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Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

The Oaks Baptist Church
Grand Prairie, Texas

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Submit to God James 4:1-10

Lesson Background and Introduction

There are at least four and possibly five men by the name of James in the New Testament. The one who wrote the book of the New Testament that bears his name was the brother of Jesus, the son of Mary and Joseph (Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3). James was not a disciple of Jesus during his ministry (John 7:5), but after the resurrection he became a believer (Acts 1:14) and a leader in the Jerusalem church (Acts 15:13; Galatians 1:19). Yet James humbly describes himself as a “servant of God” (James 1:1), seemingly reluctant to use his family credentials. We do not know when the letter of James was written. The Jewish historian Josephus (AD 37–100) notes his death about AD 62 at the hands of Jewish opponents in Jerusalem. This makes it likely the book was written sometime in the AD 50s, thus reflecting an early stage in the history of the first-century church. The recipients of the letter are evidently Jewish believers, as indicated by the reference to the scattered “twelve tribes” (James 1:1). Perhaps they were members of the original church in Jerusalem who were forced to flee due to the persecution spawned by Stephen’s martyrdom and thus were no longer centered in one location (Acts 11:19). It would be natural for James, were he their former spiritual leader, to encourage them in the midst of their trials (James 1:2–4, 12; 5:7–11). James held very high expectations for his readers. He specifically wanted them to tone down the rivalries in their communities, some of which involved conflicts between rich and poor (James 2:5–7). This fits well with the theme of humility to which James turns in chapter 4.

(Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

It's a challenge to ignore all the ways the world attempts to distract us from what God says is important or worthwhile. Every day we are enticed by advertisers who tell us if we want our lives to be more enjoyable, they have just the product we need. We see characters portrayed in the media who seem to find fulfillment through relationships or activities that God says are not right. We find ourselves envying the luxurious lifestyles of the rich even if the way they have obtained their riches is questionable. We admire the powerful or the famous and may wish at times that we were like them. Like those James was writing to, we find we are in two worlds—one based on what God says is right and good and one based on something else, and we find ourselves attracted to both. We can't totally avoid hearing about products or activities that promise to fulfill our desires but seem to leave God out of the process. We will continue to hear about people who seem to be getting a blessing in life even though they are apparently doing so apart from Him. To help us discern when we are being deceived, we must arm ourselves with truths from God's Word. His Word shows us the ways of the world are not better. We then submit to God and His ways so we are not seduced by the lie that our lives can be fulfilled apart from Him. We take seriously the consequences of ignoring God's instruction to "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness" (Matt. 6:33, KJV) and believe that God's ways are always best. When we continually say "yes" to God and His ways and "no" to the world and its ways, we won't miss out on what God says is both right and good.

(Adapted from the Echoes Commentary)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:

True freedom is not in choosing our own way, but in submitting to God's way

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:

Lord, help us to submit to You,
To follow and obey; And give us
strength to fight the urge To do
things our own way

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:

Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up
(James 4:10 NKJV)

(from "Our Daily Bread", Dec 15, 2010)

Series: Our Love For God

UNIT: God is Worthy of Our Love

NEXT WEEK

Rejoice in All Circumstances

(Philippians 1:12-21)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

Hindrances to Submitting to God (James 4:1-6)

Hindrances of lustful desires (1-3)

- Lustful desires choke God's word in me and makes me unfruitful (Mark 4:19)
- Lustful desires sometime degrade my body (Rom 1:24)
- Lustful desires lead to offering my body as an instrument of wickedness (Rom 6:12-13)
- Lustful desires lead to following the ways of this world (Eph 2:1-3)
- Lustful desires belongs to my earthly/sinful nature (Col 3:5)

Hindrances of friendship with the world (4)

- Friendship that seeks the love of the world (John 15:19)
- Friendship that comes from the lust of the eye, lust of the flesh and the pride of life (1 John 2:15-17)
- Friendship that causes my mind to be set on what my sinful nature desires (Rom 8:5-6)
- Friendship that tries to win the approval of man, not God (Gal 1:10)
- Friendship that conforms to the pattern of this world (Rom 12:2)
- Friendship that has nothing in common with righteousness (2 Cor 6:14-15)
- Friendship that is based on the principles of this world (Col 2:20)

Hindrances of pride (5-6)

- Pride that goes before destruction (Prov 16:18)
- Pride of arrogance (Isa 2:11)
- Pride of a false sense of power (Dan 4:28-34)
- Pride of false wisdom (Ezek 28:6-8)
- Pride that makes one think more highly of himself than he ought (Rom 12:3)
- Pride that keeps one from seeking God (Ps 10:4)
- Pride makes one a fool (Prov 26:12)

Exhortations to Submitting to God (James 4:7-10)

Exhortation to submit to God (7)

- Submit to God so that there can be life and peace (Rom 8:5-7)
- Submit to God because someday all will confess and know Jesus is Lord (Rom 14:11-12)
- Submit to God out of reverence (Eph 5:21)
- Submit to God with all my soul and spirit (Heb 12:9)
- Respect and submit to God because He is mighty (1 Peter 5:6)
- Respect and submit to God because it pleases Him (2 Cor 7:15)

Exhortation for purity (8)

- Purity that comes from being a child of God (Phil 2:14-15)
- Purity that we should think about constantly (Phil 4:8)
- Purity that leads us to help others (James 1:27)
- Purity that comes from the hope and trust in God (1 John 3:3)
- Purity that comes from obedience (1 Peter 1:22)
- Purity that should set an example through godly speech, life, and love (1 Tim 4:12)
- Purity that is obtained by fixing our eyes on Jesus (Ps 119:9-10)

Exhortation for humbleness (9-10)

- Humbleness is a requirement of God (Mic 6:8)
- Humbleness leads to the enjoyment of the presence of God (Isa 57:15)
- Humbleness means to be submissive to God and those in authority over me (1 Peter 5:5)
- Saints should live with humility (Eph 4:2)
- Humbleness keeps man content with what he has (Prov 12:9)
- Humbleness is rewarded in heaven (Matt 18:4)
- Humbleness is like being a child in God's eyes (Luke 9:48)
- We should take the example of Jesus and submit ourselves to humbleness (Phil 2:5-7)