

“Be Lifted Up”
James 4:7-17
Pastor Jason Huffman
March 26th, 2023

Discussion Questions

1. What is the challenge with getting under God’s mission? Why is it hard for us?
2. We can be tempted to “fight the Devil”, but the Devil doesn’t fight fair. What does resisting the devil really look like? Check Matthew 4:1-13 for reference.
3. What are real things that keep you from drawing closer to Christ? What will you do about them?
4. When are you most tempted to judge others? Why? How can we help others and not fall into the judging James talks about?
5. What have you learned about God from this passage? What have you learned about yourself?

Teaching Notes

Last week we talked about fights coming from our desires to have and conflict coming from not asking or asking wrongly.

We also discussed the idea that God resists the proud, but He gives grace to the humble.

Title: Be lifted up

So verse 7 starts with the word “therefore”...

Which means... “Because of all that was said before do this...”

4:7 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *you* sinner and purify *your* hearts, *you* double-minded. 9 Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and *your* joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

Because God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble...

...Submit to God.

Submit to God: I come under God’s authority knowing He is greater, His wisdom is greater, His plan is greater, everything about God is greater than me.

Submission to God means I am under God's mission not mine.

1. Get your mission under His mission.

Submission to God is also linked with confession...

...When we confess our sins to God...

...we are agreeing that we are wrong and He is right...

...we are putting ourselves under His judgment.

Without submission, there is no grace or forgiveness

Trusting Christ for salvation will not happen...

...without a humble submission to Christ.

This may be part of the process of sanctification...

As I learn more about Him, I continue to put myself under Him.

I have a desire, I learn that He says it is wrong...He convicts me.

I put myself under His authority. I confess and agree with Him...

...He is right, I am wrong = please forgive me.

This is where people get into trouble...

...they want the benefit but not the submission.

I want to be saved...

...but I don't want God telling me how I am supposed to live.

I like that God loves and saves.

I want help and guidance...

...But...I am not sure about the other stuff.

I am not saying you have to believe everything...

...in the Bible just how I believe it, to be saved.

But you better believe Jesus is who He says He is...

...and don't think you can keep on living in sin.

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

I John 3:6 No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. ESV

Our pop religion is "moralistic therapeutic deism".

They believe in some sort of morality.

They want their belief to make them feel good.

They believe there is a higher power or god.

BUT...They don't want to be told what to do or what to believe.

They don't like the idea of hell.

They don't like the idea that homosexuality is a sin.

They don't like the idea that God cares what they do with money.

But if you want grace...

...bow your heard and your knee in submission...

...to the Lord of Lord and the King of Kings.

Next...

7 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

2. Resist and keep resisting the devil.

The Devil is real. He really exists.

Jesus gave the best descriptions of him in John 8...

He is a liar, he is a murderer, John 10 a thief and a destroyer...

...This is what he does and this is his nature.

The Devil is in rebellion against God...

... and wants everyone else in rebellion to God too.

If God says it is white, Satan wants everyone to say it is not.

If God says it is good, Satan wants everyone to say it is not.

The Devil leads a rebellion.

Satan lies about everything God designed.

He lies to people about their gender.

He lies to people about their sexuality.

He lies to people about the rights they have with their body.

He lies to people about everything from pride to porn.

But you and I can't fight him ourselves.

We are not a match for the devil's wisdom, works, or ways.

So what do we do?

There really is only one thing: **Resist.**

Paul says, don't give him a foothold...

If someone is trying to pick up on you or sell you something...

...if you are not interested, you resist.

If there is a temptation that is trying to get you to sin, resist.
If there is a lie that is trying to get you to believe, resist.

Resist...when he knows there is no chance, he stops.

...He may come back, but he will flee.

But, when he sees a crack...

...when he can tell there is a compromise...

...when he senses an opportunity...he presses in.

...Give a good strong no and walk away.

Have you been hurt?

Have you been confused?

Have you not had your dreams fulfilled?

You are most susceptible to lies.

3. Don't sit where you have to keep resisting.

Decision fatigue is real.

Get out of the situation. Leave the area. Flee.

What is next?

8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you...

You can't resist a lie if you don't know the truth.

4. Get closer to Jesus

In John 8:31-32 **31**Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. **32**And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Notice it is not just "knowing" it starts with "abiding".

I hear what the devil says, I know his tricks, I hear his lies...

But I also know the truth...what truth?

The truth about God.

When Satan tempted Jesus, Jesus didn't just quote verses.

Jesus quoted the truth about who God was and what God said.

Sin issues are often a lack of faith in the goodness...

...and justice of God.

When you stay around someone for a while...

...you get to really know them.

You don't just have factual truths— you have personal reality.

I know that God is holy, merciful, and perfect in justice.

I know that the devil comes to steal, kill, and destroy.

I know that God is good and for me.

I know that the devil is evil and against me.

God's word is a firm foundation...

...it is life direction, and it is God's revelation.

- Read the Bible for yourself.
- Gather with God's people and be known.
- Speak words of honesty and openness to Him and others.

What is true for human relationships is true with God...

...Vulnerability brings intimacy.

As you seek Him, you will find Him.

As you draw near, He draws near.

What's next?

This next section is about purity...pure hands and a pure heart.

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

Our hands get dirty, and our heart needs to be purified.

5. Clean up and reset.

We are sinners and we all sin...

...and all our hearts can wander or get cold.

Being a Christian is not about being perfect or sinless.

It is being forgiven & sinning less as you become more like Him.

So confess and be cleansed.

Just as Jesus would tell Peter in John 13...

...He just needed to wash his feet not his whole body.

But the inward part of being pure is your heart...

...and that's where it all starts.

Double minded is going this way and that...you are unstable.

The world can spin you around...you lose your footing.

Get yourself together in one direction...God's...
...and focus on that.

9 Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and *your* joy to gloom. **10** Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

These last verses are about humility.

6. Get low.

See the weight of your sin.
Regret the mistakes you have made.
Own the pain you have caused.

Look at the cross. Stop the laughing and mourn your sin.
...Stop making excuses or lessening the weight.
...See the holiness and glory of God and put yourself under Him.

Don't take things lightly and run past...
...His payment of sin and the cost of His grace.

And we end where we began...humble submission.

7. Humble yourself and...He will lift you up.

We take ourselves out of the place where He needs to humble us.
We put ourselves in a position where He can lift us up.

- We don't lift ourselves up by thinking positive thoughts.
- We don't excuse our sin.
- We don't ignore the shame and the pain.

**We know it, we sit in it, we acknowledge it.
But we don't live in it because HE came to forgive it.**

Just as there is a pride for those that won't confess...
There is also a pride for those that won't receive forgiveness.

Do you think your sin is so great, He can't forgive it?
Do you think you are so fallen He can't reach you?
Do you think you are so broken He can't heal you?

We humble ourselves before Him and He does the rest...
He gives more grace, He cleanses, He forgives, He lifts us up.

Believe God's word that you are forgiven...
... you can come to Him, you are accepted and beloved in Him.

You may not understand or agree with everything...

...but that is what submission and faith are all about.

I don't understand everything...

...but I do submit to Him in everything...

...because I believe He is good and just, righteous and gracious.

We will close with three practical points of this humility.

Humility in judgment...

11 Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. **12** There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another?

We are all under God's judgment.

Some think they are better than others...they are not.

I am not better. I am not a judge.

God is the judge. He is the Lawgiver.

I can tell you what God says, but God judges.

So...Do not speak evil of one another.

Do not act like you know their motives or their reasons.

Put down the gavel and...8. Allow God to be the judge.

Second is humility with control...

13 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit"; **14** whereas you do not know what *will happen* tomorrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. **15** Instead you *ought* to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that." **16** But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.

Don't act like you can control and predict the future.

You have a five year plan that you think is going to happen?

You believe your plans will be fulfilled?

Maybe...but...don't boast in your future plans.

Your life is a vapor, your life is a breath.

9. Trust and know God is in control.

Lastly...humility of submission...

17 Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do *it*, to him it is sin.

If you know what is good, if you know what is right, if you know what God wants...and you do not do it...that is sin.

10. Do what God says is good.

You are missing the mark if in your pride, you think you can determine what is good or not.

- God is the only One that judges men and women.
- God is the only One that controls our lives.
- God is the only One that defines what good is and what sin is.

And as a follower, a disciple, I submit myself to Him.