



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

A MESSAGE OF HOPE AND ASSURANCE: JAMES 4:7-8a

COLORADO

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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. God will extend His great grace and mercy so undeserved to us who are in such great need. This promise of grace is the basis for what follows in James 4:7-10; a message of hope and encouragement to all who heed the call.

A MESSAGE OF HOPE AND ASSURANCE- JAMES 4:7-8A

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.”

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

James diagnosed their selfish strife as a result of their sin and pursuit of worldliness in James 4:1-6. 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.

A. “SUBMIT THEREFORE TO GOD” - JAMES 4:7A

James 4:7a: “Submit therefore to God.”

Beginning with “Submit therefore”, the “therefore” point back to the condition in previous verses as the basis for what will be expressed next. Because they have yielded to their selfish desires and fallen prey to the world's allurements, their sin has separated them from God. Consequently, James directs them to “submit to God” an aorist imperative verb, conveying the urgency with a need for immediate compliance. This is the first of 10 imperatives given by James in 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 true repentance and salvation. They are like military commands, demanding incisive actions.

%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 to accept their proper station under God as their captain.¹ It is a call for voluntary submission to God and His will. 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 and giving way to Him. Without reservation, we must completely arrange our life under His direction. 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 offers encouragement to all who are humble. God will abundantly give His grace to those who 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. That requires us to submit to God and resist the devil.

%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, so we are to continuously stand against the devil in 4:7. 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?

%devil+Greek **%diabolo**, “meaning the slanderer, God's enemy, the chief power of evil, constantly engaged in seeking to subvert the allegiance of God's people by leading them into self-centered worldliness.

BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS, GOVERNOR & SPOUSES: TUESDAY AT 7:15AM, CAPITOL BASEMENT, ROOM 0109

STAFF, LOBBYISTS, JOURNALISTS & SERGEANTS: TUESDAYS AT NOON, CAPITOL, ROOM 271

Colorado

A Message of Hope and Assurance...James 4:7-8a

The devil is opposed to God. 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.” (Eph. 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...” This is a perpetual resistance against the devil and placing ourselves under God’s authority means we refuse to bow to the devil’s authority. Whatever power Satan has, Christians 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.

II. A MESSAGE OF ASSURANCE... DRAW NEAR- JAMES 4:8A

James 4:8: “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double minded.”

James issues this third command to “Draw near to God.” Once again this is a call for a decisive and complete return to God.

A. “DRAW NEAR TO GOD” - JAMES 4:8A

James 4:8a: “Draw near to God...”

The divine call of God to us is “come near”. God is calling us to intimate fellowship with Him. Through salvation, we submit to God as our Lord and Savior and that brings a sincere desire for a true relationship with Him. We are called by God to draw near in intimate fellowship, to communion with the living, eternal almighty God.⁴ What an incredible privilege that is. This is an invitation of definite turning towards a treasured communion with the living Lord Jesus Christ. There is nothing greater than knowing, having a deep, personal and growing relationship with the God Who created the universe. Paul said his passion and pursuit was, “that I may know Him, and the

power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.” (Philippians 3:10) God is calling us to draw near to Him, to approach Him. So what does it mean to draw near to God?

1. A QUALIFIED APPROACH - JAMES 4:8A

James 4:8: “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double minded.”

The remainder of James 4:8 makes it clear that repentance is our first step towards God. Coming near to holy God necessitates a call to repentance and purity. We will study this in greater depth but it speaks to a qualified approach of sincerity, repentance and humility.

2. AN OBEDIENT APPROACH - JAMES 4:8A

The truly redeemed one will long for communion with God. Moses called on God’s people in Deuteronomy 6:5, to, “love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.” With all their might, utmost exertion, maximum strength, and supreme effort; God’s people were called to love Him with their heart and soul. But this doesn’t just happen. You don’t just “drift” into fellowship with God. It takes regular, discipline time in God’s Word, prayer, private and public worship, devoting ourselves to Christian fellowship and cultivating every avenue where we can draw near to God.⁵ This is a serious commitment of obedience, passion and pursuit to know God and grow in our relationship with Him. It’s a commitment to deliberately cultivate fellowship with God.

B. “AND HE WILL DRAW NEAR TO YOU” - JAMES 4:8A

James 4:8a: “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.”

If we sincerely draw near to God with all that means, then we can be assured of His favorable response, “and He will draw near to you.” Just as in Luke 15:20, the prodigal son received his father’s favorable response when he repented and returned in humility to his father, so believers find God watching; waiting to welcome and restore His children into His waiting arms of fellowship. God wants us to know Him, to seek Him and we will find Him; in rich fellowship and communion when we search for Him with all our heart. (Jeremiah 29:12-14) How do we come to God? With a sincere, repentant, clean and pure heart! How do we draw near to God? Daily, regularly, individually and corporately; devoted to communion with Jesus Christ and cultivating constant fellowship with God. And what comes from drawing near to God- *a sweet fellowship with our living Lord and eternal God!*

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.205.

⁵Motyer, J.A., *The Message of James*. InterVarsity: Downers Grove, Illinois, 1985. Pg.152.