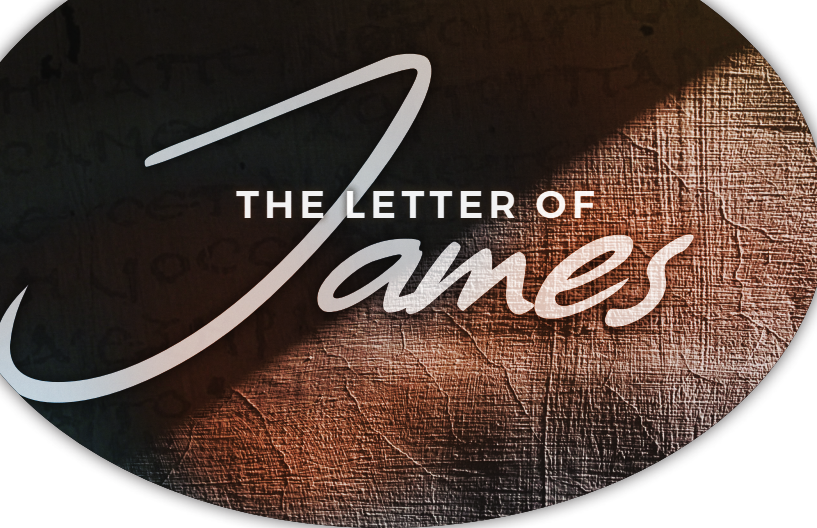




THE LETTER OF *James*

OCTOBER 18, 2026

Imperatives for the Christian Life JAMES 4:6-10

The grace of God is essential for our salvation, “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. Ephesians 2:8–9 (NASB95)

But grace is not only essential to our salvation; it is also essential to our sanctification and daily walk with Christ. We are saved by grace, and we continue to depend on God’s grace as we grow in spiritual maturity.

In the context of the spiritual battles believers face, James reminds us that “God is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble” (James 4:6, NASB95).

Grace is God’s unmerited favor. It is receiving what we could never earn or deserve. We do not earn God’s acceptance through our works, nor do we possess the strength to live the Christian life apart from His enabling grace.

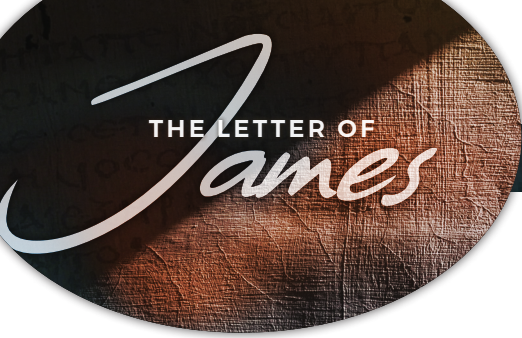
“It is the driving force behind the salvation, sanctification, and security that God offers to the fallen children of Adam’s ruined race. It is the key to the kingdom. It is the deathblow to our pride. It annuls all of the world’s religions, which demand that we do something, earn something, or merit something. The proud man will not stoop to accept God’s grace, so God resists him... To accept God’s grace, we must lay aside all pride and come as a repentant sinner to the foot of the cross.”

Pride resists God’s grace because pride insists on self-sufficiency. Humility, on the other hand, acknowledges our need for God and submits to His authority. To receive His grace, we must abandon our self-righteousness, acknowledge our sin, and come before Him in repentance and faith.

In James 4:6–10, verses 6 and 10 frame the commands found in verses 7–9. James begins by declaring God’s gracious provision for the humble and concludes with the promise that God will exalt those who humble themselves before Him.

Between these two declarations, James gives believers a series of commands that describe what humble dependence on God looks like in everyday life.

James issues ten imperative verbs in the original Greek text. These commands call believers to a life marked by submission, resistance to evil, nearness to God, cleansing, repentance, and humility.



KEY THOUGHT: A life that depends on God's grace is a life characterized by humility, repentance, and obedience.

1. Submit to God (v. 7a)

"Submit therefore to God." (James 4:7a, NASB95)

Our spiritual growth requires more than acknowledging our need for grace. It requires responding to that grace by turning away from sin and drawing nearer to God.

Submission begins with recognizing God's rightful authority over every area of our lives. It means surrendering our desires, plans, attitudes, and ambitions to His will.

We cannot experience the fullness of fellowship with God while insisting on maintaining control over the areas of our lives that we refuse to surrender.

2. Resist the Devil (v. 7b)

"Resist the devil and he will flee from you." (James 4:7b, NASB95)

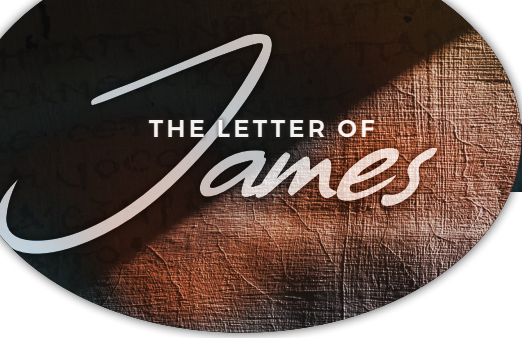
Submission to God is accompanied by resistance to the devil. We cannot faithfully submit to God while willingly embracing the temptations and deceptions of the enemy.

We resist the devil most faithfully when we stand under God's authority and depend on His strength.

3. Draw Near to God (v. 8a)

"Draw near to God and He will draw near to you." (James 4:8a, NASB95)

God calls us not merely to turn away from sin but also to pursue a deeper relationship with Him. We cannot grow in intimacy with God while deliberately distancing ourselves from His will.



4. Remove What Defiles Your Fellowship with God (v. 8b)

James continues with two related commands: *"Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded"* (James 4:8b, NASB95).

- A. Cleanse Your Hands — Outward Conduct
- B. Purify Your Hearts — Inward Affections

5. Examine Yourself Honestly (v. 9)

"Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom." (James 4:9, NASB95)

- A. Mourn Over Your Sin

This is not a command to live in perpetual sadness or to believe that joy is incompatible with Christianity. Rather, it is a call to stop treating sin casually and to respond to it with genuine repentance.

- B. Exchange Superficial Laughter for Genuine Repentance

James challenges the kind of laughter and joy that arise from a worldly attitude toward sin. There are times when frivolity must give way to serious self-examination.

6. Humble Yourself Before the Lord (v. 10)

"Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you." (James 4:10, NASB95)

Humility is not thinking that we have no value. It is recognizing who God is, acknowledging who we are in relation to Him, and depending entirely on His grace.

CONCLUSION: "AND HE WILL EXALT YOU"

James begins this passage by reminding us that God gives grace to the humble, and he concludes by promising that God will exalt those who humble themselves before Him.

Between these two truths, James shows us what a humble life looks like: submit to God, resist the devil, draw near to God, cleanse your hands, purify your heart, grieve over sin, and humble yourself before the Lord.

These commands are not a ladder by which we earn God's favor. They are the appropriate response of believers who recognize their continual need for His grace.