



James 4:7-10

Practical ways to stop fooling around

God and the devil must be taken seriously (4:7-8a)

7 Submit yourselves therefore to God.

- James instructs believers how they can place themselves in the flow of God's grace to correct an adulterous, wandering heart.
 - Proverbs 3:34
 - James 4:6
- We cannot submit to the word and ways of God when we are ignorant of them AND when we make no active assessment of our consistent need to obey.
 - Psalm 40:8
 - Thoughtful and prayerful submission to God is not a past event, but a regular necessity.
 - We should discipline ourselves to take care of the daily hygiene of our soul.

God and the devil must be taken seriously (4:7-8a)

Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

- We must plan and prepare to go to war with the enemies of our faith.
 - Ephesians 6:16
- The devil plays for keeps and we better take him seriously.
 - 1 Peter 5:8-9
- The power Satan is overcome by the grace God provides to resist his deceptive and destructive ways.
 - 1 John 4:4

God and the devil must be taken seriously (4:7-8a)

- ⁸ Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.*
- James wants believers to know that at no time will a sincere pursuit of God be shunned or ignored.
 - Proverbs 8:17
- This is not the seeking of one who trifles with God or calls out to Him as a last resort.
 - Jeremiah 29:12-13
- God does not draw near to you to make much of you, but to help you see your heart satisfied and delighted in all He is for you in Jesus.

Consistent personal consecration and sharpening the focus on Christ is necessary (4:8b)

Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

- This is what true repentance looks like.
- The call to “*cleanse your hands*” is a figurative way of saying external actions must be cleaned and changed.
- To “*purify your hearts*” describes the internal transformation of thoughts, attitudes and motives.
- Duplicity is the foolish attempt to divide life in the categories.
 - The double-minded have times when it becomes evident that they are walking as friends of the world.
 - Then there are times they want to affirm a relationship with Jesus, acting like they are friends of truth and fellowship.
 - Titus 1:16

Lightheartedness is unacceptable where sin is involved (4:9)

9 Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.

- James is condemning their attempt to find joy and satisfaction in the godless pursuit of personal pleasure, power and prestige.
- Only God-wrought repentance can bring about true Christ-centered joy.
- The vileness of our sin and the sin of others ought to break our hearts.
 - Luke 18:9-14

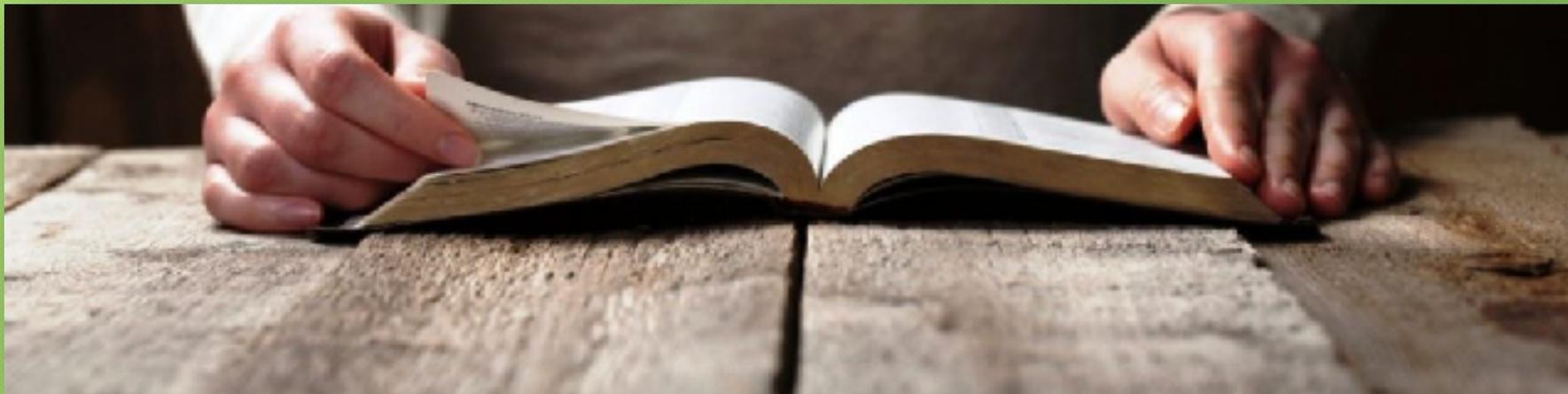
Humility is the pathway to blessing (4:10)

¹⁰ *Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.*

- God's attention and activity are made known in and through those who are consistently characterized by humility and contrition as well as obedient reverence for God's instruction.
 - Isaiah 66:2b
 - The words *humble*, *contrite*, *trembles* depict the actual heart of faithful followers of God.
 - Every blessing and benefit from God starts here.
- This section began with “*Submit yourselves therefore to God*” and it ends with “*Humble yourselves before the Lord.*”
 - This is the biblical pathway to practical ways to stop fooling around.
 - This is the pathway to an exalted life in Christ.

Questions to Consider

- Is it time for you to stop fooling around?
- How are you showing each and every day that you are taking God and the devil seriously?
- What needs to be cleansed from your life to help sharpen your exclusive focus on Jesus?
- In what ways do you need to become deadly serious about finding your joy in Jesus?
- Is God stirring up your need for gospel humility and selfless dependence on Jesus?



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