who art thou that judgest another?**

Is there someone else in here that can claim to be the Only Begotten Son of God? I didn’t think so. Therefore, we have no right to become judges.

† All Scripture from the Authorized King James Version