

THE BOOK OF JAMES

“A Greater Grace”

Scripture Reading: JAMES 4:6-10

-) **SLIDES 1-6**. Bible Jeopardy!
-) **SLIDES 7-8**. Read today’s Scripture text.
-) **SLIDE 9**. Today we continue in our expository study in the Book of JAMES. This is week #22. I have titled today’s message “A Greater Grace” (4:6).
-) **SLIDE 10**. Last week we talked about the symptom / cause / action progression. Something is wrong—a problem so it exhibits a symptom. Something is causing that problem (symptom to occur). And then there is a course of action to take to correct this issue.
-) In JAMES 4:1-5, James says there is a sin problem among the brethren. They are proud of their sins of lust and envy. But they are asking for wrong things with wrong motives and therefore not receiving what they want (the pleasures of lust and envy). And when they didn’t get what they wanted, it resulted in quarrels, conflicts, fights, and murder.
-) Nothing is different today. We may not struggle with lust, envy, or pride, but there is probably that sin hot button that you and I do struggle with more often than we’d like.
-) **SLIDE 11**. So, for us today, let’s just generalize this and you and I can fill in any specific blanks.
-) **SLIDE 12**. But the cause remains the same. War raging within. There is a spiritual battle going on within every Christian of the human condition vs the Holy Spirit. And the human condition, who has always been in control, does not want to give up easily.

-) James gives us six solutions to help resolve our sin issues. Will we perform these solutions 100% and become perfect? Not in this lifetime. But they are very good plans of action to pursue to help us work on and minimize our sin problem.
-) Review from last week.
-) **SLIDE 13.** Be **HUMBLE** not proud. We cannot be proud of our desire to sin, We must humble ourselves before the Lord and He will exalt us (lift us up) above and beyond our sin problem.
-) **SLIDE 14.** **SUBMIT** yourself to God. The Christian is now under God's authority. We yield ourselves to His Word and His commandments, regardless if we agree with them or not.
-) **SLIDE 15.** Resist the **DEVIL**. If we are friends with the world (devil), then we are enemies with God (JAMES 4:4). If we are friends with God, then the devil is now a defeated foe. Let's put the devil in his rightful place. He's defeated.
-) And don't forget these four words "*Get behind me Satan.*" In times of temptation, say these 4 words out loud and the devil will flee from you.
-) For our time remaining here this morning, let's cover the final 3 courses of action we can take to help resolve our sin problem.
-) **SLIDE 16.** Draw **NEAR** to God.
-) **SLIDE 17.** JAMES 4:8. We talked earlier about submitting to God—to His authority and being obedient to His commands.
-) But this action (drawing near to God) is different. So, I ask. Do you have a longing to be in constant communion with God? Do you desire to pursue a genuine love relationship with God?
-) Any relationship worth cultivating requires quality time together. How much time do we spend in prayer? Remember, the worst thing that could ever happen to a human being (which is dying and going to hell) will never happen to the Christian. How often do we thank God for that miracle in our life?

-) I'll say it again. Any relationship worth cultivating requires quality time together. How much quality time do we spend reading the Word of God?
-) If you want to know more about a person, read their autobiography. If you want to know more about God, read His book. Draw near to Him by spending time reading words inspired by His Holy Spirit. Remember, it's not God that has moved away. It is us. Let's draw near to God.
-) **SLIDE 18.** **CLEANSE** your hands and **PURIFY** your hearts.
-) **SLIDE 19.** JAMES 4:8.
-) **SLIDE 20.** In this verse, James tells the brethren to cleanse their hands and purify their hearts. That was a practice used by the Levitical priests in the OT. They had to wash their hands before approaching God. Failure to do so would result in death. EXODUS 30:19-20.
-) This does not mean we or any Christian needs to physically wash our hands before praying. It is symbolic of our desire for repentance. Every true Christian will repent of their sins. We symbolically cleanse our hands and we purify our hearts.
-) The website GotQuestions.org explains it this way: "*We get our hands dirty when we play in the world's sandbox. We cleanse our hands by removing them from sinful pursuits and moral compromises and then seeking God's forgiveness. We purify our hearts through the inward renewal of the mind and spirit.*"
-) **SLIDE 21.** And you notice that James calls these brethren "*double-minded.*" These brethren had half their mind on God and the other half in the world. Their mind was torn between the two.
-) **SLIDE 22.** 1 CORINTHIANS 2:16. But the apostle Paul tells us what? That we have the mind of Christ. We no longer have a mind for the world. We symbolically cleanse our hands and purify our hearts.

-) And here's our 6th and final course of action against the symptom of sin in our lives.
-) **SLIDE 23**. JAMES 4:9. This doesn't sound like a very good thing to do. I like laughter and I like joy. Why should I be miserable, mourn, weep, and be gloomy?
-) **SLIDE 24**. Be **BROKEN** over our sin. We must be miserable over our sins. We must be mourning over our sin. We must be weeping over our sin. We must feel gloomy because of our sin.
-) And it makes no difference how you or I define those things that bring us carnal pleasure. Because if God calls them a sin, then they are sins. Case closed.
-) And the opposite of mourning over our sin would be being proud of our sin. And what do we in America now call the month of June? Pride month. Let's be proud and celebrate the fact that we love wallowing in our sins of LGBTQ+.
-) That is not what James is saying. He is saying we need to be mourning over our sins. We should be weeping over our sins. Our sins must break us to the point of repentance.
-) Listen. And if and when our sins no longer break us, then we better examine ourselves to make sure that we are truly in the faith.
-) **SLIDE 25**. What does Jesus say in MARK 1:14-15?
-) **SLIDE 26**. MATTHEW 26:75. This is how we respond to our sins. We have failed the Master who bought us at a price.
-) **SLIDE 27**. King David wrote PSALM 51 shortly after he had been caught with his adulterous affair with Bathsheba by the prophet Nathan. PSALM 51:17.
-) God doesn't want us to perform some outward act of contrition to fulfill some religious obligation (burnt sacrifice, say the rosary or put more money in the basket). He wants a broken spirit and contrite heart. It's always been a matter of the heart.

-) BGCC, we do not and cannot love our sin. We must hate our sin. We don't want to be like the world. We want to be like Christ. We have been called to be separate.
-) **SLIDE 28.** There's good news. When we follow James' plan of action against our sin, and humble ourselves, God gives us a greater grace than we could ever deserve. Remember, grace is receiving something we do not deserve.
-) **SLIDE 29.** ROMANS 5:20-21. In our times of sin struggles, grace will abound all the more for all of God's elect, but only when we humble ourselves before God.
-) **SLIDE 30.** So, are we struggling with any particular sin(s)? Here's our course of action. When we do this, God's promise is that greater grace will abound.
-) You talk about an independence day? This truth will certainly set you free!

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