

James Series Going Deeper

5- Day Devotional

Week 11, Day 3: Resist the Devil and Draw Near to God

Primary Verse:

Reading: James 4:7-8; 1 Peter 5:8-10; Hebrews 4:14-16

Focus: Repentance means standing against the lies of the enemy and returning to restored nearness with God.

Devotional:

James continues the path of restoration by saying:

“Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.”

These two commands belong together.

Repentance is not only turning away from sin. It is turning back to God. And repentance is not only drawing near to God. It is also resisting the enemy who wants to keep us trapped in sin, shame, hiding, pride, and despair.

The devil works powerfully in the space of worldly desire, hidden sin, pride, shame, accusation, and isolation.

Before sin is exposed, he tempts us to believe it is not that serious.

After sin is exposed, he tempts us to believe we are beyond grace.

Before repentance, he whispers, “You can handle this. You deserve this. You need this. No one will know.”

After repentance begins, he whispers, “You are finished. You are disqualified from God’s love. There is no future for you.”

Both are lies.

To resist the devil means we stop cooperating with his lies.

We resist the lie that sin will satisfy us. We resist the lie that repentance will destroy us. We resist the lie that hiding is safer than confession. We resist the lie that worldly desire is better

than God's presence. We resist the lie that shame is the same thing as humility. We resist the lie that consequences mean God is absent. We resist the lie that our failure has the final word.

But notice the order James gives.

He does not say, "Resist the devil, then submit to God."

He says, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil."

We resist best from a place of surrender.

A heart not submitted to God has no real strength against the enemy. But a heart humbled before God, surrendered to God, dependent on God, and covered by the grace of God can stand against the lies that once held it captive.

Then James gives the heartbeat of restoration:

"Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you."

This is the goal.

The goal of repentance is not merely to stop doing wrong things. The goal of repentance is restored nearness to God.

Sometimes when we have sinned, failed, compromised, or drifted, the enemy convinces us to run from the very presence we most need. Shame tells us to hide. Pride tells us to perform. Fear tells us to keep our distance.

But James says, "Draw near to God."

Come close.

Not because sin is small, but because grace is great. Not because repentance is easy, but because God is merciful. Not because there are no consequences, but because God's presence is life. Not because we deserve nearness, but because Christ has opened the way.

This is where many people misunderstand repentance. Biblical repentance is not just turning away from sin. It is turning back to God.

The greatest gift of restoration is not getting our circumstances back. It is getting our intimacy with God restored. It is the heart learning again that God Himself is better than the thing we ran to.

His presence is better than the pleasure we chased. His approval is better than the affirmation we craved. His wisdom is better than the path we tried to control. His nearness is better than anything sin ever promised.

So today, do not run from God.

Run to Him.

If conviction is heavy, do not confuse conviction with rejection. If repentance feels painful, do not assume God is absent. If shame tells you to hide, remember that Christ has opened the way. Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you.

Reflection Questions:

1. **What lies does the enemy most often use to keep you in sin, shame, hiding, or despair?**
2. **Why is it important that James says to submit to God before resisting the devil?**
3. **What does it look like for you to draw near to God today in a real and practical way?**

Prayer:

Father, help me resist the lies of the enemy. Help me stop cooperating with anything that keeps me in hiding, shame, pride, or despair. Thank You that repentance is not just turning from sin, but returning to You. Draw me near again. Restore my fellowship with You. Teach my heart that Your nearness is better than anything sin ever promised. In Jesus' name, amen.

Today's Action Step:

Write down one lie you have been believing. Then write a truth from Scripture that directly confronts that lie. Speak that truth out loud in prayer.