

Step-by-Step: Practical Living from the Book of James **Take the Step of Submission**

Submission – Act of submitting to the authority or control of another (Webster)

“Submit yourselves therefore to God...” **James 4:7a**

“Come now, you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we will go into such & such a town & spend a year there & trade & make a profit’ – yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time & then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, ‘If the Lord wills, we will live & do this or that.’ As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. So whoever knows the right thing to do & fails to do it, for him it is sin. Come now, you rich, weep & howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches have rotted & your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold & silver have corroded, & their corrosion will be evidence against you & will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure in the last days. Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, & the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. You have lived on the earth in luxury & in self-indulgence. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. You have condemned & murdered the righteous person. He does not resist you.” **James 4:13-5:6**

Main Idea: Submission to God is Foundational to Walking with Jesus

Two Perspectives of Submission to God:

I. Living Without Submission to God **a. Logic**

“Come now, you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we will go into such & such a town & spend a year there & trade & make a profit... As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. So whoever knows the right thing to do & fails to do it, for him it is sin.’” **James 4:13, 16-17**

Boasting: It’s more than bragging or being prideful; it’s a ritual of warfare.

“Thus says the LORD: ‘Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands & knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, & righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD.’” **Jeremiah 9:23-24**

“Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring.” **Proverbs 27:1**

b. Results

“Come now, you rich, weep & howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches have rotted & your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold & silver have corroded, & their corrosion will be evidence against you & will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure in the last days. Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, & the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. You have lived on the earth in luxury & in self-indulgence. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. You have condemned & murdered the righteous person. He does not resist you.” **James 5:1-6**

The illusion of life control leads to:

- **Anxiety**

- **Overconfidence**

“And he told them a parable, saying, ‘The land of a rich man produced plentifully, & he thought to himself, ‘What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?’ And he said, ‘I will do this: I will tear down my barns & build larger ones, & there I will store all my grain & my goods. And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.’” But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you, & the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ So is the one who lays up treasure for himself & is not rich toward God.” **Luke 12:16-21**

II. Learning Submission to God

“...yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time & then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, ‘If the Lord wills, we will live & do this or that.’” **James 4:14**

Tension: There is an extreme on the other side of this individualism that James speaks about, a sort of fatalism that says *the world is rigged, what I do doesn’t really matter at all*. This is not James’ point, either. The Bible holds these concepts (Sovereign Control vs. Personal Responsibility) in Tension:

“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works & wonders & signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know – this Jesus, delivered up according to the **definite plan & foreknowledge of God**, you crucified & killed by the hands of lawless men...let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord & Christ, this Jesus **whom you crucified**.” **Acts 2:22-23, 36**

“As for man, his days are like grass; he flourishes like a flower of the field; for the wind passes over it, & it is gone, & its place knows it no more. But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, & his righteousness to children’s children, to those who keep his covenant & remember to do his commandments.” **Psalms 103:15-18**

I don’t know why God is allowing some of the things he is allowing right now as it relates to suffering, division, hatred & violence. But I know one thing for sure...God loves you and proved it by sending Jesus!

“Why did the eternal become mortal? The eternal became mortal so we mortals could become eternal.” **Tim Keller**

That is a God worthy of Submitting to & Worshipping Eternally!

Sources & Further Reading Opportunities:

- Tyndale Bible Dictionary – Elwell & Comfort (2001)
- New American Commentary: James – Kurt Richardson (1996)
- Shoe Leather Christianity – Johnny M. Hunt (2014)
- Holman NT Commentary: Hebrews & James – Max Anders (1999)
- The Book of James – Johnny M Hunt (2003)
- James: Faith that Works – R. Kent Hughes (2013)
- Exploring the Epistle of James – John Phillips (2003)
- Be Mature – Warren Wiersbe (2010)
- Swindoll’s Living Insights: James, 1&2 Peter – Chuck Swindoll (2014)
- MacArthur’s NT Commentary: James – John MacArthur (1998)
- A Community of Justice: Part Two – Timothy Keller (2010)

