

## Daily Bible Study

### *“10 Illustrations of a Genuine Christian” Part-2*

*James 4: 7-10*

*February 26 – March 1, 2024*

**MONDAY** –This week we continue on in James and again 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 the second part of the 10 commands that are given by James which illustrate to us what a genuine Christian looks like. We pick up the text in the final part of **verse 8** where we read, *“...and purify your hearts, you double-minded.”* The 5<sup>th</sup> command given here by James is for purification. *Cleanse your hands and purify your hearts* correspond to one another as do *sinners* and *double minded*. James is calling for a repentance that changes both the heart and the behavior. The hands and tongue reflect what is in the heart. A. W. Pink observed that the hands and tongues are the shops, and the heart is the warehouse. To merely cleanse one’s hands without also purifying the heart is pointless. It actually happens the other way around. He said they were *double minded*, which literally means double-souled. They had divided loyalty between God and the world. Again remember the unsaved man is being addressed who thinks he is a Christian. We as genuine believers do well to hear this as well. Their “*hearts*”, their will and affections were not for God but self. The prophet said, *“Wash your heart from evil, O Jerusalem, that you may be saved”* (**Jeremiah 4:14**). And we know the classic verses in **Ezekiel 36:25-27** where God spells out what happens in the salvation of a soul. *“Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them”*. This is what James is calling for. The 18<sup>th</sup> century preacher George Whitefield said, “Every man, by his own natural will, hates God; but when he is turned to the Lord, by evangelical repentance, then his will is changed; then his conscience, now hardened and benumbed, shall be quickened and awakened; then his hard hearts shall be melted, and his unruly affections shall be crucified. Thus, by that repentance, the whole soul will be changed, and he will have new inclinations, new desires, and new habits.” May we return to the Lord as directed by **Isaiah 55:6-7**, *“Seek*

*the Lord while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; Let him return to the Lord, And He will have mercy on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.”*

*(Meditate & Apply) Do I have a pure heart reflected in clean hands through my behavior?*

*(Pray): Father, thank You that You are ready and quick to forgive the genuine penitent sinner. Help me to be repentant and broken over my sin and turn to Jesus cross by faith for mercy.*

**TUESDAY** – **James 4:9**: *“Lament...”* This 6<sup>th</sup> command or illustration of a genuine Christian will not score highly on many people’s list. This one word in the Greek, used only here in the New Testament literally means miserable or wretched. It is speaking to the point of being broken and feeling wretched of being separated from God, distant from Him because of my sin. This is something a man who is born again feels and what a man must come to feel and realize in order to be a Christian. No one is a Christian who doesn’t realize he NEEDS to be SAVED. He is lost and miserable in sin and The Holy Spirit’s conviction and turns to Jesus in faith to have this burden lifted from Him. Like the tax collector in **Luke 18:13**, he cries, *“Lord, be merciful to me a sinner”*. Charles Spurgeon wrote, “There is a vital connection between soul-distress and sound doctrine. Sovereign grace is dear to those who have groaned deeply because they see what grievous sinners they are.” The *lamenting* that James is mentioning is not the feeling miserable about the circumstances of life hoping God will come around and make things better. It isn’t also some manufactured misery to make oneself seem humble and deserving of God’s grace. It is merely genuine heart felt brokenness over our sin and an understanding that we have violated the ultimate standard and apart from Jesus rescuing us deserve judgment from a Holy God.

*(Meditate & Apply) Am I broken over my sin? Do I feel the burden of misery that comes from truly understanding my condition or do I merely get miserable when things don’t go my way?*

*(Pray): Father, help me to truly feel the burden of my sin and then rejoice in faith for Jesus sacrifice which pardons me and cleanses me and gives me joy.*

**WEDNESDAY** – **James 4:9**: *“...and mourn...”* Command #7 simply tells us that genuine Christian people *mourn*, they have sorrow for their sin. Kent Hughes states, “... while gloom is not a Christian characteristic, mourning over our sin is.” The Greek word *pentheo* means mourn, be sad, and grieve. The idea is that of deep grief, like mourning

that takes place over the death of a close loved one or relative. The other aspect of this grief is spiritual. Scripture teaches us that repentance and grief go together. Jesus Himself in The Sermon on the Mount said, “*Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted*” (**Matthew 5:4**). Obviously He is talking about spiritual mourning over sin as the entire sermon there is an invitation to follow Him in repentance and faith for salvation. Grieving over one’s sin is something Christian people do. We grieve because of sins we have committed against God and others. We see many examples of this from Scripture. David shows his grief for sin in many of his psalms. In **Psalm 6:6** he pleads for God’s mercy and cries out, “*I am worn out from groaning all night long I flood my bed with weeping and drench my couch with tears.*” That is some serious sorrow for one’s sin. Paul, describing his struggle with sin, says in **Romans 7:24-25**, “*O wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?*” He himself gives the answer: “*Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord!*” Christians both struggle with and mourn over the sin and sinful condition and look to Jesus for forgiveness and comfort now and complete deliverance forever realized at the last day.

*(Meditate & Apply) How is my attitude toward my sin? Do I mourn over it when I’m not right with God?*

*(Pray): Father, Help me to be more aware of how my sin grieves You and may I have a mournful spirit over it yet look with hope and joy to the forgiveness and deliverance in Christ.*

**THURSDAY – James 4:9:** “*...and weep; Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.*” The 8<sup>th</sup> command is that we should weep. This is the outward manifestation of being miserable and sorrowful for our sin. Men don’t cry they say. Christian men do cry beloved. Hearts that are right with God feel the weight of the realities of the Gospel and emotional response in tears is often an expression of it. You will remember when Peter denied Jesus before His crucifixion, that when Peter saw Jesus, and thought about what he had done, as Scripture tells us, “*he began to weep*”. Command # 9 follows with words very reminiscent of Jesus. “*Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.*” This is a call to seriousness. I say it often, everything is a joke today in our society. It is laughed off, mocked, turned into a meme etc... The very opposite of what Scripture says Christians should do and behave like. Remember these things are illustrations of what a Christian looks like as well as command for unsaved people to follow to turn in faith to Christ. Again, the similarity to a word of Jesus is unmistakable: “*Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep*” (**Luke 6:25**). James is not saying Christians should be somber face and gloom and doom. Rather, we ought to be happy in the Lord, thankful for the gift of salvation, and obedient in doing the

will of God. When we fall into sin and turn toward Jesus, a change must occur. Laughter and joy are silenced. When we reflect on our sin we are filled with mourning and gloom. “*Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death*” (**2 Corinthians 7:10**).

*(Meditate & Apply) Do I cry about anything that is spiritual or biblical or is it merely worldly types of things which move me emotionally? How serious am I about this life or do I, like the world turn everything into a joke and frivolity?*

*(Pray): Lord. Help me to be moved when I contemplate the beauties and wonder of You and Your gospel. Help me to be more serious concerning this life that You have blessed me with.*

**FRIDAY– James 4:10** “*Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.*” The 10<sup>th</sup> and final command given which illustrates the genuine Christian is humility. James returns to the subject he introduced in the Old Testament quotation from **verse 6**: “*God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble*”. Humility is what is called for here and it is Beloved the starting and ending point of salvation in the life of an individual. NO ONE is saved who has not first humbled himself before The Holy God. The theme of God exalting or lifting up the humble is prominent throughout Scripture. The Word of God is clear on this point. **Psalm 149:4**, “*For the Lord ... crowns the humble with salvation*”. **Proverbs 3:34**, “*The Lord ... gives grace to the humble*”. **Ezekiel 22:26**, “*The lowly will be exalted and the exalted will be brought low*”. **Matthew 23:12**, “*For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted*”. **1 Peter 5:6**, “*Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up*”. Suffice to say, we could go on and on. This call is about as the Greek term *tapeinoo* means, to make low. Making yourself low is not some weird self put down mentality but an abasement that sees your unworthiness and lostness in the eyes of God because of your sin regardless of what others see or think about you. Mark it down big bold and straight beloved, God always honors the spiritually humble. The prodigal son is a beautiful illustration of this humility and men and women, like him will be received and embraced by a loving Father when we turn to Him in humility.

*(Meditate & Apply) Have I humbled myself before a Holy God? Do I do it regularly as a believer? Do I make myself low or do I exalt myself for all to see?*

*(Pray): Father God, thank You so much that You stand ready to receive me with open arms when I humble myself before You. Help me to walk this way in life, dominated by an understanding of my unworthiness and Your marvelous grace.*