

## Resolved: Spiritual Resolutions for 2024 James 4:7-10

### INTRODUCTION

The New Year is upon us; new resolutions are in play...new goals are in sight and new action plans are being realized. **For many, it's a time of introspection (self-examination, contemplation, soul searching) from which they resolve to change some aspect or aspects of their life.** It is that time of the year when people are not only pondering but acting upon New Year resolutions. Have you made any resolutions? Have you set goals for this year? **If you fail to plan, you plan to fail.**

To make the necessary changes we're after requires God speaking to us. Since we believe that God speaks through His word, let's look into God's word and see what we can find to help us to commit to our spiritual resolutions. Please turn in your Bibles to **James 4:7-10**. From these verses, I would like to glean (pull together) several truths that provide the needed perspective when making spiritual resolutions. Please understand that these **4 verses contain 10 commands** that call people to get serious in their relationship with God. **10 commands that we're going to group under 5 expressions.**

### I. Resolve to \_\_\_\_\_ (4:7a)

The key word is **SUBMISSION**. Our first issue is that of submission. The word '**submit**' is a military term meaning literally "**to rank under; to subordinate; to arrange under.**" The passive form indicates the submission is to be voluntary. The verb is used frequently in the New Testament. Luke uses it of Jesus' submission to His parents when He was a boy (Luke 2:51). Paul uses it to indicate a Christian's responsibility to human government (Rom 13:1), of a wife's responsibility to her husband (**Eph 5:21-24**), and a slave to his master (Titus 2:9; cf. 1 Peter 2:18).

**Worldliness is adopting a philosophy of life that says that true fulfillment and happiness in life can be found apart from a relationship with God. It is a spirit of self-reliance rather than reliance on God. Worldliness is alive and well in our life when we live it solely to gratify and exalt ourselves to the exclusion of God – the love of this world (1 John 2:5).**

**The hard truth is that you and I (Christians) today seem to have almost abandoned the pursuit of Christ as our means of finding fulfillment in life and we have substituted for Him the pursuit of things that are temporal rather than eternal—things that are created rather than the Creator himself. We're not really looking to His love and acceptance of us for our true sense of security and significance in life. Instead, we are daily pursuing the approval and love of others, or the accomplishment of personal goals, or the attainment of a position of prestige or power, or the accumulation of certain possessions as our means of finding happiness in life. **Pride wants us to be king; submission reminds us that God must be in control (King).****

## II. Resolve to \_\_\_\_\_ (4:7b)

The second key word is **RESIST**. By definition, to submit to God as Lord is to resist the devil, your old lord. The word *'resist'* literally means *"to stand against", "to oppose."* To stand with the Lord is to stand against everything sinful and worldly that formerly was appealing, corrupting, and enslaving. Too often we rip this verse out of its context. Humbling yourself has to do with resisting Satan's desire for you to assert yourself. You see, Satan's strategy has always been one of self-centered assertion for the meeting of your needs and the protection of your reputation rather than humble dependence on God.

- **Avoiding** \_\_\_\_\_.

- **Resisting** \_\_\_\_\_.

## III. Resolve to \_\_\_\_\_ (4:8a)

The key word here is **RELY**. *"Drawing near to God"* was in the Old Testament a general expression for the one who sincerely approached God in penitence and humility. The only true way to rely on God is by truly resolving to trust God by drawing near Him through much prayer and Bible study along with obedience. **Pride tempts us to live independently from God.** We forget however that you can't please God without faith. It's not faith if you are relying on anything else but God!

## IV. Resolve to \_\_\_\_\_ (4:8b-9)

The key word in this section is **REPENT**. **True biblical repentance begins with a change of mind that results in a change of behavior. Maybe not instantly, but inevitably and progressively.**

A. External: \_\_\_\_\_

B. Internal: \_\_\_\_\_

**V. Resolve to \_\_\_\_\_ (4:10)**

The key word is **HUMILITY**. The disposition of valuing or assessing oneself appropriately, especially in light of God's holiness, one's sinfulness and creatureliness.

**CONCLUSION**

So, what resolutions will you make, or have you made? Are they God-honoring? Are they spiritual resolutions? Or simply resolutions that reveal our preoccupation with this passing world? It's not enough for us merely to recognize our faults. We must also change our ways!

Perhaps the best resolution you can make this year is to surrender to Jesus Christ as Lord & Savior. Much of what we said today leads you to a decision – to acknowledge your problem (sin) and turn to God for the solution; **or** continue to deny the problem, ignore the problem, and continue to turn away from God.