

Wednesdays in the Word
Digging Deeper
August 19, 2020
James 4:7-10
Not The World's Priorities

This past Sunday our study took us through four basic answers to last week's dilemma. Remember from then that James beat us up a bit concerning our sin. We sometimes share the ugly mindset that has the world in condemnation. Wars, fighting, lust and killing. Remember, Jesus told us that even thinking sinfully is the same as performing a sin. We experience disappointment, disillusion and broken relationships with God and man. If we dare we might talk about some of the sins that plague Christians today. A very uncomfortable thought indeed. But at least, for now, look into your own soul. There should be no ambiguity in recognizing the individual sin in each of our lives. All this because we do not continuously choose to live in the love of our Creator. We instead turn to the world and its empty promises. These two choices are mutually exclusive. This week we learned some useful principles to help us alter our focus. In verses 7-10 James tells us to 1) Submit to God and resist the devil. No middle ground here. One or the other. Joshua 24:14-15. 2) We are told to draw near to God. A result of this will be His drawing near to us! We are also told to repent as we do so, symbolically with clean hands, hearts and minds. We might think to actually wash our hands as we prayerfully consider what sin we committed and let Him fully cleanse us. John 13:4-9. 3) Be afflicted, mourn and weep. This is not a lifestyle but a response we ought to have when we realize we have sinned. Our Wonderful Savior hung on a cross and endured its shame for each and every sin we commit. Never lose sight of that. Hebrews 12:2-4. 4) Finally we are to humble ourselves before the Lord. This is the only way to approach Him and the only heart attitude that will allow Him to lift us up. See verse 6.

We were given a handout as we left the sanctuary on Sunday. Let's dig deeper into that list to see what God would have us understand. Perhaps the first thing we can notice is that it is a list of Christian attributes that the unsaved world would hold in derision. Look through the list and think of how many lost people would have no respect for any of these traits nor want to pursue them in their lives. This is only one of the many reasons that people resist converting to Christ. We have however converted and made Him our Lord and Master. We can look at these commands and understand that we need to fall more in line with the directives that James has laid out for us.

We will break each one down into its original Greek and also make reference to some interesting verses that will help us understand what the Lord wants us to be like.

First, the definitions;

1. Submission (or submit yourselves)

ὑποτάσσω hupotassō

Strong's Definition

From G5259 and G5021; to subordinate; reflexively to obey: - be under obedience (obedient) put under, subdue unto (be make) subject (to unto) be (put) in subjection (to under) submit self unto.

Thayer's Definition

to arrange under, to subordinate

to subject, put in subjection

to subject one's self, obey

to submit to one's control

to yield to one's admonition or advice

to obey, be subject

This word was a Greek military term meaning "to arrange [troop divisions] in a military fashion under the command of a leader". In non-military use, it was "a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, and carrying a burden".

2. Resistance (or resist)

ἀνθίστημι anthistēmi

Strong's Definition

From G473 and G2476; to stand against that is oppose: - resist withstand.

Thayer's Definition

to set one's self against, to withstand, resist, oppose, to set against

3. Fellowship (to draw near)

ἐγγίζω eggizō

Strong's Definition

From G1451; to make near that is (reflexively) approach: - approach be at hand come (draw) near be (come draw) nigh.

Thayer's Definition

to bring near, to join one thing to another

to draw or come near to, to approach

4. Cleansing

καθαρίζω katharizō

Strong's Definition

From G2513; to cleanse (literally or figuratively): - (make) clean (-se) purge purify.

Thayer's Definition

to make clean, cleanse from physical stains and dirt on utensils, food, a leper, to cleanse by curing, to remove by cleansing in a moral sense, to free from defilement of sin and from faults, to purify from wickedness, to free from guilt of sin, to purify to consecrate by cleansing or purifying to consecrate, dedicate, to pronounce clean in a levitical sense

5. Purification

ἁγνίζω hagnizō

Strong's Definition

From G53; to make clean that is (figuratively) sanctify (ceremonially or morally): - purity (self).

Thayer's Definition

ceremonially, to make pure, purify, cleanse morally

6. Misery (or affliction)

ταλαιπωρέω talaipōreō

Strong's Definition

From G5005; to be wretched, that is realize one's own misery: - be afflicted.

Thayer's Definition

to toil heavily, to endure labours and hardships, to be afflicted, to feel afflicted and miserable, to afflict

7. Sorrow (or mourn)

πενθέω pentheō

Strong's Definition

From G3997; to grieve (the feeling or the act): - mourn (be-) wail.

Thayer's Definition

to mourn, to mourn for, lament over

8. Tears (or weep)

κλαίω klaiō

Strong's Definition

Of uncertain affinity; to sob that is wail aloud (whereas G1145 is rather to cry silently): - bewail. weep.

Thayer's Definition

to mourn, weep, lament, weeping as the sign of pain and grief for the thing signified (i.e. for the pain and grief) of those who mourn for the dead, to weep for, mourn for, bewail.

9. Seriousness

κατήφεια katēpheia

Strong's Definition

From a compound of G2596 and perhaps a derivative of the base of G5316 (meaning downcast in look); demureness that is (by implication) sadness: - heaviness.

Thayer's Definition

a downcast look expressive of sorrow, shame, dejection, gloom

10. Humility (or humble yourselves)

ταπεινός tapeinoō

Strong's Definition

From G5011; to depress; figuratively to humiliate (in condition or heart): - abase bring low humble (self).

Thayer's Definition

to make low, bring low, to level, reduce to a plain, metaph. to bring into a humble condition, reduce to meaner circumstances, to assign a lower rank or place to, to abase, to be ranked below others who are honoured or rewarded to humble or abase myself by humble living, to lower, depress, of one's soul bring down one's pride to have a modest opinion of one's self, to behave in an unassuming manner, devoid of all haughtiness.

Is it not proper to place humility last? We Christians in our endeavor to be more like Jesus most need to acquire this trait that was uniquely and perfectly His. What does scripture tell us about our development through and in Christ?

1. Submission. Luke 2:51, 22:42
2. Resistance. Ephesians 6:10-13, 1 Peter 5:8-9
3. Fellowship. 1 John 1:5-7, Matthew 11:28-30
4. Cleansing. (Note; we get our word catharsis from this Greek term) 1 John 11:9, 2 Corinthians 7:1
5. Purification. 1 John 3:3, Ezekiel 36:25
6. Misery. Psalm 22:24, 24:17-20
7. Sorrow. Psalm 30:5, Revelation 21:4
8. Tears. John 11:32-35, Hebrews 5:5-7
9. Seriousness. Isaiah 61:3, 1 Peter 5:7-11
10. Humility. Matthew 11:28-30, Philippians 2:6-8

May we learn and grow in the honour of serving and sharing our Most Blessed Lord and His great plan of salvation.