

Submit and Resist

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: James 4:1-12

This lesson is the seventh in a series on the book of James. In this passage, James talked about the need to submit to God and resist the devil.

There Is a War Inside of Us (v. 1-5)

- Conflicts among us are primarily rooted in selfishness (v. 1) – our desires over the good of others
- Following after our lusts leads to conflict (v. 2-3) – murder, fight, and quarrel to satisfy our own pleasures
- We must choose to be a friend either of the world or of God (v. 4) – we cannot choose both
- God’s desire is for us to choose Him (v. 5) – “jealously desires...”; yet we must choose to follow Him

Submit to God (v. 6-10)

- Submitting to God means putting His will ahead of our own – commitment to do His will in all things
- Why should we do this? – He gives grace to the humble (v. 6); grace makes salvation possible (Ephesians 2:8)
- How do we do this? (v. 8) – cleanse our hands by giving up sin (cf. Romans 6:6, 11); purify our hearts by being singularly focused (James 1:6-7; cf. 2 Corinthians 5:7); mourn over our sin (v. 9; cf. 2 Corinthians 7:10)
- If we submit to God, He will exalt us (v. 10; 1 Peter 5:6) – we do not need to exalt ourselves

Resist the Devil (v. 7)

- This must necessarily be done if we are going to submit to God – no middle ground; but this means we can resist the devil; we will never be in a situation where we must sin (cf. 1 Corinthians 10:13)
- How to resist the devil? – contrast it with how we submit to God
- Resist the temptation to think too highly of ourselves – pride goes before destruction (Proverbs 16:18)
- Look for and take the way of escape when tempted (1 Corinthians 10:13)
- Focus on the things of God (Colossians 3:1-2) – do not allow worldly things to distract you
- Do not celebrate/tolerate/excuse sin as society does – they call evil good and good evil (Isaiah 5:20)

The One Lawgiver and Judge (v. 11-12)

- James began this section by addressing the conflicts that existed among brethren (v. 1-2) – he returns to that point here; submitting to God leads to peace with God’s people
- We must not speak evil against our brethren (v. 11) – this does not mean we cannot correct one in sin (James 5:19-20); this is about speaking “against the law”; this condemnation is based upon a human standard
- God is the only Lawgiver and Judge (v. 12) – He can save or destroy; our eternal fate is in His hand; it is not our place to judge the servant of another (Romans 14:4); instead, we need to make sure we are right with Him; then encourage others to do the same

Conclusion

- God will judge us based upon His law – so let us submit to Him in all things
- In doing this, we must also resist the devil – if we do, he will flee from us
- As we do these things, we can also enjoy peace with one another