

## James 4:7-10 Part Two

Introduction #1 - The first three commands we find in our text are submission, resistance and fellowship.

- Submission to God and His authority is a fruit of salvation
- Resistance to devil is a sign of you belonging to God. You cannot resist the devil if you belong to the devil
- Fellowship or drawing near to God is a sign of a relationship with Him

Note: The redeemed heart longs for communion with God, submission to God and the ability to resist the devil and not to live continually in sin.

(Continued from previous sermon)

Point #4 - Cleanse your hands, you sinners. The origin of this idea is in the Jewish ceremonial prescription for priests before they came before the Lord. Moses had commanded the priests *"they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they may not die"* (Exodus 30:18-21). Isaiah 1:15-16 *"So when you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide My eyes from you; Yes, even though you multiply prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are covered with blood. Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Remove the evil of your deeds from My sight."*

Paul also used this to represent the external behavior of believers, *"Therefore I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension."* Holy hands represent a spiritually and moral life, for without such, one cannot approach God. The fact of this command seems to be specially addressed to unbelievers (in the church) calling them to repentance and a saving relationship with God.

Point #5 - Cleanse your hearts, you double minded. This reinforces the reference to cleanse your hands you sinners. The outward sins of the hands, reflect the inner working of the heart. Psalms 24:3-4 *"Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? And who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood And has not sworn deceitfully."*

The turning of a heart and cleansing from the blood of Christ results in an outward change. If there's no change in the external behavior there's no change internally. Matthew 15:19 *"For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders."* Here is the plea from Jeremiah *"Wash your heart from evil, O Jerusalem, That you may be saved. How long will your wicked thoughts lodge within you?"* (Jeremiah 4:14), cf Ezekiel 36:25-27

The 18th century evangelist George Whitfield said *"Every man by his own natural will hates God, but when he is turned by repentance, then his will is changed, then his conscience, now hardened and benumbed, shall be quickened and weakened; then his hard heart shall be melted, and his unruly affections shall be crucified. Thus by repentance, the whole soul will be changed, he will have new inclinations, new desires, and new habits."* Thus the word "double minded". It has a

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literal meaning of double souled. This defines the person who lacks integrity, who claims one thing and lives another. Isaiah pleaded with the double-minded man to repent, *"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; And let him return to the Lord, And He will have compassion on him, And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon."*

Point #6 - Misery, it carries the idea of being broken and feeling wretched because of one's circumstances. It is the feeling expressed by the tax collector in Luke 18:13 *"But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, God, be merciful to me, the 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 misery spoken of in our text today has nothing to do with being sad about circumstances in life and wanting God to help you have a better one. It implies a grief over the sinner you are which leads to repentance.

Point #7 - Mourning, along with being miserable, the contrite sinner is to mourn over his sin. The idea is that of deep grief and remorse, a complete despair that laments over sin the way someone mourns the death of family member or close friend. Matthew 5:4 *"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted."* If there is no mourning for your sin and rebellion against God, there is no true salvation.

Point #8 - Weeping, carries the outward manifestation of misery and sorrow. This is what Isaiah called on unfaithful Israel to do *"Therefore in that day the Lord God of hosts called you to weeping, to wailing, To shaving the head and to wearing sackcloth"* (Isaiah 22:12). Peter remembered the words of Jesus about his betrayal, and wept *"Immediately a rooster crowed a second time. And Peter remembered how Jesus had made the remark to him, "Before a rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times." And he began to weep"* (Mark 14:72).

Point #9 - Seriousness, laughter to mourning and joy to gloom. James is not condemning legitimate laughter and joy, but rather the flippant, trivial and worldly sensual kinds that unbelievers revel in their sinful pleasures. This corresponds to Jesus' warning in Luke 6:25 *"Woe to you who are well-fed now, for you shall be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep."* James is calling for unbelievers to lament and repent over their sins. The joy and laughter of sin and the world will cease. Jeremiah lamented *"The joy of our hearts has ceased; Our dancing has been turned into mourning. The crown has fallen from our head; Woe to us, for we have sinned!"*

Point #10 - Humility, as we see in the first beatitude *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."* The world for humble in the text has the meaning of *"to make low."* It has the meaning of the realization of complete unworthiness and lostness because of sin. The more an

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unbeliever sees God as who He really is, the more he sees himself as he really is, sinful and depraved. Isaiah lamented *“Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I live among a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.”*

The Lord has always blessed those who are humble. Matthew 23:12 *“Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted.”* And of course the prodigal, *“I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men”* (Luke 15:18-19.

This closing point is paramount to repentance. Realizing you're a sinner, disobedient to the commands of the Lord, and repenting towards God. It will result in a change of behavior. You cannot be saved apart from total humility to who you truly are and who God is.