

Joyful Life Bible Studies

JAMES 4:7-10

Lesson 16

FIRST DAY: Read James 4:7-10

1. Living in post-Christian America, where sin has become the norm, and is accepted, defended, promoted, and protected by legislation, Christians can easily drift into compromise with the world's system and not even recognize they have become *friends of the world*. The line of right and wrong is being blurred by the world's standards and its demand that we tolerate its philosophy and lifestyle. Many Christians are being imperceptibly programmed, especially through sit-coms, talk shows, movies, and other TV fare, not only to condone what the Bible reveals as sin but also to actively participate in it and not recognize it as sin. Our consciences are becoming dulled. Only through strong, courageous commitment to the Lord, choosing to be *His friend*, learning from His Word how we are to live as the bride of Christ, will we be kept vigilant, on track, and able to survive the massive onslaught of evil that is rapidly winding up the end of this age. One Bible scholar's observation of the world's condition and the church's responsibility in reaction to it writes: *The prevalent passion, even among Christians, for self-gratification in opposition to the revealed will of God demands repentance*. That is what James 4:1-10 exposes and requires. We need to re-examine our lives in light of these verses. We need to program God's truth and ways in our minds and hearts so that we will valiantly stand as *His friends* and resist the power of evil which threatens to engulf us. This need has impressed us to do an in-depth study of James 4:7-10. Highlight or underline a thought from the above paragraph that impresses you in a specific way and share why.
2. James 4:6 leads into the passage we will be studying this week. Observe the adjective *humble* in verse 6 and the verb *humble* in verse 10. Why is humility a prerequisite for receptivity to the exhortations in the Word?
 - a. How does *pride* react to instruction?
 - b. Meditate for a few moments on the phrase *be clothed with humility* (1 Peter 5:5b). See this through the lens of John 13:(2,3)4(5). What does being *clothed with humility* say to you about laying aside your garments of *rights* and *wants* and *desires* and making God's will priority in your life?
 - c. How does God's provision of grace to the *humble* (James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5c) enable them to be obedient to the instruction of James 4:7-10?
3. We are given definite, urgent commands in James 4:7-10. The choice of obedience to these is up to us. What does John 15:14 say about obeying the Lord's commands? SELAH.

Challenge: Define in your own words the difference between being a *friend* of the Lord's and a *servant*. John 15:14,15

4. With a humble heart read James 4:7-10 as though it were written just to you. We all need to identify with the exhortations given and allow the Holy Spirit to work in those areas of our life that are keeping us from being the light He desires us to be in these dark days. In what area of these verses do you especially desire Him to work? Write this as a prayer.

*Change my heart, O God, Make it ever true,
Change my heart, O God, Make me more like You.*

-Eddie Espinosa

SECOND DAY: Read James 4:7

1. Thoughtfully write James 4:7 sentence by sentence.
 - a. Highlight or underline the word *submit*. This is the key word of the paragraph. The remainder of the passage indicates how we are to do this.
 - b. *Submission is characteristic of humility*. Define the word *submit*. Use synonyms for this if you desire.
 - c. The Greek word translated *submit* speaks of a subordinate's readiness to await commands and to do the will of the superior. With this explanation in mind, what does the phrase *submit. . . to God* mean in your life?
 - (1.) How does refusal to *submit* our lives *unto Him* deny His being Lord of our lives? See Luke 6:46
 - (2.) What things hinder or prevent our submitting unto Him?
 - (3.) What do you know about God that compels you to submit unto Him? Use scriptures to support your answer, if possible.
2. In what way will submitting unto God change your behavior if you're entangled in any of the actions or attitudes of James 4:1-4?

3. Tell how in practical experience you *resist the devil*.

- a. What do you learn from Eve's encounter with the serpent that you should not do? Genesis 3:1-5

Challenge: How do you discern if an attack is from the devil or if it is from your *flesh*?

- a. How should we deal with an attack from the devil?
 - b. According to Romans 6:(1-10)11-13 how do we deal with the *flesh*?
4. The devil is God's enemy. He constantly seeks to undermine the allegiance of God's people by seduction into self-centered and worldly attitudes and actions. Christ's victory on the cross (I John 3:8b; Colossians 2:(14)15) has destroyed the devil's power over us. **HE CANNOT LEAD US INTO SIN WITHOUT OUR CONSENT.** He is a persistent foe, though. In recognition of this what does I Peter 5:8,9a tell us to do?

- a. Clarify the meaning of the word *vigilant* by using both synonyms and antonyms.

5. How will your persistence in submission to God affect your resistance to the enemy?

THIRD DAY: Read James 4:8a

1. The wars and fightings, lusts, and worldliness exposed in James 4:1-4 distance people from God. (see Isaiah 59:1,2) These things also grieve the Holy Spirit and limit His work in their lives. What action does James 4:8a command believers to take? Print your answer.

- a. Print the glorious promise that results from our *drawing nigh*.

- b. What do the following verses tell us to do? (Choose a few, all if you have time)

1. Deuteronomy 4:29
2. I Chronicles 16:11
3. I Chronicles 22:19a
4. Psalm 27:4

5. Psalm 27:8

6. Psalm 40:16

7. Psalm 105:4

8. Circle the one that especially speaks to you and tell why.

c. Sometimes believers allow their sins to drive them further away from God. As Adam and Eve did, they hide from God. How do these verses encourage such a one? Use other versions if you desire.

1. Psalm 34:18

2. Psalm 145:18

2. How does the Psalmist express his desire to draw nigh to God in Psalm 42:1,2a?

a. Express here in writing your desire to *draw nigh* to God.

3. What things contribute to your staying close to the Lord?

a. Drawing near to God marks those who long to come into the closest possible relationship with Him in contrast to those who follow from a distance. When do you set aside time each day to talk to the Lord, to hear from Him through His Word, to cultivate your fellowship with Him?

(1.) What was Paul's desire concerning this? Use other versions for your answer, if you desire. Philippians 3:10

4. When you *draw nigh to God* and *He draws nigh to you*, what difference does it make in your life?

FOURTH DAY: Read James 4:8b

1. Some Christians skip over James 4:8b because they think it is addressed to those who have not accepted Christ as Saviour. Remember, though, James is writing to Christians. What does James tell them to do:

a. _____, _____;

b. _____, _____.

2. James is dealing here with an outward and an inward cleansing of the Christian. *Cleanse your hands* would be a command easily understood by Jewish believers. Under the Old Testament Law handwashing was a ritual duty of the priests before performing their ceremonial duties. (see Exodus 30:20,21) It represented a purification from the defilement of the world before approaching a Holy God. This cleansing of the hands was also practiced in Jesus' time and not only by the priests. (see Mark 7:3,4) It is still practiced by "observant" Jews who wash their hands ritually upon rising in the morning and before eating a full meal. After the ritual is completed, a blessing is recited. In James 4:8b it is used in a figurative sense concerning our *outward* conduct; it is symbolic of an outward cleansing. The *hands* represent what we do. We have been cleansed from the root of sin through Christ's blood and we stand pure before God in His righteousness but living in a fallen world, we, too, are contaminated or stained by the pollution that surrounds us. We need daily cleansing. With this explanation in mind, what does *cleanse your hands* say to you?

a. Choose a few of the following scriptures, all if you have time, and record what they reveal about *hands*:

1. Psalm 18:20
2. Psalm 24:4(5)
3. Psalm 26:6
4. Psalm 26:10
5. Psalm 90:17
6. Proverbs 14:1
7. I Timothy 2:8

b. How do we *cleanse our hands*?

Challenge: How does John 13:8-10a amplify the meaning of *cleanse your hands*?

3. James' concern was not just with their outer cleansing but with inward purity as well. What does he tell the *double-minded* to do? James 4:8b

a. How does being *double-minded* affect the purity of our heart?

b. What is the remedy for an impure heart?

c. How will the following verses contribute to keeping a pure heart:

1. I John 3:(2)3
2. I Peter 1:22
3. Psalm 119:10,11

4. Add to this other verses that help you maintain a singleness of mind that ensures purity of heart.

4. What have you learned from today's study that you are putting into practice?

*Let us draw near to God
with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith.*

-Hebrews 10:22a NIV

FIFTH DAY: Read James 4:9,10

1. Many Christians today treat sin with a casual attitude as though sin had not caused our Lord to be crucified. They go along laughing, indulging, and enjoying the same stuff the world delights in. James 4:9 pleads with the readers to see their sins from God's perspective. Our sins grieve the heart of God. This verse is not to take away true Christian joy but to startle double-minded believers into a sober recognition of the seriousness of their sin. From Lesson 15, page 7 define the meaning of the phrase *be afflicted*.
 - a. Write James 4:9 phrase by phrase. Selah - pause and reflect on what this is saying to you.
 - b. This verse demands deep repentance. Scan Psalm 51 and write a few phrases that reveal David's attitude of heart towards his sin and the depth of his repentance.
 - c. What do you think would be the result in the church worldwide if believers were obedient to James 4:9?
2. Consider James 4:10 in the light of II Chronicles 7:14. What do you see?
 - a. James 4:10b in The Amplified Bible reads: *He will lift you up and make your lives significant.* To live a life now that is significant eternally should be the desire of every born again believer. In what way does this promise encourage you to be obedient to the exhortations of James 4:8-10a?
3. How has James 4:9 affected your perspective on sin and repentance?

*Lord Jesus, for this I most humbly entreat.
I wait, blessed Lord, at Thy crucified feet.
By faith, for my cleansing I see Thy blood flow.
Now wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.*

-J. Nicholson

SIXTH DAY: Review James 4:7-10

1. In relationship to today's study how can we keep from becoming *friends of the world* in the sense of James' concern?
2. Review your life the past few days. Does it reveal a single-minded devotion to the Lord or a double-mindedness? If you detected a divided-heart (double-mindedness), in response to James 4:7-10, what would you do?
3. What verse, phrase, or word in the lesson spoke to you in a specific way? Why?
4. How will you apply this James 4:7-10 lesson to your life?

*Lord, take my life,
and make it wholly Thine;
Fill my poor heart with Thy great love divine.
Take all my will, my passion, self and pride;
I now surrender, Lord - in me abide.*

-Edwin Orr

