



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

A MESSAGE OF HOPE...SUBMIT TO GOD: JAMES 4:7

TO: COLORADO LEGISLATORS, SPOUSES AND THE GOVERNOR

MAY 3, 2011

Dan File, PO Box 1088, Lake City, CO 81235 dan.file@capitolcom.org Hm- 970.944.2551 Cell- 303.345.8830 Office- 970.944.1088 www.capitolcom.org

James recognizes a contrast between the yearning of our spirit to fulfill our sinful desires which competes for our love and the gift of grace God gives enabling us to overcome our sinful desires. James says God gives a "greater grace". No matter what the desire or temptation from our flesh or the world, God gives us more grace to overcome those sinful, selfish desires and we can walk the way God calls us to. God willingly and abundantly supplies all that we need to please Him. But this grace demands a response and that response is one of humility.

I. A MESSAGE OF HOPE: SUBMIT TO GOD- JAMES 4:7

James 4:7-10: "Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. 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."

God gives grace to the humble. And though His grace is free, it is never intended to enable us to take our sin lightly. James has rebuked his readers for seeking to fulfill their sinful pleasures in James 4:1-3. He rebuked them for their worldliness in James 4:4. In James 4:5 they are reproved for their disregard for Scripture which reveals their sin, and he rebukes them for their lack of devotion to God and pride in James 4:6. Then, James offers a call to repentance and salvation if we will simply humble ourselves, acknowledging our sins and need for the Lord Jesus Christ. Then God will extend His great grace and mercy so undeserved to us who are in such great need. And this promise of grace is the basis for what follows in James 4:7-10; a message of hope and encouragement to all who will heed the call.

A. "SUBMIT THEREFORE TO GOD" - JAMES 4:7A

James 4:7a: "Submit therefore to God."

James diagnosed their selfish strife as a result of their sin and pursuit of worldliness. This reveals the gravity of their condition. But James doesn't end with his reproof; rather he exhorts them to an urgent call of repentance with a godly, sincere sorrow for their sins that begins with submitting to God. Beginning with "Submit therefore", the "therefore" point back to the condition that has just been revealed in previous verses as the basis for what will be expressed next. Because they have yielded to their selfish desires and have fallen prey to the world's allurements, their sin has thus separated them from God. Consequently, James directs them to submit to God.

James begins with the aorist imperative, "submit", conveying the urgency with a need for immediate compliance. This is the first of 10 imperatives given by James in James 4:7-10 as he calls on us to deal with our sin. These commands are not to be taken lightly for they reveal the path to salvation. They are like military commands, demanding incisive actions and thus revealing the seriousness God places on true repentance.

%submit+Greek **%hypotasso**, "to rank under, subject oneself to obey, to station, to place, to order, unconditional surrender, put in order under."

It is arranging our life under God's direction. It is an immediate demand that they accept their proper station under God as their captain.¹ It is a call for voluntary submission to God and His will and this is a very hard thing for the proud to do for it is a complete humbling. It is hard for all of us to do because we all struggle with pride. Submitting means to place ourselves under God's authority, under Christ's lordship, and willingly commit to obey Him in all things. Motyer says this is more of an enlistment word, the taking up of allegiance to a greater Superior in order to engage in the fight under His banner. It speaks of a subordinate's readiness to await commands and do the will of the Superior.²

By using the word "submit", a clear hierarchy is suggested. To submit means to recognize lordship and authority of another. In Acts 5:29, Peter calls all to "obey God rather than men." The first step James calls us to, is that of recognizing Christ's lordship and God's authority in our lives over everything and giving way to that. Without reservation, we must completely arrange our life under His direction.

With this command James conveys a sense of urgency and immediate compliance. Don't wait. Submit to God now. Acknowledge your sin and "humble yourself in the presence of God", James 4:10. Paul implored the Corinthians in 6:2, "behold, now is "the acceptable time," behold, now is "the day of salvation." Tomorrow may be too late. Turn to God, acknowledge your sin, humble yourself and remember that God gives a greater grace (James 4:6). No matter what the desire or temptation from our flesh or the world, God gives us more grace to overcome those sinful, selfish desires and we can walk the way God calls us to. While God has taken up His station against the proud and arrogant sinner who exalts himself, James now offers encouragement for all who are humble and God will abundantly give His grace to those who have a humble heart and submit to Him.

B. "RESIST THE DEVIL" - JAMES 4:7B

James 4:7b: "Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil..."

The second imperative James gives is to resist the devil. Again, there is no middle ground for who controls your life. You are either submitted to God, acknowledging His rightful rule and reign in your life or you are a friend of the world and the ruler of this world, the devil. James calls us to repentance and that requires us to submit to God and resist the devil. What does that mean?

%resist+Greek **%anthistemi**, "to set against, to withstand, oppose, a military term of manning the defenses and withstand or stand against."

James reminds us that we are always engaged in a conflict between the devil's control and God's. We cannot be both friends with the world and a friend of God's. Just as God is constantly opposing the proud in James 4:6, we are to continuously stand against the devil. It carries the same idea. And we are to always be manning the defenses in our life, realizing the enemy's pressure will never stop vying for control. Who is the devil?

BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS: TUESDAY @ 7:15 AM, RM 0109 – COLORADO STATE CAPITOL

STAFF, LOBBYISTS, SERGEANTS & JOURNALISTS: TUESDAY @ 12:00 PM, RM 271 – COLORADO STATE CAPITOL

CAPITOL COMMISSION COLORADO

A MESSAGE OF HOPE...SUBMIT TO GOD: JAMES 4:7

%devil+Greek %diabolo, meaning the slanderer, giving description of the devil's primary activity, God's enemy, the chief power of evil, God's enemy who is constantly engaged in seeking to subvert the allegiance of God's people by leading them into self centered worldliness.

The devil is opposed to God and his realm is the world. He seeks to subvert the allegiance of people to himself and is an enemy to God. Scripture refers to him as the deceiver. Beginning with the first sin in Genesis 3 until now, Satan seeks to deceive all about the truth of Who God is and what He has done. Ephesians 4:27 says, "do not give the devil an opportunity" and later, "Put on the full armor of God that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places." Ephesians 6:11-12. Peter wrote in 1 Peter 5:8-9, "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world."

We are called to "resist" the devil, constantly standing against the devil, manning the defenses, for the pressure is ceaseless and we will constantly be under fire by Satan. We will be engaged in this conflict our entire life. This is a perpetual resistance against the devil. By placing ourselves under God's authority means that we refuse to bow to the devil's authority. And whatever power Satan has, the Christian can be absolutely certain he has been given the ability to overcome that power.³

C. AND HE WILL FLEE FROM YOU - JAMES 4:7C

James 4:7: "Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."

God offers an added promise to assure us that resistance is possible against the devil. When James says, "Resist the devil **and**..." (emphasis added), "and" indicates that the victory is based on the ongoing resistance to the devil. It is important to understand that Satan is a defeated enemy and he has no power over the believer. Our Lord's victory over Satan culminated at the cross as Jesus spoke before going to the cross in John 12:31-33, "Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world shall be cast out." And though Satan is defeated, he is persistence and we must constantly be vigilant, withstanding the devil's deceptive schemes as Ephesians 6:11-12 reminds us. One day, Satan will be cast into the lake of fire, condemned eternally by God as Revelation 20:10-15 says. Until then, we must constantly take our stand in opposition to Satan as our true enemy in perpetual resistance against him.

D. A CALL TO SALVATION - JAMES 4:7-10

James doesn't want us to be deceived about the genuineness of our faith, constantly calling on us to examine our lives to see if the faith we profess is actually possessed. James has warned us in chapter 3 against a worldly wisdom that is earthly, natural and demonic that results in jealousy, selfish ambition leading to disorder and every evil thing. We learned in James 4 that you can't be a friend of the world and a friend of God. There is no middle ground for if you are a friend of the world, pursuing the lust of your flesh and selfish desires, then you have made yourself an enemy of God. James has wasted no words in dealing clearly with sin, exposing our hearts and motives. And it is that sin that separates us from God. This stands as a

warning to all, demonstrating a true need for salvation found in Jesus Christ alone offered in James 4:7-10.

In Acts 17:30, God calls all to repent, "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent." It is God's sincere desire that no dies in their sin unsaved, 2 Peter 3:9, "but for all to come to repentance." 1 Timothy 2:4 reminds us of God's heart, "who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." The invitation from our Lord is clear, "Come to Me all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28-30. We come to the Lord recognizing our sin and our need for a Savior as James has emphasized; humbling ourselves and submitting to God. In Luke 24:46-47 Jesus said, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem." Acts 4:12 reminds us that "there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved." It's not that we may be saved, no, by which we "must" be saved. We are all in desperate need of salvation. We must be saved! But how does that happen? The Philippian jailer asked Paul and Silas the very same question in Acts 16:30-31 and they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved..." Romans 10:9-10 confirms that "if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation."

The "greater grace" James has just mentioned in James 4:6 is God's justifying, sanctifying, glorifying grace of salvation, that divine, sovereign, loving favor that He freely bestows on undeserving sinners who trust in His Son, Jesus Christ, as Savior and Lord. His redeeming grace is greater than the power of sin, greater than the power of the flesh and the world, greater than the power of Satan. No matter how sinful a person may be, no matter how much he may love and follow the world, no matter how enslaved to the lusts and passions for the things of the world he may be, God's grace has more than sufficient power to save, redeem, purify and sanctify.⁴

Yes God gives a "greater grace" to those who are humble, James 4:6. What comfort there is in this verse! It tells us that God is tirelessly on our side. God never falters in respect to our needs. He always has more grace. His resources are never at an end. His patience is never exhausted. His generosity knows no bounds. He gives more grace. God is sufficient for our every need. God is tirelessly on our side!⁵

And with that, God calls men everywhere to repent of their sin and turn to God and be saved! That's our responsibility. James calls us to "Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double minded. Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you." God's grace demands a response. What is yours?

¹Hiebert, D. Edmond, *James*. Moody Bible Institute: Chicago, Illinois, 1992. Pg. 236.

²Motyer, J.A., *The Message of James*. InterVarsity: Downers Grove, Illinois, 1985. Pg.150, 151.

³Moo, Douglas J., *The Letter of James*. Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2000. Pg.193.

⁴MacArthur, John, *MacArthur Commentary on James*. Moody Press: Chicago, 1998. Pg.203.

⁵Motyer, J.A., *The Message of James*. InterVarsity: Downers Grove, Illinois, 1985. Pg.150, 150.