

## Daily Bible Study

### *“10 Illustrations of a Genuine Christian” Part-1*

*James 4: 7-10*

*February 19 – February 23, 2024*

**MONDAY** –This week we continue on in James and take as our text, **James 4:7-10**: *“Therefore submit 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. Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.”* We are going to look at 10 commands that are given by James which illustrate to us what a genuine Christian looks like. As mentioned before, many people come to this book of James and see only true Christians being spoken to. James is in fact addressing genuine believers but he is also having people test themselves against the measure of Sacred Scripture to see if they are true children of God. We have seen over and over James give us tests to determine if we are truly born again Christians and this week’s text is no exception as he spells out clearly 10 commands that help us see who is and who isn’t a Christian. As believers, we also read this and are instructed to embrace and grow in these things as we mature in the Christian life. This passage could also be viewed as an invitation to becoming a Christian. You wouldn’t find these things in many of the “gospel pitches” we heard given today. This is straightforward and hard hitting as it should be when we are dealing with the reality of eternity separated from God in punishment or joy unspeakable and full of glory with Him forever. It may sometimes seem overbearing to some as God continues to outline the importance of this matter throughout His Word. We see his heart as He from beginning to end calls men to repent of sin, turn to Him and be saved. Through the pen of Moses He said, *“This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the Lord your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him.”* (**Deuteronomy 30:19-20**) Again in Isaiah the prophet, *“Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake their ways and the unrighteous their thoughts. Let them turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.”* (**Isaiah 55:6-7**) And Jesus Himself offers the invitation in **Matthew 11:28-29** when He says, *“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”* The invitation still stands for you and I and all men and women the world over.

*(Meditate & Apply) Have I responded in faith and obedience to The Lord’s invitation?*

*(Pray): Father, thank You that You so care for me that You offer me forgiveness and salvation through Jesus. Help me always listen to Your voice and empower me to obey.*

**TUESDAY** – **James 4:7**: *“Therefore submit to God.”* The first illustration James gives us is that of submission. We have all seen the child who does the opposite of what his parents command and refuses to obey with detestable rebellion. Mankind, like the little disobedient child is rebellious toward The Lord. The Greek word used here for *submit* is *hupotassō*, which is a military term meaning “to be subject, subordinate, to submit to the orders or directives of someone, to place or rank under, to obey, obedience, submission.” When James says “*submit*,” he actually means “obey”. Submission to The Lord is obedience to Him. Luke uses the same Greek verb when he describes the twelve-year-old Jesus who “*was obedient*” to Mary and Joseph (**Luke 2:51**). This phrase pictures a voluntary act of placing oneself under the authority of someone else to show him respect and obedience. We see it in many relationships in Scripture; citizens are to obey governing authorities (**Romans 13:1–7, 1 Peter 2:13**), wives to their husbands (**Ephesians 5:22, Colossians 3:18, Titus 2:5, 1 Peter 3:1**) and servants to their masters (**Titus 2:9, 1 Peter 2:18**). The main and obvious relationship in view here is a person to God Himself. No one is a Christian who hasn’t submitted to God. As we have seen, voluntarily placing oneself under the sovereign hand of The Almighty and seeing and obeying Him as Lord, following Him and His commands regardless of how one thinks or feels about them. This is foundational in “being” a Christian.

*(Meditate & Apply) Have I submitted myself to God? Am I living a life marked with obedience to His will, following Him regardless of how I feel or think about situations?*

*(Pray): Lord, forgive my sin of rebellion and help me submit and obey You and Your Word.*

**WEDNESDAY** – **James 4:7**: *“Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”* This next illustration of a true Christian is that of *resistance*. The word *anthistēmi* means to oppose, stand against, resist. By submitting to God in obedience we automatically take this posture of resistance to Satan. When we are obedient to God and His law, Satan seeks to interfere by leading us into temptation. Paul reminds us of this as well in **Ephesians 6:11** where he tells us to *stand against the wiles of the devil*. Peter also in **1 Peter 5:9** says, *resist him steadfast in the faith...* Jesus taught us to pray, *deliver us from the evil one* in **Matthew 6:13**. The assurance we receive from James through Holy Scripture is that that *he will flee from you*. This is a fact we must believe and understand. The Gospels and Acts are filled with examples of Satan and his demons fleeing before Jesus’ Divine authority. When we obediently do God’s will, Satan cannot lead us astray but must flee. Martin Luther once said concerning the devil that if we sing psalms and hymns or read Scripture, Satan will flee from us lest he scorch his wings. As a footnote, Luther on the power of praise and God exalting music said, “Music is hateful and intolerable to the devil. I truly believe, and do not mind saying, that there is no art like music, next to theology. It is the only art, next to theology, that can calm

the agitations of the soul, which plainly shows that the devil, the source of anxiety and sadness, flees from the sound of music as he does from religious worship. That is why the Scriptures are full of psalms and hymns, in which praise is given to God. That is why, when we gather round God's throne in heaven, we shall sing His glory. Music is the perfect way to express our love and devotion to God. It is one of the most magnificent and delightful presents God has given us." Adversely, that is why music which exalts sinfulness attracts Satan Himself. A word of warning is here for us however. This is no once and done thing in battling Satan and his foes. When Jesus was finished being tempted by Satan Scripture tells us, "Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time". (Luke 4:13). He will flee when we resist him beloved but make no mistake, even as we see in the life of our Lord Jesus, he waits for an opportune time to come back around.

*(Meditate & Apply) Can I think of things in my life that I participate in that show either submission to God and resistance to Satan or an invitation to worldliness, self and Satan?*

*(Pray): Father, thank You for protecting me from evil when I run to You and cry out. Help me continue in obedience and submission and therefore resistance to Satan. .*

**THURSDAY – James 4:8:** "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you." The third illustration is one of a deliberate, cultivated fellowship. Again, this is a requirement to be a Christian. James says to draw near to The Almighty, eternal God in intimate fellowship. Seeking God and nearness to Him is something only a person who knows and loves God can or will do. David's words in **Psalm 42:1** explain, "As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God." This is only the attitude of the believer. We see all throughout the Old Testament that the priests had this task getting themselves consecrated as well as God's people in order to draw close to The Lord. All of that work was fulfilled in Jesus, The Great High Priest who has made final atonement for our sins and has brought us near to God. **Hebrews 10:12**, "But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God". **Ephesians 2:13**, "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ." We are warned to not merely draw near to God with our words and mouth (**Isaiah 29:13**) but truly with sincere hearts pursue His presence. We then find a beautiful promise in the words, "He will draw near to you." David said in **Psalm 145:18**, "The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth". Also given originally to David's son Solomon, "As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever." (**1 Chronicles 28:9**). We have assurance that The Lord is near to those who genuinely seek Him. The Lord's promise through Jeremiah the prophet was that "You will seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart" (**Jeremiah 29:13**). The problem of nearness to God is never with Him beloved, it is with us. **Isaiah 59:2** reminds us that it is OUR sin that has

separated us from God. The most important thing a man can do is to draw near to God. It is when we are near Him we have peace. As the hymn writer reminds us, "There is a place of quiet rest, near to the heart of God; a place where sin cannot molest, near to the heart of God. O Jesus, blest Redeemer, sent from the heart of God, hold us who wait before thee near to the heart of God." The true Christian longs for communion with His God.

*(Meditate & Apply) Is my face toward God and my back to the world or vice-versa?*

*(Pray): Father, help me to draw near to You in worship, communion and praise.*

**FRIDAY– James 4:8** "Cleanse your hands, you sinners..." The fourth command given by James which illustrates to us the life of a true Christian is cleansing. This language finds its roots in the Jews meticulous attention to cleansing, especially in relation to the priests in preparation of sacrifices and to enter into the presence of The Lord. David also expounds on the necessity of cleansing to come before the Lord in **Psalm 24:3-4**; "Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn deceitfully." Obviously this command pertains to all of us but the text gives us an interesting clue that James is speaking primarily to professing Christians who are really unbelievers when he uses the word *sinners*. The term *sinner* was given to someone who disregarded the law of God and flouted standards of morality. That is the life of the unbelieving world. In every other place that this Greek word is used in Scripture it is used of unbelievers and this therefore would be the only exception. James readers would have immediately been reminded of **Psalm 1** among other places where God says how "blessed is the man that does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly or stand in the way of sinners..." Jesus used the word in **Matthew 9:13**, **Luke 5:32**, and **Mark 2:17** where He says He came to call *sinners* to repentance. So James is primarily calling for unbelievers to turn in repentance to God for salvation and forgiveness from their sin. Sin is defiling and only the blood of Jesus can cleanse it. Paul tells Timothy in **1 Timothy 1:15**, "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." Although James is challenging his readers concerning their salvation it is not to say we as Christians do not need to be about this work of cleansing. He says, *Cleanse your hands...* The hands become a revealer of the heart. We become what we think and do and what we mentally dwell on. Believers need to have clean hearts and hands so all we think, do and say points directly to Jesus and His glory.

*(Meditate & Apply) Have I come to Jesus in faith and in repentance toward God for true cleansing? Are my hands, mind and mouth a reflection that I have been cleansed?*

*(Pray): Father God, thank You that I have been cleansed and made clean before You through Jesus. Help me live in such a way that I shine a bright light in this dark world of the power You have to transform a sinner.*