

## **Jas20 – What To Do With Pride James 4:7-10**

*Pastor Dave Shepardson Calvary Chapel Nuevo / [www.wordbymail.com](http://www.wordbymail.com)*

Open your Bibles. Turn them to James Chapter 4. We're going to do from verse 7 to verse 10. Get ready. Here's the title of the message, "What To Do With Pride."

We started James Chapter 4 a few messages ago by looking at what causes quarrels and fights in our lives. And we look also at why doesn't give us what we ask for. Then we looked at the great spiritual danger of becoming a friend of the world. Then last message we saw the good news, (and I was so happy to give you good news because James has been so much like a two-by-four up the side of the head kind of pastor, which I love) it was in verse 6. He said "**God gives more grace.**" More grace. The grace flood. God gives grace to restore us from these sins that separate us from him and to restore us to himself.

However, the bad news came right after the good news, didn't it? The bad news on the heels of the good news was this is verse 6 – the grace that we so desperately need to be restored to God is not available to the proud. Verse 6 says God opposes the proud. The grace we need he gives to the humble. That's pretty bad news, because our number one sin is pride.

But, fear not, because James is going to tell you what to do with that ugly, sinful, God-separating pride that you carry around. In fact, I ran across a picture this week that kind of illustrates the relationship between our pride and the Book of James. There's a picture of a church and a picture of a track hoe. The church represents our pride, and the track hoe represents James. James has the answer for those of us willing to admit that our pride is standing in the way of God's grace.

*Let's pray. Lord we need to be ready to hear this. We trust you Lord. We don't know. Our pride keeps us from knowing how much pride we have. Our pride blinds us to our pride. We need to see it Lord. We need the scales to fall from our eyes and we need to see what you call us to do with our pride. Please, God. By the power of your Spirit show us our pride, show us the ugliness of it and show us what to do with it, we pray in Jesus' name, amen.*

James Chapter 4 has backed us into a corner. Verse 6 says God gives the grace we need to be restored to him, but... he won't give it to you in your pride because he opposes your pride. He will only give it to you in your humility. And so if we recognize our pride, if the Holy Spirit finally breaks through our pride and convinces us that we have pride, that in itself becomes a problem. We might say we have a bit of a problem, because the grace

we so desperately need to be restored to God is being kept from us because of our pride. What are we going to do?

There is only one thing in your life worse than the sin of pride. It's saying you don't have any pride. Just saying that you don't have any pride is usually proof that your pride is on steroids. You look like the Hulk to God.

So our entire section today is a "therefore" sections. It's a "therefore" response. So here's how it works. The thing that dooms us is our pride. The thing that keeps us "in love" with the world is our pride. The thing that keeps us separated from God is our pride.

*Therefore*, (a response) our only hope is to tear down our pride to humble ourselves and to truly submit to God so he can restore us. That's what we are going to see today.

But first we need to define the word "Pride" for our use today. This is not the positive use of the word "pride" as in I'm proud of my children, or I'm proud of those who serve our country sacrificially. That is not the kind of pride James is talking about. So let's get a picture of the kind of pride James is talking about so we will know exactly where the Holy Spirit is pointing in our lives.

The Book of Proverbs tells us what kind of pride this is by its outcome.

This pride leads to conflict and prevents us from taking advice. (Prov. 13:10)

This pride leads to our disgrace. (Prov. 11:2)

This pride goes before a fall and before our destruction. (Prov. 16:18)

This pride leads to our ultimate ruin. (Prov. 29:23)

We have got to get a handle on what pride is and what it looks like in our lives. I've been this guy and I've seen this guy. And a few women. Our pride keeps us from seeing our pride. The more prideful we are the less prideful we think we are. I know, I've been there. We have to have the courage to call it what it is and to recognize it as even the root of all of our sin. You might say our sin nature is the root of our sins, but pride has its ugly head in every single one of your sins. Let me show you why.

There's a whole bunch of definitions for pride, but I am putting up definitions that fit the context of the verses we are using.

Webster's Dictionary – PRIDE

***Excessive opinion of one's own worth or virtue.*** (virtue - meaning merit)

***An inordinately favorable opinion of Self***

Now, you don't have to be honest with me right now, but please be honest with God (because he already knows.) Hebrew 4:13 says *every creature is naked and open to the eyes of him to whom we must give account*. He knows you. So be honest with him.

Here is the pride meter:

How often are you right?

How often is your opinion the best one?

How well do you handle hearing that you are not right?

How well do you handle your opinion not being taken?

These are the classic signs of pride.

*An Excessive opinion of one's own worth or virtue.*

*An inordinately favorable opinion of Self*

So once we come to grips with the damage our pride causes we must go to war. The enemy is "self." The victory is "Christ." We've got to fight to begin living in the opposite of pride. The word that is the opposite of pride is *humility*.

### **James 4:6 (ESV)**

*6 . . . "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble."*

You and I desperately need God's grace. You need God's grace. You can't have it in your pride. What's the answer? Tear down your pride to begin to live in humility.

Accept the fact that pride is damaging your life. Trust me, it is. The big question is how do you do it. If I accept it, even quietly, I need to know how do I tear down that pride and begin to grow in humility instead. That just happens to be the question that our text is going to answer.

This is how we begin to crucify our pride and how we begin to grow in humility. James 4:7.

### **James 4:7(a) (ESV)**

*7 Submit yourselves therefore to God . . .*

This is a stand-alone statement. This statement ends at the period, not at the end of the verse. (Remember there were no chapters or verses in the original manuscripts.) And this stand-alone statement - *Submit yourselves therefore to God* is a therefore response. Just look there in your Bible.

James says in verse 6 *God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble*

And then he says in verse 7 **THEREFORE**. Therefore, because of that, because God is going to oppose you as long as you are living in your pride- **THEREFORE**. ***Submit yourselves to God***

This is how humility begins. ***Submit yourself to God*** so that you can begin to receive God's grace. I am going to give you an outline. The rest of this text is a follow up, is an expansion, is a process even, of what that verse said. What verse 7 starts with, **THEREFORE** - ***Submit yourselves to God***, the rest of it is the how to. Isn't it great when we have a how to? How do I begin to humble myself before God if I recognize that my pride is separating me from God, that he is opposing my pride, that it's damaging my life? How do I fix it? God says I got a way, James wrote it. He wrote it in a process. That's good news.

Here's the not so good news. You might not like what he is about to say. He's going to tell you how, but you may not like it. That's good. It's like going to the dentist. You're not supposed to like it, but it's good for you. In fact, the more you dislike what God is about to say to you, the more prideful you are. There more you deny it and say it isn't you, the more prideful you are.

In any case, for those who would choose to crucify their pride and humble themselves before God, here we go.

First we have the all encompassing statement.

**James 4:7(a) (ESV)**

***7 Submit yourselves therefore to God . . .***

The word "submit" is important and how it is used here means: ***to surrender your own will, and take on the will of God***

Pride is thinking too highly of your own will. How often do we say, okay that's my will so it's probably wrong. If you are thinking naturally, if you're responding naturally, if the Holy Spirit hasn't transformed how you're going to respond, it's probably not a good sign. Because pride comes naturally. Walking in the Spirit comes supernaturally. The remedy is to tear down your own will and fully receive God's will instead. Tear down your own will and replace it with God's will.

"Yeah but I don't agree with God." That's the point. Of course you don't agree with God, which just proves you are operating outside of his will. And soon as you agree with God you know that your heart is aligned with his.

The verb “submit” here (get used to hearing this for this message) is in the “Aorist Imperative” which means: ***This “Receiving” of God’s Will must be Decisive and Urgent.*** Aorist imperative. These are words that we use to try to convey what the Greek language does in its own nature. We have to add all these kinds of things to try to explain them. The aorist imperative means this: ***it must be a decisive, urgent move.*** If you know about these things, you might know this is passive because you’re surrendering and allowing God to put his will on you. But it is a decisive, urgent move to receive God’s will. It’s not like when you get around to it – it’s like now or you’re going to die. Surrender your own will. Take on the will of God. Submit yourselves therefore to God.

Then, we begin to see how to do that. How do we begin to tear down our own will? How do we tear down our pride? How do we submit to God – surrender our will and take on his? Here is step number one, if we can put it in steps. We like recipes. We love steps. I don’t do three point sermons, you know that, and I’m not doing one today. There’s five points here.

### **#1 Resist the traps and temptations of the devil**

The number one way that you begin to tear down your own pride and submit yourself to God is resist the devil. James 4:7 (b) – new thought same verse.

#### **James 4:7(b) (ESV)**

***7 . . . Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.***

Again the verb “resist” is “Aorist imperative” which means: ***Take Decisive, Urgent, Action - to Resist the Devil, and THEN - he will Flee from you***

This one is active, not passive which means you’re doing it not it is being done to you. You have to do this. You have to decisively, urgently take action to resist the devil. It’s a war. And you might be losing.

***Take Decisive, Urgent, Action - to Resist the Devil, and THEN - he will Flee from you***

The first step to tearing down your own will is to resist the devil feeding your pride. How does he do that? How does the devil do that? I don’t understand it. But he feeds your pride. He tells you you’re right, and you’re “the man,” and no one else’s opinion matters, only yours, and that you’re the only one that knows what’s going on. That’s the devil. Get behind me Satan! Stop feeding my pride!

You have to *turn from what is destroying you before God can begin to restore you.* You have to aggressively resist the devil (especially in the sin of pride) in order to humbly

submit to God. And the promise is *IF* you will – then the devil will flee from you! And that’s good news! If you aggressively resist him, he will flee from you. There are so many cross references to study on this subject. But just write these down in your margin.

**1 Peter 5:6-10; Ephesians 6:10-18; and how Jesus did it Matthew 4:1-11.**

And remember this, in this context of James, the specific type of “resisting” would be in your sinful pride. Let me tell you something about every area of your life. But remember you can’t just stop sinning. It’s not enough. Hear me when I say this. It’s not enough for you to say “I’m stopping sinning.” If you don’t fill that hole that was full of sin, if you don’t fill it with God, you’re going to go right back to sinning. You can’t just stop sinning. You have to fill it with God. So, *AS* you begin to resist the devil you *must* begin to draw near to God.

## **#2 Draw near to God**

### **James 4:8(a) (ESV)**

***8 Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you . . .***

Again, “Aorist imperative” verb “draw near means: ***Take Decisive, Urgent, Action - to DRAW NEAR to God***

It’s not okay if you say “Alright. I’m going to stop doing that sin.” You have to replace it. With decisive action, with urgent action you have to draw near to God in that area that sin is destroying you in that same area.

It’s important to remind you that James is written to believers. James is written to Christians, to the Church. So he isn’t really talking (when he says draw near to God and he’ll draw near to you) about initial salvation. He’s talking about Christians who have been drawn away from God by their love for the world and their pride. He is saying, Resist the devil, and draw near to God. He will draw near to you.

However, if you’re here and haven’t committed your life to Jesus Christ, that’s a good way to do it. Resist the devil, turn from that and turn to God, and God will draw near to you and he will save you.

The implication here is that there is a professing Christian. Here’s a scary thought. Not everyone that says they’re a Christian ... you can finish it. I don’t want to question your salvation, but the Word says test yourself and see if you are in the faith. I will tell you today that if you’re following Jesus Christ, if you have the evidence of his life in you,

then you are good to go. Your home is in heaven, it is waiting for you, get excited, be anxious to go there. Wake up in the rapture position every morning.

James is writing to someone who says they're a Christian but they're so *caught up in the world* and they are so *caught up with their pride* that they are *separated from God*. James says here's how you tear down that pride. Humble yourself and be restored to God. First you resist the devil. And then you draw near to God, decisively, actively, urgently draw near to God.

Those two steps, can I just tell you one other thing about them? This is something Christians tend to fight. We fight this. We act like we don't know this. These are what we call conditional clauses. Conditional clauses. These are not universal promises. They are conditional, which means there is a promise that is conditioned on your action. They are conditional promises.

Often people come to me with questions about why they don't feel near to God and about why God doesn't seem active in their lives, why doesn't God hear them when they pray. Most of the time what they are saying between the lines is, "Why isn't God doing what I told him he was supposed to do?" That's generally kind of what's in the heart. I will try to poke around and ask some questions. Often there is a sin that comes out. "Well, yeah I'm doing that, doesn't everyone do that?"

Now how does resisting the devil fit in right there? "Well, you know, I's not the devil, it's just sin."

It's a conditional clause. *IF you will* take decisive action to resist the devil *then he will flee*. If you don't take decisive action to resist the devil, then will he flee? No! Why would he? You're welcoming him in. You're giving him a guest room; you're feeding him every day, why would he leave?

If you are not decisively, actively drawing near to God, is God drawing near to you? That's hard to say, isn't it? That's hard to say. We don't like that condition. God is with you. He is with you because he is outside of time, and he is omnipresent and he has promised to be with you to the ends of the earth. But, Isaiah 59:1-2 says your sin has separated you from God.

If you will draw near to him, he will draw near to you. The flip side of that is if you don't draw near to him, he will not draw near to you. Oh, we hate it when it is our fault. We're like, "Oh, I guess it is my fault. I haven't spent time with the Lord in like, never .I

guess I shouldn't ask why I don't feel his presence. Because I'm not drawing near to him."

How do you draw near to God? I am telling you, this is how. James continues his step-by-step encouragement to submit to God, to tear down your own pride, to humble yourself so that he can lift you up.

### **#3 Cleanse your hands and purify your heart**

#### **James 4:8(b) (ESV)**

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

I told you James has a process for you but you might not like it. James just doesn't pull any punches. Here he is taking us to the mat. Are you tired yet of hearing all these verbs are "Aorist imperative?" James is saying over and over again we must jump into decisive and urgent action in order to reverse the course that our sin has put us on.

The first half of verse 8 says ***draw near to God*** and the second half tells us how to do it. James says ***Cleanse your hands, you sinners***. Hands are symbolic for your actions. We are the hands and feet of Jesus. Hands are symbolic of your actions, what you do. What would cleanse me? Stop doing it. Get the sin off. Stoop sinning, is what he is saying. Then he says ***purify your hearts***. Let's look at the NLT for this.

#### **James 4:8(b) (NLT)**

***8 . . . purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world***

Your heart represents your inner life, that place that only God can see, and when your loyalty is divided it means that your heart (the innermost being is divided.) "I want to go to heaven, but I really like sin. I really like my sin, but I want my ticket punched so I can go to heaven."

Your heart represents your inner life and James is saying your loyalty (in your inner life, your heart) is divided between God and the world. And God says you can pick one, but only one.

One of the most shocking letters to the churches in Revelation is the letter to the Church of Laodicea. That Church had divided its loyalty between God and the world. Let's hear what Jesus said to the church that had a divided loyalty in Revelation 3:15-16.

#### **Revelation 3:15–16 (HCSB)**

***15 I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot . . .***

*16 So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I am going to vomit you out of My mouth.*

Well, that seems pretty clear, regarding how the Lord feels about us dividing our loyalty between him and the world. And so James says, you want to tear down the pride? Do you want to draw near to God? ***Purify your heart - for your loyalty is divided between God and the world***

So, in order to humbly submit yourself to God

#1 **Resist** the devil, with a vengeance

#2 **Draw near** to God, purposefully, actively, urgently

#3 **Cleanse** your hands and **purify** your heart

James isn't done yet.

**#4 Mourn and weep because of your pride**

**James 4:9 (ESV)**

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

Wait a minute. Is James dyslexic? Doesn't he mean let your mourning be turned to laughter and your gloom be turned to joy? God is supposed to make me happy, give me what I want; he is supposed to make everything right. He is supposed to turn my mourning into dancing. He is supposed to turn my gloom into joy. Listen, please. There are plenty of verses that say that God is going to turn your mourning into laughter, that he is going to turn your gloom into joy. But hear me when I say *sometimes you need just the opposite*. This is why we teach scripture in context, because in this context you need the opposite. As you start coming to grips with your pride and understanding that God is opposing you. It's separating you from God and it's damaging your life. It's not time to sing and shout and dance. It's time to mourn and weep.

That legendary band, The Byrds didn't write "Turn, Turn, Turn." Solomon wrote it in Ecclesiastes Chapter 3. He says there is:

**Ecclesiastes 3:4 (ESV)**

***4 a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;***

When you understand the extent of the damage and destruction that your pride is doing in your life and with other people and how it is keeping you from receiving the grace you

desperately need from God, it's time to mourn and weep. It's time to hit the ground in mourning and weeping. It's time to stop laughing and start weeping. It's time to stop dancing and start mourning over your sin.

Here's a line I love, I love these lines that kind of rhyme. *In recognition of your true condition is the beginning of your restoration.* You want God to restore you. It starts with understanding where you are really at with him. "God, I think that's me." Praise the Lord, that is the first step.

Here's what we've done so far to humbly submit yourself to God so that you can receive the grace you so desperately need.

- #1 Aggressively **resist** the devil.
- #2 Purposefully **draw near** to God.
- #3 **Cleanse** your hands and **purify** your heart.
- #4 Come to him with **true remorse** for your pride.

And finally, number five. The summary. This is the all encompassing summary. James 5:10

#### **#5 Humble yourself before the Lord**

##### **James 4:10 (ESV)**

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

Once you have truly recognized your condition before God. You start tearing down your pride, and you begin to go through this process of turning from the devil, drawing near to God, cleansing your hands, purifying your heart, being remorseful for your sin. That is encompassed in this last statement, the summary statement, humbling yourselves. That's what it means. What does it mean to humble myself before the Lord? This. What we've been talking about. It's a summary of the points we have just gone over. It's the conclusion to the "what do I do about pride" section. What do I do about pride? It's right here. James told you. "I don't like that. Is there any other option?" Yes. You can continue on the broad road of destruction.

But if you're willing to admit that the word of God has been speaking specifically to you, if you're willing to apply this to your life, now you know what to do with your pride. Tear it down. Submit to God. Actively resist the devil. Purposefully draw near to God. Cleanse your hands. Purify your heart. Come to him with remorse.

Let's review starting in James 4:1.

If there are quarrels and conflicts in your life (James 4:1)

If you are not receiving from God because you are asking amiss (James 4:2-3)

If you have become a friend of the world (James 4:4-5)

If you are realizing that God is opposing you because of your pride (James 4:6)

Then here is what you must do about it. Starting in verse 7.

#1) Tear down your own will and receive God's will (James 4:7)

#2) Aggressively resist the devil and his schemes (also James 4:7)

#3) Purposefully draw near to God (James 4:8)

#4) Cleanse your hands of sin and purify your inner heart (Also James 4:8)

#5) Come to God with true remorse for your sinful pride. (James 4:9)

In summary – ***HUMBLE Yourself before the Lord, and He will EXALT You*** (James 4:10)

I think one of the most deadly things for a Christian is to hear something like this and not do anything about it. It's because you get good at it after awhile. "I can hear anything and keep on living like I want. Nothing affects me." BE AFRAID!!

The word exalt means, in its simplest form, to be raised up or lifted up. The word has a number of meanings. But here are two definitions I think really fit this context.

#1) Exalt means: ***to Fill with joy or delight***

#2) When you have been exalted it means: ***to have a feeling of intense well being***

***To be filled with Joy or delight.***

***To have a feeling of intense well being.***

So much of what we do in our sin and pride is a hopeless attempt ***to be filled with joy and well being***. But what about God? God says, here's my way. It's opposite of yours. Here's my way, it is opposite of the world's. Tear down your own will. Tear down your pride. Submit to God and allow him to exalt you. And when he does, when that happens, you will genuinely be filled with joy. You will have a genuine feeling of intense well being. It is well with my soul.

Paul says abounding or abasing, having plenty or suffering need, none of it matters. I'm in Christ. What can go wrong? I can go through all circumstances in Christ, because I have an inner joy that doesn't come from my circumstances.

It doesn't come from the pleasure of my sin. I have an intense feeling of well being because of my relationship with Jesus Christ.

Here's what we need. We need to stop protecting our pride. And stop covering up our sin. We need to stop fighting and clawing and demanding and sinning to try to get these feelings that we want. "We just want to be accepted. We want to feel joy. We want to feel that feeling of well being."

Yeah, God offers it all to you, but your sin separates you from God. Your pride separates you because you oppose him, but there's an answer. Submit yourself to God. Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord, and he will lift you up. He will exalt you. Stop trying to do it yourself, because your "self" ways are all opposite of God's ways. They are a broad road that leads to destruction. Tear down your pride. Submit to God. Resist the devil with aggression. Draw near to God with passion. Cleanse your hands. Purify your heart. Mourn over your sin. Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord and he will exalt you.

*Let's pray. Lord, we recognize that our pride prevents us from seeing our pride. We recognize that there are scales on our eyes, that we have too high of an opinion of ourselves. And so we so we don't see the damage that it's doing. We can't figure it out, we can't reason it, we can't logic it, and it has to be revealed to us, Lord. We need a revelation. We need to the scales to fall from our eyes and our hearts to be open so that we can confess what you already know, that our pride is keeping us from you. That we can repent of it, begin to tear it down, to resist the devil's feeding of it, to draw near to you, Lord. Every one of us has something, God, that's getting itself on us that is sin Lord. We need to wash it off. We need to cleanse our hands and our hearts. Forgive us, empower us, and consecrate us for your good use. Humble us that you would lift us up in your time. Lord, we need new hearts and right spirits. Don't allow us to be separated from you God.*

(If this is the first time you will commit your life to Jesus Christ, hear me when I say it's for real. Jesus will flood into your life. He will fill you with his life, give you the power to overcome, forgive you of your sins and reserve a place in heaven for you. You don't have to repeat these words, but just pray along with me.)

*Dear Lord Jesus, save me. I'm sorry for my sin. I'm sorry my sin has separated me from you. Please forgive me and draw me back into your presence. Create in me a clean heart and renew a right spirit within me. Please fill me with your Holy Spirit and make me a disciple. Draw me in to a powerful relationship with you. Thank you for your love for me and thank you for saving me. I commit to follow you all the days of my life. It's in your own name I pray, amen.*