

Currently Working Way Through Next Major Section of James, ~ 4:1-12

Collection of Qs ~ covering wide range of subjects.

▶▶4.

▶▶Conflict in the Congregation, ~ 1-3. ~ Spiritual adultery, ~ 4-6. ~ Submission to God, ~ 7-10. ~ & Slander, ~ 11-12.

Submission To God, ~ 7-10.

In this brief Q, ~ a rapid-fire salvo of 8 impvs. ⇔⇔ But not disconnected commands.

▶▶The 1st and 8th ~ are basically the same, ~ 11

▷▷the 8th using diff. wds. ~ and adding the result of submission to God.

▶▶7a, ~ Submit yourselves therefore to God.

▶▶10, ~ Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

These 2 impvs bracket the other 6, ~ and indicate ~ 11

▶▶that submission to God ~ is the theme of this brief Q.

▶▶The intervening 66 impvs ~ spell out ~ what submission to God entails. 1/15

Diagram.

1st impv & topic sentence.

▶▶^{7a} Submit yourselves therefore to God.

The 2nd impv shows submission to God entails ~ resisting temptation (vv. 7b).

▶▶^{7b} Resist the devil, ^{7c} and he will flee from you.

The 3rd impv shows it entails ~ prayer (vs. 8a).

▶▶^{8a} Draw near to God, ^{8b} and he will draw near to you.

The 4th impv shows submission to God entails ~ changing actions (v. 8c).

▶▶^{8c} Cleanse your hands, you sinners,

The 5th impv shows it entails ~ a single-minded commitment to God (v. 8d).

▶▶^{8d} and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

The 6th & 7th impvs. show submission to God entails ~ genuine repentance (v. 9).

▶▶^{9a} Be wretched

▶▶^{9b} and mourn

▶▶^{9c} and weep.

▶▶^{9d} Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. 2/15

Using diff wds, ~ the 8th impv ~ repeats the 1st imperative ~ & notes the result of submission.

▶▶¹⁰ Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

Today, ~ 7-8b.

1st Imperative & Topic Sentence.

^{7a} Submit yourselves therefore to God.

▶▶ To submit to God means ~ to place ourselves under his authority, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ and therefore ~ to commit ourselves to obey him ~ in all things.

▶▶ TPID, ~ submission to God ~ is living a life ~ that continually expresses to him, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ not my will, ~ but yours be done.

The Greek verb for ~ submit ~ means ~ to put in order under.

▶▶ It suggests ~ the existence of a hierarchy of authority.

▶▶ Such as God instituted ~ in human government, ~ marriage, ~ & the church.

▶▶ And when it comes to God's kingdom, ~ you & I my friends, ~ are not ~ at the top ~ of this hierarchy.

↪↪ Is. 45:9, ~ Woe to him who strives with him who formed him, a pot among earthen pots! Does the clay say to him who forms it, 'What are you making?' or 'Your work has no handles?' 3/15

The idea James is getting at here is ~ complete submission, ~ which is, ~ of course, ~ patterned after Jesus.

▶▶ For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.

▶▶ And of course, ~ prayer in Gethsemane, ⇨⇨ My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.

As Observed, ~ The Next 8 Commands Spell Out What Submission To God Entails.

I.e., ~ these are required ~ as a necessary accompaniment ~ to a claim of submission to him.

▶▶ IOW, ~ this is what submission to God looks like ~ in real life.

We can also look at it from a different angle.

▶▶ Earlier, ~ James said that ~ Christ-honoring works ~ are proof ~ that a claim of saving faith is genuine.

▷▷ On the flip side, ~ lack of said works, ~ proves the claim bogus.

▶▶ Likewise, ~ obeying these 6 commands ~ proves one's claim to have submitted themselves to God.

▷▷ On the flipside, ~ lack of obedience ~ proves the submission claim bogus.

↪↪ Sum up all exhortations in the NT.

▶▶ Does not let us get away with ~ empty, ~ verbal claims. 4/15

As We Took Note Of, ~ Intervening 6 Impvs ~ Spell Out ~ What Submission To God Entails.

The 2nd Impv Shows Submission To God Involves ~ Resisting Temptation (Vv. 7b).

Resist the devil.

▶▶ Could be expressed as ~ If you resist the devil, ~ and you should!

▷▷ IOW, ~ we have no business ~ not ~ resisting Satan.

The grammar focuses on resisting.

▶▶ And one ~ resists an opponent who attacks.

▶▶ The Christian is ~ not instructed ~ to attack the devil ~ by luring him into combat.

▶▶ Rather, ~ it is implied by James ~ that the devil ~ will do the attacking.

▶▶ We don't need to go looking for him. ⇔⇔ He'll find us.

Peter makes this explicit with a sober warning in his 1st epistle.

▶▶ 1 Pet. 5:8, ~ Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

▶▶ Like a roaring lion ~ describes his fierce and determined activity.

▶▶ Like ~ asserts the reality ~ of his true character, ~ as a vicious beast. 5/15

▶▶Roaring ~ pictures him ~ as ravenously hungry, ~ intent on capturing prey.

▶▶Prowls around ~ depicts the restless energy of the devil ~ in his search for victims.

▷▷Recall how he answered God.

↪↪The Lord said to Satan, "Where have you come from?" Satan answered the Lord, "From roaming throughout the earth, going back and forth on it." (Job 1:7; NIV)

▷▷He is constantly on the prowl, ~ looking for someone to devour.

▶▶Seeking ~ expresses Satan's persistent search.

▶▶And ~ devour ~ depicts the total destruction of the victim.

▷▷A failure to resist, ~ will bring destruction into our lives.

Now, ~ it's important to point out here that Satan is not omnipresent.

▶▶So it is unlikely that he is personally assailing every Christian, ~ ¶¶

▷▷but is assigning demons to do this work.

▶▶So we could say that, ~ in the context here, ~ "devil" can go beyond Satan ~ ¶¶

▷▷and refer to all of the fallen angels ~ over which Satan rules.

↪↪Spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

▶▶So it's not just Satan alone ~ James calls us to resist. 6/15

In Eph., ~ Paul says much the same thing, ~ using different words.

▶▶ In the context of anger, ~ but applicable to all areas of our life, ~ he writes, ~ and give no opportunity to the devil.

▶▶ Opportunity ~ means ~ place.

▷▷ And the picture is ~ of letting the devil into our house ~ and allowing him to inhabit a room.

Now we must really understand something here.

▶▶ We are commanded to resist the devil.

▶▶ However, ~ we are not told ~ to remain in the place ~ ¶¶

▷▷ where his temptations prove strongest ~ in order to fight them.

▶▶ Often we must run away, ~ either literally or metaphorically.

▷▷ Danish proverb: ~ No one can be caught ~ in a place he does not visit.

▷▷ Joseph.

▶▶ However, ~ when it is not possible to remove ourselves from a situation, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ e.g., ~ working or living around unbelievers, ~ at those times, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ we must simply live morally ~ in the midst of immorality. 7/15

▷▷ Phil. 2:14-15, ~ Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.

▷▷ And 1 Pet. 2:12, ~ Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

Resisting the devil ~ is a sign ~ of true submission to God.

The Command To Resist The Devil ~ Is Followed By A Promise.

^{7c} And he will flee from you. ⇨⇨ He will turn and run.

▶▶ The whole idea here is this.

▷▷ If we do not give in to Satan's schemes, ~ he will turn and run away from us.

▶▶ Whatever power Satan may have, ~ the Christian can be absolutely certain ~ ¶¶

▷▷ that he has been given the ability ~ to overcome that power.

The only power Satan can have over us ~ is what we give him.

▶▶ Jesus defeated Satan and broke his power over us on the cross.

▶▶ Believers have the power of choice now.

▶▶ When we choose ~ to say no to his schemes and stand our ground against him, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ he will run away from us. 8/15

Important to understand, ~ there's a principle ~ that this vs does not imply.

▶▶ It does not indicate ~ that if we resist Satan ~ our lives will be smooth from that point on.

▶▶ He'll be back.

▶▶ At the end of Satan's temptations of Jesus, ~ Lk writes, ~ 77

▷▷ And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time.

↳↳ I.e., ~ he left until the next opportunity to attack came.

▶▶ Same for us.

▷▷ Not 1 & done.

▷▷ Stay alert.

And we should mention this.

▶▶ We have absolutely no need ~ to fear Satan.

▶▶ 1 Jn. 4:4, ~ Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

▶▶ The greater one = Holy Spirit.

▷▷ He is ~ infinitely greater, ~ infinitely superior, ~ to the enemy who opposes us. 9/15

▶▶ No cosmic dualism is found here!

▷▷ Satan ~ is not an equal but opposite power to God.

▷▷ He is no match for God.

▶▶ As believers yield themselves ~ to the one who lives within them, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ we will experience ~ continual victory ~ in our daily battles with the forces of evil.

▶▶ This is a great promise ~ that provides great ~ comfort, ~ assurance, ~ and hope.

The 3rd Impv Shows Submission to God Entails ~ Prayer.

^{8a} Draw near to God.

▶▶ Exhortation to pray.

▷▷ Throughout the NT, ~ exhorted to pray.

▶▶ But James & the other NT authors are not talking about ~ half-hearted, ~ superficial praying.

▷▷ Pointing to a commitment to ~ habitual, ~ heartfelt, ~ God-honoring prayer.

↪↪ I.e., ~ genuine prayer.

→→ And note, ~ genuine prayer is not necessarily related ~ to length of prayer or amount of time prayed. 10/15

Genuine prayer, ~ I would suggest, ~ is whole-hearted fellowship with God through Jesus.

▶▶It is expressed in ~ adoration, ~ thanksgiving, ~ and intercession, ~ ¶¶

▷▷through which believers ~ draw near to God ~ and learn more of his will for their lives.

True prayer reflects ~ a longing after God.

▶▶Ps. 42:1, ~ As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God.

▶▶As noted, ~ one can visualize the deer, ~ in a parched land, ~ neck outstretched, ~ ¶¶

▷▷seeking to get the scent of water, ~ without which it will surely perish.

▶▶So is the psalmist's thirst for God.

Genuine prayer offers believers ~ a means of acknowledging the character and purposes of God.

▶▶It also offers us ~ the opportunity to seek guidance concerning his will for us.

Authentic prayer embraces ~ praising God for who he is, ~ ¶¶

▶▶thanking him for what he has already done, ~ ¶¶

▷▷and looking forward with joy to what he has promised to do in the future.

And genuine prayer ~ is concerned ~ not only with the well-being ~ of the one who prays. 11/15

▶▶ A vital aspect of its purpose is ~ to allow the will of God to be done, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ and to bring glory and honour to his name.

▶▶ Jesus, ~ Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done."

▷▷ Submission to God's will characterized Jesus' prayer life.

▶▶ And Ps. 115:1.

▷▷ Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name give glory, for the sake of your steadfast love and your faithfulness!

Related to this ~ is prayerfulness, ~ which is a key component of genuine prayer.

▶▶ Prayerfulness ~ is an attitude ~ by which a constant relationship between God and believers is developed.

▶▶ It's a way of life.

▶▶ Ps. 5:3, ~ NIV, ~ In the morning, Lord, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait expectantly.

▷▷ In the morning ~ is repeated in vs 3 for emphasis.

↳↳ It stresses ~ that his first thoughts each day ~ were prayer.

▶▶ Nehemiah felt so close to God ~ that it was automatic ~ ¶¶

▷▷ for him to speak to God and the king almost simultaneously. 12/15

▷▷Neh. 2:4, ~ Then the king said to me, "What are you requesting?" So I prayed to the God of heaven.

▶▶Luke writes of Jesus, ~ in Lk. 5:16 (LEB), ~ that ~ But he himself was withdrawing in the wilderness and praying.

▷▷Was withdrawing and praying ~ indicates ~ that it was Jesus' regular practice ~ to retire to pray.

Habitual, ~ heartfelt, ~ God-honoring prayer ~ is a sign ~ of true submission to God.

Before Moving On, ~ An Important Reminder.

It is possible for us to approach God in prayer because of, ~ and only because of, ~ Jesus' sacrifice.

▶▶Heb 10:19-22.

Like The Previous Command, ~ The Command To Draw Near To God ~ Also Has A Promise.

^{8b} And he will draw near to you.

▶▶God promises ~ to hear and respond ~ to the prayers of his people.

▷▷I.e., ~ when we pray according to his will.

1 Jn. 5:14-15.

▶▶And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him. 13/15

▶▶ The idea of ~ **he hears** is ~ not merely that He listens ~ but ~ that He listens favorably.

▶▶ And, ~ since we know he listens favorably ~ when we ask according to his will, ~ 77

▷▷ we also know ~ that he will give us what we ask for.

▶▶ And, ~ we should add, ~ it will be ~ in his timing ~ not in ours.

Heb. 4:15-16.

▶▶ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

▶▶ Our High Priest understands our weaknesses, ~ our human pull toward sin.

▷▷ He understands ~ because he faced all of the same testings we do.

▷▷ He was tempted with all the essential aspects of sin.

▷▷ This makes him ~ compassionate ~ as our High Priest.

▷▷ Yet, ~ he did not sin.

▷▷ Jesus is unlike the earthly high priests, ~ 77

↳↳ who had to make offerings for their own sins ~ before they could make offerings for the people. 14/15

▶▶ **Let us draw near** ~ could be translated to indicate ~ ongoing action.

▷▷ I.e., ~ **let us ~ continually ~ draw near.**

▶▶ As our compassionate High Priest, ~ Jesus has opened the way for us ~ 77

▷▷ to enter God's presence continually ~ and with confidence, ~ 77

↪↪ where we can obtain his mercy and grace to help us.

→→ What a blessing. **15/15**