

Series – Part 16: How to Live as a Christian:

Practice These Things!

James 4:7-12 NAS

Sunday, August 11 at 9:00; Monday, August 12 at 7 PM

12th Sunday After Pentecost / 11th After Trinity – 2013

Only TWO MORE WEEKS of our Summer Schedule: 8/18 & 8/25

Sundays: DS 9; Refreshments 10:10; BC&SS 10:30; Mondays: DS 7 PM

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ, God loves us and has saved us through Jesus, but we are not yet in heaven; therefore, because of ♦*His love for us* and ♦*the spiritually dangerous world in which we live*, He instructs us how to function in ways that are *truly best for us*. So:

- Can you see our need for God’s instruction?
- Are you convinced that God’s ways are best?
- Are you ready to take the next step as a believer?

Last week God warned us to AVOID certain things; today He encourages us to PRACTICE certain things.

1. **Let Us Submit to God:** ⁷ **Therefore** [*because of what has just been said (“God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”)]* **submit to God, but resist the devil and he will flee from you.** // The proud do it their way, *but the humble submit to God’s way.*
 - a. The humble gladly yield to God’s will: God’s will is found in His Word (“*The sum of Your Word is truth...*” Ps. 119:160). What is B – I – B – L – E? **BEST Instructions Before Leaving Earth!**
 - b. The humble strongly resist the devil’s will: The devil’s will is the *norm* of our sinful world, *but* – by the power of the Holy Spirit – *let us resist!*

2. **Let Us Draw Near, Cleanse, and Purify:** ⁸ **Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded** [*two-headed; 1:8*]. // God ♦made us, ♦loves us, and ♦wants us to be close to Him; therefore, He calls us and enables us to repent – *to be sorry for our sins and believe in Jesus as our Savior.* We draw near to Him on His terms, *not ours*; He calls us to ♦stop functioning like two-headed people (living both *for God* and *for the world*), ♦be pure on the inside (“*...the blood of Jesus...purifies us from all sin.*” 1 John 1:7), and ♦stop sinning on the outside (which is the fruit of repentance, John 8:11).
3. **Let Us Be Sorry for Our Sins:** Wow, I bet this is NOT a popular verse; *probably no one has memorized it*, yet it is important: ⁹ **Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy into gloom.** // Why practice such things? Because sin is a huge deal and sorrow for sin is important! It’s not our sorrow that saves—GOD SAVES, but sorrow over sin is a reality for all who know Jesus as Savior. He said: “**Blessed are those who mourn, for they** [*for that very reason*] (Gingrich)] **shall be comforted**” (Mat 5:4 NAS). Jesus also said: “**Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh....** [*But to those who continue without sorrow, He said:]* **Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep**” (Luke 6:21, 25 NAS).
4. **Let Us Humble Ourselves:** ¹⁰ **Humble yourselves in the presence of [before] the Lord, and He will exalt you.** // It is easier to humble ourselves when we think about some of the various ways in which we are helpless:

- a. To keep our hearts beating.
- b. To provide the air we breathe.
- c. To cause our digestive systems to function.
- d. To remove our sins.

Now, *more aware of our helplessness*, God enables us humble ourselves and to F – R – O – G = Fully Rely On God! Then we will have peace in Christ; then, *when the time is right*, GOD will exalt us, HE will lift us up!

5. **Let Us Rightly Speak to One Another:**

- a. Do not speak falsely: ^{11a} **Do not speak against slander** [*speak falsely against*] **one another, brethren.** // God is NOT saying: “Don’t speak,” but “Don’t speak *falsely*.” Instead, let us follow these words of St. Paul by “**speaking the truth in love**” (Eph 4:15 NAS).
- b. Why should we not speak falsely? ^{11b} **He who speaks against slanders** [*speaks falsely against*] **a brother, or judges** [*finds fault with*] **his brother, speaks against slanders** [*speaks falsely against*] **the law, and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law, but a judge of it.** // LTJ: “To practice slander and judgment against a neighbor is...to assume not only an arrogant superiority toward an equal but also to assume an arrogant superiority toward the law that forbids such behavior... The person who determines which laws to keep and which to disregard has assumed the role of a judge.” (293)
- c. Who speaks rightly? ¹² **There is only One Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy** [*...fear Him who is able to destroy*

both soul and body in hell.” (Mat 10:28 NAS)]; **but who are you¹ who judge your neighbor?** // God does judge, *thus rightly speak*, through His Word (“...the word of God is... able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. (Heb 4:12 NAS). We can also *speak rightly* when we *rightly use God’s Word, first on ourselves, then on others.*

Conclusion: **Having been saved through Jesus:**

1. We gladly submit *because God’s ways are best!*
2. By grace we draw near *and God transforms us!*
3. Since our sins separate us from God, *we are sorry!*
4. Realizing our helplessness, *we F – R – O – G!*
5. As believers, *we desire to speak the truth in love!*

And all God’s people said: **Amen!**

Verse and <u>Key Word</u> – James 4 NAS	Greek and Transliteration	Meaning of Key Word
¹¹ Do not speak against slander [<i>speak falsely against</i>] one another, brethren. He who speaks against slanders [<i>speaks falsely against</i>] a brother, or judges [<i>finds fault with</i>] his brother, speaks against slanders [<i>speaks falsely against</i>] the law, and judges the law...	καταλαεΐτε katalaleite	slander: speak against, speak evil of

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¹ The “who are you” phrase contains the Greek word τίς, to identify a person in need of repentance.