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A0741 – October 14, 2007 – Jas 4:6-10 – The Divine Viewpoint
Program Of Exaltation

James 4:6-10 Μείζονα δὲ δίδωσιν χάριν· διὸ λέγει, Ὁ θεὸς ὑπερηφάνους ἀντιπάσσει, ταπεινοῖς δὲ δίδωσιν χάριν. ⁷Υποτάγητε οὖν τῷ θεῷ· ἀντίστητε δὲ τῷ διαβόλῳ, καὶ φεύξεται ἀφ' ὑμῶν. ⁸Ἐγγίσατε τῷ θεῷ, καὶ ἐγγιεῖ ὑμῖν· καθαρίσατε χεῖρας, ἁμαρτωλοὶ, καὶ ἀγνίσατε καρδίας, δίψυχοι. ⁹Ταλαιπωρήσατε καὶ πενθήσατε καὶ κλαύσατε· ὁ γέλως ὑμῶν εἰς πένθος μεταστραφήτω, καὶ ἡ χαρὰ εἰς κατήφειαν. ¹⁰Ταπεινώθητε ἐνώπιον τοῦ κυρίου, καὶ ὑψώσει ὑμᾶς. **(BYZ)**

James 4:6-10 But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” Submit therefore to God and resist the devil and he will flee from you. ⁸Draw near to God and He will draw near to you, cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your heart, you doubters. ⁹Be miserable and sad and weep. Turn your laughter into sadness, and your joy into gloom. ¹⁰Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will exalt you. **(Author’s Translation)**

James 4:6-10 But He gives a greater grace. Therefore *it* says, “GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.” ⁷Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. ⁸Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you. **(NASB95)**

Now, we’ve been working with James 4:1-5 and this is a section that deals with the sin nature, the war that goes on in our members and the disorder, the chaos, the evil things that emanate from the sin nature. These believers

are fighting and warring with one another and that's just a manifestation James says of the war within them. And he counsels them to go to God in prayer, to ask God and to ask Him with pure motives. So, they are into all this self-exaltation business and that always coincides with arrogance. The idea that we can please God and we can advance ourselves spiritually, through battling with other believers? That's not the way and the NT is so clear on this that those who exalt themselves will be brought low and those who humble themselves will be exalted. There's a future reversal so to speak in the Millennial Kingdom. A lot of people who held prominent positions are not going to hold the prominent positions anymore because they gained them by self-exaltation and a lot of people who held low positions are going to be exalted, they are going to take the prominent positions in the Millennial Kingdom and beyond because God is going to exalt them. And when we think of it, when we think of our earthly lives, they are very short. But eternity is forever. Eternity is a long time so we want to make sure that we don't bank on this life. This life is very short in comparison to eternity future. And what we do here, now determines our position and privileges for all eternity. So, verses 1-5 are about the sin nature's power lust, it's drive for power and position and how the kind of havoc that creates, how that is anti-God, how there is no neutrality. They have set their affections on the world which is hostility toward God and they should have known these things. It is apparent that when we walk by the flesh we are not neutral, we are opposed to God, we are enemies of God, we have committed an act of spiritual treason. We have gone over to Satan's army, taken up arms and set ourselves against God. There's no in-between position. Every day, every thought, every moment is either for God or against God and this is where we get sloppy in the Christian life because we've got Christianity over here in our religious compartment and that's what I do on Sunday and that has to do with morals and ethics but it doesn't have anything to do with my math. It doesn't have anything to do with my art. It doesn't have anything to do with my poetry. It doesn't have anything to do with language. It doesn't have anything to do with my politics. Well, that's a slick hoax Satan has perpetrated on the human race to destroy the potency of the Christian worldview. Because the Christian worldview says from page 1, "God created everything so He owns everything." That's a fundamental truth in most cultures of the world, that if a person makes something then they are the owner of it. You can go into tribes all over the world and say you're looking at a canoe paddle and you ask the natives "Whose is this?" and they will say "It belongs to the man who made it." And if

you ask, "Can I break it?" they will say, "No, it's not yours to break." "Well, can the owner break it?" "Yes, he can do whatever he wants with it because he made it." So, Christianity is saying "God made everything and that means He owns everything." So, can I be neutral in any area of life. No, if God made everything and the government insists that we teach math without reference to God or history or science then what are they saying? They are saying that math is math whether or not God exists, they are saying history is history whether or not God exists, they are saying that science exists whether or not God exists. But if that is true then math, history and science cannot be the result of God's creation which means it is a denial of God's existence. Here's how slick Satan is, he has perpetrated this hoax on 99.9% of American's. If you get this you are going to be in the 0.1% who haven't been deceived. I want to quote from a document called *A Teachers Guide to Religion in the Public Schools* and I want you to listen closely to what they are saying, "As employees of the government, public-school teachers are subject to the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment and thus required to be neutral concerning religion while carrying out their duties as teachers. That means, for example, that teachers do not have the right to pray with or in the presence of students during the school day." What does this really mean? It means that, if you are a public school teacher and you are a Christian, you must act like an atheist. There's no neutrality in that statement, that's a direct assault against the God of Scripture. That's hostility toward God. And just like Paul says, the mind set on the flesh is what toward God? Hostile to God. It's not neutral, neutrality is a myth. People pretend to be neutral. When I was a child I thought like a child but the world wants to remain childish. They're still pretending. Well, you can pretend all you want but it doesn't remove the hostility toward God. Our flesh is at enmity with God and is not subject to God nor can it be (Rom 8:7). There is a war going on and you have got to realize this. Now, in verse 5 we had some work to do with the translation here, because the shift, the contrast to the sin nature is not until verse 6, so you have this quote in verse 5 and we had to move it all around to get the subject right and here's what we concluded, **The spirit that has settled in us envies toward jealousy**. That's very similar to the KJV translation and that's because the translators noticed that the Greek form of "the spirit" could be either nominative or accusative. When you take it as nominative, which is more in tune with the context and realize this is not the holy spirit but an attitude, a disposition then it fits in line with the sin nature.

But verse 6, marks the contrast. It is the contrastive conjunction *de*, so it signals that now we are shifting and we're going to contrast the spirit of the world and its envy with what God gives. **But He gives a greater grace.** And clearly the **He** is God. So, the sin nature is the source of envy but God is the source of grace. What God does is He **gives**. What He **gives is grace** and it's qualified by an adjective, **greater**. So, the grace God gives is greater in comparison to something. We want to know what it is James is comparing here. Greater than what? And I think it's obvious from our new translation. It's greater than the spirit that has settled in them. In other words, His grace can overcome the spirit of the world system. If it couldn't then ultimately the world would prevail rather than God's grace so this is good news. Christians can have victory over the world. Maybe they will, maybe they won't but they can, that's James' point. So, God **gives**. This is the Greek word *didomi* and here it has the sense of "sending". **He sends** something that will overcome the world system and that something is **grace**. It's a present tense so He's continually sending **grace** but just who He sends grace to is limited in the following quote to Christians who are humble. If a Christian is proud then God does not send him grace but rather sets Himself against the believer in battle array, perhaps referring to some kind of discipline. So the implication is that the Christian has got to make the first move here in order for God to send him this **grace** and the ten things he must do are listed in verses 7-10. There are 10 imperatives there, 10 commands packed into those four verses. In the end, once we have humbled ourselves then it's His grace that exalts us, it's His grace that conquers the spirit of the world. So, let's look at the quote. James is citing Prov 3:34 to prove the point that God's grace is greater than the spirit of the world. If you turn to Prov 3:34 you find something a little different from here, "Though He scoffs at the scoffers, Yet He gives grace to the afflicted." That's because James isn't quoting the Hebrew version of Prov 3:34 but the Greek version. So, this is a quote from what is called the Septuagint, the majority of NT authors quote the Septuagint when they quote the OT. And you'll notice that his quote is only one word different from Prov 3:34 in the Septuagint. *kurios* (Lord) is replaced with *o theos* (God).

LXX κύριος ὑπερηφάνοις ἀντιτάσσεται, ταπεινοῖς δὲ δίδωσιν χάριν.

NA27 ὁ θεὸς ὑπερηφάνοις ἀντιτάσσεται, ταπεινοῖς δὲ δίδωσιν χάριν.

So, the Septuagint is a Greek translation of the Hebrew OT. It was made ~ 200BC. It's called the LXX (=70) because seventy elders went up with Moses in Exod 24:1, 9 but Aristeas added 2 to get an equal number of scholars from each tribe. The legend is that six scholars from each of the twelve tribes gathered together on the island of Pharos, a total of 72 Jewish scholars, who then translated the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek in 72 days all in separate cubicles and when they all finished they came out and compared the 72 translations and they were all identical. That's just a legend but it was still a very highly revered translation of Scripture and it was quoted by Jesus, Paul, James and others.¹ And it says, **God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.** So, there's another contrast here. See the word but, it's the same as the word at the beginning of this verse, it's the contrastive conjunction *de*, so, what it's saying is that God responds two different ways to two different attitudes. First, **God is opposed to the proud** and this is what James has been accusing these brethren of. They are **proud** and there is no doubt that this word is better translated "arrogant" here. It's the word *uperephanoi* and refers to a person who "claims for himself more consideration or importance than is warranted." We might say, someone who is conceited. They think they are all that but they are not, they have a higher evaluation of themselves than is really the case. In this case, they think they are so very advanced in spiritual maturity, that they have all this DVP wisdom but their fighting and bickering with one another is evidence to the contrary. So, **God is opposed to the arrogant.** The word **opposed** is another military term, it means "to set against in combat" (see Luke 1:51). Probably what this means is that if you are an arrogant believer God is going to set Himself against you in divine discipline. God disciplines His children and an arrogant child needs correction. On the other side of divine discipline is divine blessing, **but He gives grace to the humble.** This is the greater grace (4:6) that results in exaltation (4:10), superior status before God as a spiritually advanced believer. What is this **humble** stuff? Some people associate humility with weakness, passiveness, it's not that at all. Jesus Christ is the pre-eminent portrait of humility (Phil 2:5-8). Let's turn to Phil 2. This is the great *kenosis* passage. And you'll note, right off the bat Paul is concerned with the Christian's attitude, same thing James is concerned with.

Philippians 2:5-8 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷but emptied Himself

[that's the word *kenoo* and what follows is a definition of *kenosis*, what it means for Christ to empty Himself, what true humility is all about], taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. ⁸Being found in appearance as a man [He didn't give up His divine attributes, the kenosis is defined in terms of an addition. He took to Himself a new nature, a human nature. In other words God, while all the while remaining God took to Himself a human nature, He stooped down in the incarnation to die on the cross, or, as it goes on to say...] He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

This is why humility has been called the classic Christian virtue. This is why the Westminster Confession of Faith in 1648 calls this a divine condescension. If Jesus Christ as God did not humble Himself, if He did not come down and take to Himself a true human nature, there is no salvation. So, Christ's humility becomes the archetype for our humility. That's why Paul says, "have this in yourselves", this humility, this emptying ourselves of pride and arrogance. The English word "humble" comes from *humus* and what's so interesting about *humus* is that it refers to the earth, the ground. So, this reminds us of our origin; that man was made from the dust of the ground. That's our origin, it's a humble, low beginning and that's what it means to be humble, to recognize our creaturehood, our limitations, spiritually, mentally and physically under God. It's a good reminder because we so easily inflate ourselves into greatness. So, our origins from dust deflate our pride and arrogance. It gets us properly oriented before the God with whom we have to do. We are His creatures. So, if we are to enjoy God's grace arrogance must be replaced with humility. As long as we are arrogant all we can expect from a loving Father is divine correction. If you want a good parallel to this passage turn to 1 Peter 5:5-11. Peter's dealing with the importance of a young man submitting to his elders, the local shepherds or elders in the church, not being these arrogant little, "I'm so advanced spiritually, I know the issues, I've taken some seminary courses and all that" and he quotes the same Proverb and goes into many of the same issues about resisting the devil and God exalting you and all that.

Now, verse 7 starts a string of ten imperatives. I said before that James has 104 verses and 52 imperatives, on average that's one command every other verse but here he really packs them in. Ten imperatives in three verses. I

don't know of any other single concentration of imperative verbs in the NT. These are ten commands for believers to follow in order to become humble, the final command being a summary of the previous nine. Remarkably, John MacArthur says of vv 7-10 that they are "perhaps the most comprehensive invitation to salvation in the epistles" and in another place that James is revealing "how to receive saving grace." Yet not once in this list does James tell them to "believe in the Lord Jesus Christ" or that "by grace are you saved through faith". The refutation of this interpretation is plain on the face of it. Clearly they are addressed to people who are already believers, already born from above (1:18). The first command is **Submit**, in other words, how am I going to begin developing humility so I can enjoy this greater grace? All Christians have experienced the grace of God but there is a greater grace, a further enjoyment of it and reception of it if we humble ourselves and the first step in that is **Submitting...to God**. The word **submit** is *hupotassomai*, a word commonly used in military contexts. In the military it means "line up under" your commanding officer. It's a word that implies an "authority structure" and it means "be subordinate, be subject". It's interesting how the leading Greek lexicon translates this word, "obey" in an absolute sense. It's a word of salute that says "Yes sir, you are my King and I your servant, I obey without question." So, it's a word of allegiance, tribute and honor to God the King. So, the first step toward humility is coming under His authority and obeying His word.

Second imperative (command), **Resist the devil**. If on one hand we are to obey God then on the other we are to resist the devil. There are only two allegiances, God or the devil. Verses 7-8 are difficult to translate because they are one sentence in the Greek. There are no stops and the Greek kind of reads like this in v 7, **Submit therefore to God and at the same time resist the devil** as if God is saying, "I want your full allegiance, I don't want any of that double-minded allegiance, I don't want you to obey on the outside while rebelling on the inside, I want your full allegiance". Here again we have a military word, **resist**, *anthistemi*, "to stand against in battle". To get the idea turn to Gal 2:11. This is the NT book on justification by grace alone through faith alone and here's the first distortion of that by Peter and the circumcised Jews. Peter was affirming that Gentiles had to first be circumcised and then have faith in Christ. In other words, Gentiles had to go through Judaism to get to Christianity. Now, remember, this is the first Pope supposedly, the Catholic religion tells us Peter was the first Pope and that

the Pope is infallible. Well, if Peter was the Pope then Paul had no right to stand up to him and correct him because the Pope's are infallible. But he does anyway and our word *anthistemi* is used here. Paul literally goes to battle with Peter face to face, "But when Cephas [Kephas, that's Peter's Aramaic name] came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned." Now, if Peter was the first Pope then the first Pope was the first one in church history to stand condemned. If that's not irony I don't know what is. But notice the word "opposed". Paul "opposed" him, he stood up and went to war with him over the gospel. That's the sense of resistance. Turn over to 1 Pet 5:8-9. Here's Peter in that context I told you about earlier telling believers to resist the devil, "Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹But resist him, firm in *your* faith". That's the same word. Now, if you are resisting someone, if you are opposing someone are they there? Of course. You may not be able to see the devil but he's there, he's your adversary and he's seeking to devour you. Some theologians that think we are living in the millennium right now think Satan is bound right now. But if he is Peter thinks he's on a pretty long leash! But, he's not bound yet, not until Christ returns and sets up His kingdom. He's loose and he's like a roaring lion, seeking to devour you. So stay alert, and resist him. Back in James, what does James say will happen if you resist him? If you stand up to his face in battle array? **He will flee from you.** That word **flee** (*pheugomai*) means "to run away to a place of safety". For example, when Moses killed the Egyptian and he fled to Midian. Why did he go there? Because it was safe, it was outside the patrolled boundaries of Egypt. Or Jesus, when he was a baby and Herod was going to have all the baby boys killed and Mary and Joseph get this tip off from an angel that they better get out of town so they fled to Egypt because it was safe there. Well, if you resist the devil he will flee to a place of safety, away from you. But what does that imply? If he's running away to a place of safety then it's not safe for him to be near you. There's a battle going on for coveted territory and when you resist him he becomes vulnerable and he doesn't like that so **he flees**. And how are you going to resist him? You are going to put on the full armor of God, that's over in Eph 6:10ff. A lot of good sermon material over there, very practical stuff. You have to be armed and ready with the word of God, you have to be strong in the Lord and that means strong in the word of the Lord. The word of God is the key to resisting the devil. So, somehow, we are fighting a battle in the heavenly places, somehow we are engaged in a war against demonic powers and we don't know all that's

going on behind the scenes but somehow God is using our obedience in this heavenly conflict. Whole dimensions to the cosmos that we just get a peek at here and there.

Third imperative, **Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.** Here's a present tense **you draw near to God** followed by a future tense **and He will draw near to you.** In other words, we are the initiators here and He is the responder. If we obey the command to draw near to Him then He will in turn draw near to us. So, this is a command followed by a reciprocal promise. That God conditions some of His promises on our obedience is common in Scripture. The word **draw** *eggizo* means to move closer to a reference point and can be translated "approach". "Approach God and He will approach you". It's possible that what he's referring to is approaching him in prayer which recalls James call to prayer in vv 2-3. Certainly prayer is taking a step toward God and it is the context in which we confess our sins and are cleansed from all unrighteousness. As a result God **will draw near to you.** This no doubt talks of intimacy with God in close fellowship.

Fourth imperative, **cleanse your hands you sinners** is parallel to the fifth imperative, **purify your hearts you double-minded.** They both look back to Ps 24:3-4, "Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? And who may stand in His holy place? ⁴He who has clean hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood And has not sworn deceitfully." The word **cleanse**, *katharizo* is the same word used in 1 John 1:9 where it says, "For if we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." There God cleanses believers at the moment of confession but here we are commanded to **cleanse our hands.** The **hands** are what we use in every day life to interact with the world around us. They are often the instrument through which we sin. So, here he is referring to cleansing our life from external acts of sin, contextually, the warfare they are carrying out against their brethren earlier in this chapter as they strive for power. If **cleanse your hands** refers to cleansing our life from external acts of sin then **purify your hearts** refers to cleansing our life from internal acts of sin in the mind. They are indeed, **double-minded.** A believer who is **double-minded** has a mixture of DVP and HVP in his mind so that he doubts DVP and hesitates to respond positively to DVP. The **heart**, *kardia*, refers to the center and source of the whole inner life, our thinking, feeling

and volition. So, our minds, our emotions and our will need to be purified. This requires a consistent diet of the word of God, daily meditation, thinking through the implications and a change in our emotional and volitional responses. So, we're talking about a deep seated change here, a shift from HVP thinking to DVP thinking and a change from HVP emotions to DVP emotions. Our hearts are purified in a positional way at the moment of faith in Christ (Acts) but here James is speaking of an experiential purification of heart. Part of this purification process is discussed over in 1 John 3:3 where he says, "And everyone who has this hope *fixed* on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure." Contextually that hope is the hope of Jesus' return. If we wake up every day thinking, "Maybe today" then it purifies us because our lives are focused on Christ and His word. In conclusion, Tom Constable says, "The "pure in heart" are those who are singleminded in their devotion to God and therefore morally pure inwardly."ⁱⁱ

Verse 9, **Be miserable and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom.** I don't want to rush through these because this can really bother some of us so let's deal with it next week. So, in conclusion, v 6 is shifting from dealing with the Christian's sin nature to God's grace and how, if we want to enjoy this greater grace then we must have an attitude of humility. If we are arrogant we can only expect to undergo divine discipline. He will set Himself against us in battle array but He gives grace to the humble. So, how do we become humble? By obeying these commands. If we submit to His authority, obey Him, resist the devil, stand opposed to him with the armor of God, if we draw near to God in prayers of confession, if we cleanse our hands from external acts of sin (overt sin) and purify our hearts from internal acts of sin (covert sin) and then there are a few more we'll cover next week. But just know now that James is instructing us on how to develop the attitude of humility which results in the release of God's greater grace and His exaltation of us. Thus, humility must replace arrogance if we are to enjoy the greater grace of God. So, it is vital that we develop humility, it is the classical Christian virtue pre-eminently demonstrated by Jesus Christ Himself and His obedience even to the point of death on a cross. So, the commands trace the road to having Christ-like humility.

ⁱ A.B. du Toit, *The New Testament Milieu* (Halfway House: Orion, 1998).

ii Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003; 2003), Mt 5:8.

[Back To The Top](#)

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