

March 30, 2014

Ten Commandments of James
(Part 2)

James 4:8-10

All Stand and Read Scripture

James 4:8-10

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

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 Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰ Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.

Prayer

INTRODUCTION:

So here are the Ten Commandments from James:

- I. Submit yourself to God.
- II. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.
- III. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.
- IV. Cleanse your hands, you sinners
- V. Purify your hearts, you double-minded.
- VI. Be miserable.
- VII. Mourn.
- VIII. Weep.
- IX. Let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom.
- X. Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.

In the previous messages from James we have been dealing with “worldliness”. James was writing to the Christian Jews who had been dispersed due to persecution. He was exhorting them to stay true to their faith and mature in their Christianity. Two of the purposes for writing chapter 4, including verses 7-10 which I am referring to as the Ten Commandments of James, were to define a test for worldliness and a solution for that worldliness.

I have read this many times before, but it is important that we understand what the deeds of the flesh are that define us as “worldly”. By knowing what we are to avoid in our lives, we can more effectively deal with them.

Galatians 5:19-21

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

¹⁹ Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, ²¹ envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these,

Paul exhorts us in I Cor. 13:5 to “**Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith.**” If you have examined your Christian faith and find that it is full of activities that have been described as worldly, James is telling us HOW to clean up our lives.

The first two commandments that we looked at last week were to

1. Submit ourselves therefore to God.
2. Resist the Devil and he will flee from you.

To avoid worldliness, James’ first commandment is to **SUBMIT OURSELVES TO GOD.**

When we accepted Christ as our Lord and Savior,

- We acknowledged that we needed Christ in our lives and asked God for forgiveness of our sins.
- We were buried with Christ through baptism into the likeness of Christ’s death on the cross.
- We were raised out of the water, as Christ rose from the dead, so that we might walk in newness of life.
- We became one with Christ, just as a man and woman, when married, become one.
- We were forgiven of our sins
- We received the Holy Spirit in our lives to help us in our Christian walk.
- Thus our body is no longer our own. We were bought with a price, the price of Christ’s death on the cross.

That is why James is reminding us that if we are a true Christian, we **must** **SUBMIT OURSELVES THEREFORE TO GOD.**

Secondly, he told us to **RESIST THE DEVIL AND HE WILL FLEE FROM YOU.**

Satan tries to make sin attractive, profitable, and fun. We must not let Satan distract us by

- Being careless of our actions.

- Placing more value on temporal things of the world than eternal things.

Satan is a very powerful enemy. We must have the Lord's strength on our side to resist him

So...let's tie all of this together to today's message:

Clearly James has in mind with his commands, a fellowship with God. As we have seen, salvation involves submitting to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Verse 6 says **Submit yourself therefore to God**. In order to receive salvation, you **MUST** submit yourself to God! You must not continue to live your **dirty, rotten life**. That is not the purpose of salvation! The purpose of salvation is to see where your sin has taken you and do an about face in your life. We come to the Lord, and say "Lord, Lord, I have sinned against you, come into my life, save my soul, and CHANGE me!" Because if you are going to be **saved** by God, you must **submit** to Him first.

James tells us that if you are a true Christian and have submitted yourself to God, that if we resist the devil, he will have to flee from you.

BODY:

This leads us to our message this morning as we continue with the "Ten Commandments" of James. Let's start this morning by looking at verse 8. It is our Third Commandment.

James 4:7-10

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

⁸ Draw near to God and He will draw near to you

III. Draw Near to God and He will Draw Near to You.

The way to resist the devil is to draw near to God. The devil will flee from you because he does not like to be in God's company. He wants to be "Like God", but he does not like God's company. God booted him out with a bunch of his followers. Satan knows his end. It will be in the Lake of Fire for eternity.

The devil will not get you unless you get too far away from God. If you get too far away from God, you are making yourself vulnerable.

ILLUSTRATION:

The wolf never attacks the sheep if it is with the rest of the sheep and the shepherd. The closer it is to the shepherd, the safer that sheep is. The problem is that we get too far from God. When we go wandering in the wilderness, we get too far from God.

So, this begs the question, how can we draw near to God?

IV. Cleanse your hands , you sinners.

The “hands” here are referring to outward sinful actions. The things we do outwardly.

Exodus 30:17-21

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

¹⁷ The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ¹⁸ “You shall also make a laver of bronze (a large wash bowl), with its base of bronze, for washing; and you shall put it between the tent of meeting and the altar, and you shall put water in it. ¹⁹ Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet from it; (when they were between the angels and the ark of the covenant, they were in the presence of God) ²⁰ when they enter the tent of meeting, they shall wash with water, so that they will not die; or when they approach the altar to minister, by offering up in smoke a fire *sacrifice* to the LORD. ²¹ So they shall wash their hands and their feet, so that they will not die; and it shall be a perpetual statute for them, for Aaron and his descendants throughout their generations.” (This was command was for Aaron and his descendants throughout their generations, or until Christ brought in the New Covenant and the Law was done away with.)

God told Moses that he must be clean when in the presence of God. Pictures in the Old Testament were foreshadows of realities in the New Testament.

You can't have fellowship with God if you are filthy. James tells us in verse 4 that if we are a “friend of the world” we are an enemy of God!

How do you get near to God? By being clean.
How do you remain clean? By confessing your sins to God.

V. Purify your hearts, you double-minded.

“Purifying your hearts is referring to inner sins. (Sinful thoughts, sinful attitudes)

A college professor once said, “At the heart of every problem is a problem of the heart”.

Philippians 4:8

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

⁸ Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.

We must have some areas that we will not allow our minds to go. A double-minded person is someone who professes Christ, but loves the world. When the double-minded is around Christians, he can put on the face of a Christian, but when he is away from them, he reverts to his worldly ways. He seems at home in the church and then he seems at home in the world.

You must decide which master you are going to follow.
Cleansing your hands and purifying your hearts is a continual process.

ILLUSTRATION:

You can't go into the bathroom and wash your hands just once and be done, "I don't need to wash them again, I washed them two years ago."

When you sin, you should confess it to God and ask His forgiveness. It is a continual process; it is not a onetime thing.

If you want to be close to God, draw near to God, confess your sins, and purify your hearts.

VI. Be Miserable.

VII. Mourn.

VIII. Weep.

IX. Let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom.

James is talking about worldly Christians.

Luke 9:23

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

²³ And He was saying to *them* all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.

The worldly Christian does not want to hear this. He wants everyone who cares to think that he is living his life for God, but when he is in the world, he wants to do deeds of the flesh.

James says if you are not continuously serving the Lord, we must be miserable. He is not talking about the outward display of misery, but an inward affliction of our soul. It is an inward mourning and weeping for our sin because it separates us from God. It separates us from the fellowship and blessings of God. The worldly things that caused us to laugh or gave us joy should be turned into mourning and gloom. The worldly ways should no longer give us pleasure.

The devil seeks whom he may devour. Until the Christian realizes that his worldly ways are separating himself from God, he is just like the sheep who wanders away from the other sheep and the shepherd.

I want to make it clear that James is NOT saying that we are to miserable, mourn, weep, and live in gloom as a Christian. He is NOT saying that we cannot laugh or have joy in our lives, if we are a Christian.

He IS saying that if you are claiming to be a Christian, but you are not living your life for God, then you **MUST** get it right with Him. Get away from worldly ways, and seek His forgiveness for your sins. He is saying, that our **laughter and joy** should **not be generated by worldly things**.

There is a right kind of laughter and a right kind of joy. We must keep our minds on heavenly things.

Galatians 6:7-8

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

⁷ Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. ⁸ For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

X. Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.

One commentary described humility this way: “The way up is down. The lowly one becomes the lifted one. There is a marked advantage to humility, eventually it brings honor.”

ILLUSTRATION:

Perhaps you have heard the story of the man who received recognition for being the humblest man in the church? They gave him a pin to wear. The following Sunday he wore it and they took it away from him for being proud. Humility is a lot like this. As soon as we think we are humble, we are not.

So, how do we humble ourselves to God?

- **Routinely confess your sin to God.**

Luke 18:10-14

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

¹⁰ “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.’ ¹³ But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, the sinner!’ ¹⁴ I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

All of us sin and fall short of the glory of God. However, too few of us have a routine practice of confessing our sins to God. Daily, review of your heart and behavior and ask God for forgiveness. It is an essential practice of humility.

- **Take wrong patiently.**

1 Peter 3:15-17

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

¹⁵ but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always *being* ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; ¹⁶ and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame. ¹⁷ For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.

When something is unjust we want to react and rectify it. However, patiently responding to the unjust accusations and actions of others demonstrates our strength of godly character and provides an opportunity to put on humility.

- **Be quick to forgive.**

Forgiveness is possibly one of the greatest acts of humility we can do.

Jesus taught us in the Lord’s prayer: **”Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.”**

To forgive is to acknowledge a wrong that has been done us. It also releases our right of repayment for the wrong.

Forgiveness is denial of self. Forgiveness is not insisting on our way and our justice.

- **Cultivate a grateful heart.**

The more we develop an attitude of gratitude for the gift of salvation and life He has given us, the closer we will get to God. We should be thankful for ALL He has given us. He supplies all of our needs. A grateful heart is a humble heart.

CONCLUSION:

James is telling us in his “Ten Commandments” that if we want to be right with God, we MUST:

- Submit ourselves fully to God.
- Resist the devil and he will flee from you.
- Draw near to God.
- Clean up our lives by washing our hands of our outward sin.
- Clean up our mind by purifying our hearts.
- Examine our faith. Make sure you have turned away from worldly ways. If you do not pass the test, let your soul be miserable, mourn, and weep and seek God’s repentance.
- Finally humble yourself to God. Let Christ be Lord in your life.

If you do not know Christ as your personal Savior, the window of opportunity is open for you now. God wants to come into your life. If you have not been baptized by immersion into Christ, won’t you come forward this morning and let God know that you are ready to live your life for Him and obey His commands.

If the Holy Spirit is convicting you to get away from worldly ways and rededicate your life to Christ. The invitation is open to you this morning.

We are also here with open arms, if you would like to identify yourself as part of this family in the Greenwood Christian church.

The Family of God

I’m so glad I’m a part of the family of God.
I’ve been washed in the fountain, cleansed by His blood!
Joint heirs with Jesus as we travel this sod,
For I’m part of the family, the family of God.