

## Sermon or Lesson: James 4:7 (NIV based)

[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: Do A Reversal

INTRO: Have you ever worked on an unfamiliar project and you got to a point where you realized that in order to be successful, you needed to do things in a reverse way from how you have been doing them so far?

Sometimes circumstances or situations in life call for doing a reversal - switching to now do things in a reverse way to what you have been previously doing. As you are probably now surmising, in our passage to study, God is calling us to do a reversal.

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READ: James 4:7

[Lesson Question: What are the dynamics of submitting yourself to God?]

SECTION POINT: Submit yourselves to God.

- - From this discourse in James 3:13-4:6 about believers engaging in "disorder and every evil practice" (v.3:16) in order to promote themselves, their selfish agendas, their sensual desires, their worldly inclinations, and etc., there is "then" (v.4:7) a corrective course of action being prescribed and described here starting in verse 7 that is to be taken "therefore, certainly, accordingly". (Strong's #3767)

- - The overarching principle and action is to "submit yourselves to God".

"submit" - Strong's #5293 "be subject; subordinate; reflexively, to obey"

'subordinate' - (AHD) "To put [yourself] in a lower or inferior rank or class; To make [yourself] subservient; [to become] subdued."

Essentially, submit means to willingly and agreeably line up behind and under the authority of another person, or this case God.

- - Notice that "submit yourselves to God" goes far beyond merely mechanically obeying or robotically acquiescing to His wishes. It is a deliberate, agreeable act of your will.

From the context surrounding verse 7, this submitting of your will, your life to God is:

- - a change of allegiance;

- - a change of direction;

- - a change of attitude;

- - a change of regard;

- - a change away from what you think, and towards conforming to what God says;

- - an abandoning of your own value system in favor of God's value system;

- - a determined commitment to actively oppose relapsing back to your own value system;

- - a discarding of your role of playing god, and replacing it with willingly and wholeheartedly following God as God of your life;

- - a lowering of yourself (humility, v.10) down off your self-created pedestal of self-exaltation (pride, v.6), of trying to be god in your corner of the world;

- - a determined commitment to willingly, agreeably, and actively line up behind and under the authority of God;
  - wanting and making God the One:
    - - - - who determines and governs your life;
    - - - - who is sufficient for you;
    - - - - whom you serve;
    - - - - whom you are dependent upon;
    - - - - whom you exalt (to raise up);
    - - - - whom you worship;
    - - - - whom you reverence as the only God - your God - whom you love.
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[Lesson Question: What are the dynamics of the involvement of the devil?]

SECTION POINT: There is a need to overcome the involvement of the devil, in other words the Kingdom of Darkness.

- - Within the overarching principle and action of submitting yourself to God, there are several other relating and supporting important principles and actions listed in the adjoining verses that need to be adhered to as well. One involves the devil, in other words the forces and tactics of the Kingdom of Darkness. (v.7; cf. Ephesians 6:12)
- - The Kingdom of Darkness actively pursues the recruiting of believers, which includes swaying their thinking, beliefs, words, and actions towards worldliness and destroying ministries (vv.3:14-16; 4:1-2,4), and simultaneously away from God and growing ministries (vv.3:13, 16-18).
- - From historical accounts, it is obvious that the Kingdom of Darkness is quite effective and successful in these tactics, and because it is prominently cited here in this verse, along with in verse 3:15.
- - From the previous verses starting in verse 3:14, the believer has been listening to, agreeing with, and submitting to the devil and his will. (cf. 2 Timothy 2:23-26)
- - Even though through worldliness the believer has been in reality striving to make himself/herself into a god, the reigning of the Kingdom of Darkness has also become a god over the person's life, albeit perhaps a de facto god, but effectively powerful, cunning, influential, invisible, and etc., calling the shots, so to speak, or directing the god-self-making activities of that believer. (v.6)
- - There is no automatic absolute protection of believers from being pursued by the devil, his forces, his tactics, or his kingdom. (v.7)
- - The Kingdom of Darkness regularly attempts to sway believers away from God. (v.7)
- - And the Kingdom of Darkness gains advantage and advancement when the believer does not intentionally resist its schemes or efforts to lead astray. (v.7; cf. Ephesians 6:11,13)
- - So by implication, "resisting" is required, necessarily being persistent and consistent in "opposing, standing against". (v.7; Strong's #0436)
- - Then success will occur in fending off that particular skirmish or encounter, with the Kingdom of Darkness making no progress against that believer at that time (v.7). So the persuading and/or influencing efforts of the Kingdom of Darkness have been effectively

thwarted but temporarily for that moment, only to be resumed later with a modified tactic when conditions might be more favorable and the believer has lowered his/her defenses of resistance. (v.7)

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[Lesson Question: Essentially, what is the overall nature of the content in verses 7-10? What is this?]

SECTION POINT: There is a process or series of steps to take.

- - From the context of this passage, there is a process to coming out of significant sinfulness and getting one's life right with God.
  - - By implication and by other numerous verses in both the O.T. and N.T., we believers cannot just walk up to God and spout "What's up, dude?" while trying to totally ignore the significant sinfulness we have been doing.
  - - These verses 7-10 contain a core framework of the whole formula for that process, some of the important main steps to take. [Note: The tone and content of this passage indicates it is not intended to be a comprehensive listing of all of the steps necessary to be freed or delivered from every form of sinful worldliness, and etc.]
  - - These steps are what God wants to see from us, what He wants us to willingly and genuinely walk through to come out of significant sinfulness and into right-standing before God.
  - - Essentially, God wants believers involved in worldliness to do a reversal - reversing who you are submitting to and who you are resisting.
  - - In theological terms, this reversal is called 'repentance' - "to make a decision that changes the total direction of one's life"; "to turn from evil ways back to holiness"; and "in the age of grace it is God's kindness in withholding merited judgment that gives human beings time to repent". (Richards, p.522; cf. v.4:6; Romans 2:4)
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BIG IDEA: God wants believers involved in worldliness to do a reversal - to comprehensively submit to God rather than the devil, and to comprehensively resist the devil rather than God.

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APPLICATIONS:

- - Are there any areas in your life that you are submitting to sinful worldliness and by extension the Kingdom of Darkness?
- - Are you ready to now resist and take a stand against those areas of sinful worldliness?
- - Even though you are vulnerable to returning to your areas of sinful worldliness, are you going to persist in your resistance?
- - And further, are you ready to now submit to God, especially in regard to your areas of sinful worldliness?

- - Even though you may not currently see any benefits to doing this, are you committed to persisting in submitting to God?

- - If you are ready, then do it - right now. Submit to God and resist the devil - right now. Start - right now. Take on this challenge - right now.

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