

When Resistance Becomes an Encounter

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James 4:7-8 *Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.*

As a young Christian man barely out of my teenager years, God showed me the truth of the passage above in real time. As we all are at times, I was being tempted to sin. It was one of those sins that so 'easily entangles' Hebrews 12:1 and I remember how close I was to giving in. In the last minute I was able to resist.

It's what I did after the resisting that is the most memorable to me many years later. In that moment of God's grace in which I was able to resist, I decided to actively praise God in a place where I was able to be alone. I begin to sing and praise Him. I never expected God to show up the way He did. I was suddenly overwhelmed by His presence and His nearness; I couldn't even stand up; the presence of God was so thick in that place.

When we resist (and repent) of sin, it's an active submission to God. It's also an open door and opportunity for the presence of God to be manifested in our lives. We serve a gracious God who knows all that we struggle with. I believe on this day all those years ago, God not only saw my struggle to 'crucify the flesh' but saw an opportunity to teach me something. Drawing near to God and submitting to Him was a really good way to get His attention and His help. He drew so near to me that day, I'll never forget it.

In our endeavor to encounter God's presence, let us consider what sins we need to resist and repent of. And when we are in active temptation, it could be an opportunity for an experience of a lifetime. The first step is always on us when it comes to the principal James lays out in his fourth chapter. Resist the devil, submit and draw near THEN God will draw near to us. There is something very powerful about replacing sin with praise, worship and thanksgiving.

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