

## Epistle of James X Ten Commandments to Overcome Worldliness #2

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Today we're going to cover something very unusual in the Epistle of James. Many people don't realize it, but there are supposed to be 54<sup>[corrected]</sup> commands in the whole Epistle of James. We're not going to cover 54 of those today, but what we want to focus in on is the *Ten Commandments to Overcome Worldliness*. In other words, how does a Christian come out of being so worldly and living in the way that the world lives. How are they able to retrieve themselves out their difficulties and problems. Given the whole span of life in the things that we go through and do, that certainly is something that happens—and it happens to quite a few people. Some just get discouraged and give up and figure, 'well, you know this isn't happening, God isn't with me' and they just run off back into the world.

This is the important thing always to remember, always keep in mind, James 4:6 (KJV): "But he gives **more grace**..." In other words, God's grace is greater than your sins. The only sin grace does not cover is the unpardonable sin. We will see one of the kings of Israel to see how grossly he sinned, but was able to be retrieved out of that sin.

"...Wherefore he said, 'God resists the proud, but gives grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves, therefore, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep; let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up. Speak not evil one of another, brethren, He that speaks evil of his brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the Law, and judges the Law; but if you judge the Law, you are not a doer of the Law but a judge'" (vs 6-11).

Then he goes on to say there is only one Lawgiver, Who is God. So, if you judge the Law, for whatever reason, then you are judging God. If you judge God then you are sitting in the seat of God and God is not God, *you're God!* You can apply this principle to many, many different things. Some people say:

- O, Lord, I love my ham. Praise the Lord, I found a place in the Bible where I can eat my ham.
- I love your commandments, but I've got to have my idol.
- O, Lord, I like the principle of one day off

from the week, so I'll keep Sunday.

- O, Lord, adultery applies to everyone else, but I have a real need.

All of that is judging the Law of God and you're sitting in the seat of God! That's what the world does all the time. They sit in God's seat and say, 'You don't need the Bible, you don't need this; why do you need that?'

Let's concentrate on these *Ten Commandment to Overcome Worldliness* if you've been entrapped in it. We have covered the first three, so we will review those just a little bit.

Verse 6 (FV): "But He gives **greater grace**..."—present tense, he is giving. God is the One Who is the Giver. Always remember that the only creatures of all of God's creation designed to receive grace *are human beings*, because we need it.

"...This is the reason it says, 'God sets Himself against *the proud*...' (v 6). He's not going to give grace to the proud. He's not going to give grace to someone who is big in his own eyes, or someone who is judging God— that's the height of pride.

"...but He gives grace to *the humble*" (v 6). He's saying that if you want this grace, here's what you need to do.

### Ten Commandments to Overcome Worldliness:

1. "Therefore, **submit yourselves to God**..." (v 7)
2. "...**Resist the devil**, and he will flee from you." (v 7)

We're moving from one frame of mind and behavior to a different frame of mind and behavior in each one of these things.

3. "**Draw near to God**, and He will draw near to you..." (v 8).

A lot of people say, 'I wonder where God is? God didn't stop me from doing this.' Well, if you're far from God, He isn't going to help you at all. You've got to draw near to God.

4. "**Cleanse your hands**, you sinners... (v 8)
5. "...and **purify your hearts**, you double-minded!" (v 8)
6. "**Be grieved and mourn and weep**..." (v 9)
7. "...let your **laughter be turned into grieving**..." (v 9)
8. "...and **your joy into mourning**." (v 9)
9. "**Humble yourselves** before the Lord, and

He will exalt you.” (v 10)  
10. “Brethren, **do not talk against one another....**” (v 11)

Those are the *Ten Commandment to Overcome Worldliness*. Then also it comes full circle, but now that you do this you don’t begin elevating yourself above others by comparing your righteousness with theirs and you talk against them.

When we are all done, we will see how these are all put together in such a way that it forms a whole picture of repentance and drawing close to God.

**Commandment #1—“Therefore, submit yourselves to God...”**

If you want to subject yourself to God, you’re putting down the proud, you want to receive God’s presence with you. You draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Here’s the final conclusion of it:

Isaiah 57:15: “For thus says the high and lofty One Who inhabits eternity; Whose name is Holy; ‘I dwell in the high and Holy place, even with the one who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.’”

That’s how God draws close to you. ***You first have to draw close to God!*** God sends His Spirit to call you. God sends His Spirit to convict you in heart and mind, but then you have to draw close to God.

**Commandment #2—“...Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”**

**Commandment #3—“Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you...”**

Eph. 6 talks about the whole armor of God, and we will see what that is based upon. You can’t fight the devil yourself. You can’t overcome him yourself. There is no person in the world that has the ability to do so. If you think you can, then you are going to succumb to the devil in a different trap, in a different plan, through a different lust, because there are many avenues into a person’s personality to where Satan can pull that trigger and know how to get to you.

Even in the Bible, it shows all of the sins of all of even those that God has called. These things are here for our instruction that we do not do as they do. But we have to rely on God.

Ephesians 6:10: “Finally, my brethren, be strong in *the Lord*...” If you draw near to God and He draws near to you, then you can be strong in the Lord. Then, if you resist the devil with the power of

God, then he’s got to flee from you. It all fits together. There are a lot of people who think that James was, on one hand, fighting against the doctrine of Paul.

I just read a book this morning called *The Dead Sea Scrolls Deception*. That is put in as one of the scenarios that they have in trying to explain about it. I just really could understand how much mental gymnastics that a lot of these scholars do. First of all, they don’t know the Bible. Second of all, they just read it for it’s surface meaning. They don’t try and harmonize the teachings of Paul and the teachings of James, and they do harmonize together. This fits exactly here with what James is telling us. This is the writing of Paul.

Verse 10: “Finally, my brethren, be strong in *the Lord*, and in the might of His strength.” Then he goes on to describe all of the things that we need to do to resist the devil:

Verse 11: “Put on the whole armor of God so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” That we have:

- the Word of God in our mind
- the helmet of God on our head
- the Gospel which protects us as a shield
- the sword of the Lord which is the Word of God, the Spirit of God
- and we’re able to quench all the fiery darts of the devil

What we’re going to see is that you can’t take one of these commandments and sit it over here and say it’s not connected with the rest. You start out with you submit to God, draw near to Him, and then right at the end it says humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord. All of those tie in together.

Psalms 119:150—talking about the wicked: “They draw near, those who follow after wickedness; they are far from Your Law.” In other words, they are out there transgressing and breaking God’s Law. This also equates with the more you’re transgressing the laws and commandments of God the further the way you are away from Him.

Verse 151: “You are near, O LORD, and all Your commandments are Truth.” You can ‘take it to the bank’—it’s sure! We’ll take that home to *the bank of faith*, because that is sure!

Psalms 119:10: “With all my heart I have sought You... [that’s how we’re to seek God] ...O let me not wander from Your commandments.” This is one of the most wonderful Psalms in the whole Bible, and it actually shows the converted attitude toward:

- the commandments of God
- the laws of God

- statutes of God
- the judgments of God

**Commandment #4—“Cleanse your hands, you sinners...”**

Why does he say, ‘cleanse your hands’? Is that you have dirt on it? You have dirty hands? Is it like the scribes and Pharisees, you have to wash your hands when you come back from the market? Does that make you a sinner? *No!* The reason why it says ‘cleanse your hands’ is *because your hands are the thing that performs the sin!*

That’s where sin begins! What you do you first start with the outward sins that you are doing and you stop them and you ‘cleanse your hands.’

Psalms 119:9: “With what shall a young man cleanse his way?...” The way that he’s doing with his hands. Hands are symbolic of your work, your actions, the things that you do.

“...By taking heed according to Your Word” (v 9). We’re reading part of the Word of God and what to do to come out of worldliness.

Whatever your problem is with worldliness—be it smoking, drinking, breaking the Sabbath, not keeping the Holy Days, a bad attitude, whatever it may be—follow these ten commandments to get back to God. Remember, *the grace is there*, and here’s how you start: You cleanse your hands and cleanse your way by taking heed, that is paying attention to and following the Word of God. That’s why it says, “...cleanse your hands...”

We find in Isa. 1 how all of these things tie in together, Isaiah 1:2: “Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the LORD has spoken, ‘I have reared and brought up children, but they have rebelled against Me.’”

Verse 4: “Ah, sinful nation, a people burdened *with* iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children who deal corruptly!... [look at the intensity of these sins] ...They have forsaken the LORD; they have provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger; they have gone away backward.”

A common terminology that we use in the New Testament similar to that is called ‘backsliding.’ *Backsliding into worldliness* is what we’re talking about. Here we’re looking at gross sin in this particular case. The reason I’m covering this is to show you that regardless of what your situation is there is hope!

Verse 16: “**Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean;** put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes; cease to do evil.”

That all ties in with *cleanse your hands*.

These are all outward actions that you can do. Then with the heart; you just can’t clean the outside, you’ve got to also clean the *inside*. That’s why James says, “Cleanse your hands, you sinners...” and then he says, “purify your hearts, you double-minded!” Because if you have your mind on God with one part of your brain, and you have your mind on the world and sin with the other part of your brain, you’re double-minded! You have two loyalties and no man can ‘serve two masters.’

Verse 17: “Learn to do good... [also part of the mental] ...seek judgment... [seek those things that are right] ...reprove the oppressor. Judge the orphan, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together,” says the LORD. ‘Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be like wool. If you are willing and obedient...’ (vs 17-19).

That ties in with James. It’s almost like James was condensing the teachings that we find here in Isaiah and writing them in his epistle; could very well be.

Notice that it is conditional, v 19: “If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured *with* the sword;’ for the mouth of the LORD has spoken *it*” (vs 19-20).

So, always, as God does, He sets choices before us: We’re to choose the good—which we can; or choose the evil, which God will let us do. A lot of people say, ‘Well, God allowed it.’ In many cases that’s a copout. *NO!* God didn’t stop it, but that doesn’t mean that God allowed it. It means you or I chose it and God didn’t stop us from it. Don’t ever say God allowed, that’s just a copout for responsibility. That is really not something that should be or put in that particular way.

The Psalms are full of so many things that are important for us to know and understand in growing, changing, overcoming, learning to pray and all of those things. This is all part of *cleansing our hands* and *cleansing our way*, because if you cleanse your hands—which are the physical agents to do sin—then you must also cleanse your way in which you are walking, that you’re no longer going to walk in sin.

Isaiah 52:11: “Depart! Depart! Go out from there! Touch not the unclean. Go out of her midst; purify yourself, you who bear the vessels of the LORD.” The Apostle Paul quotes this in 2-Cor. 4 where it also likens it to us. We are not go out and putting our hands into sin. *All sin is uncleanness!*

We can apply this in many different ways. We can take this Scripture—“Cleanse your hands

you sinners...” and think of so many different things that we can do. It also ties in with the tenth commandment, ‘speak not against your brother’; because you’re pointing of accusation. If you point the finger of accusation then your hand is dirty with accusations. You see how right down to earth, in everyday practical in changing and growing and overcoming that James is telling us here in the Epistle of James. I’m sure that you have found, as I have found, that the Epistle of James is really a very powerful epistle with so many things for us to learn and grow and change and overcome.

Here’s how we are to cleanse, not only our hands, but our whole spiritual being as it were—the same way the Jesus does the Church. This is comparing marriage, husband and wife, with the Church and Christ, and it shows what Jesus is doing for the Church, and how He is cleansing the Church. Obviously, we’re not talking about just soap and water. Obviously we’re talking about the *spiritual* things.

Ephesians 5:25: “Husbands, love your own wives, in the same way that Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; so that He might sanctify it, having cleansed *it* with the washing of water by *the Word*” (vs 25-26).

This is why Bible study is so important. I’ll guarantee you one thing that’s really true—I’ve experience it and I’ve seen it, and you have, too—when you don’t study and you don’t pray that’s when you sin! Then when you sin, you’re not too inclined to come back to God, because you’re ashamed that you’ve sinned and you haven’t studied and you haven’t prayed. It’s kind of the catch-22 treadmill of worldliness, and it sort of perpetuates itself. That’s why ***you need the Word of God to cleanse you!*** That’s why it starts out ‘submit yourselves, therefore, to God.’ Recognize that you’re a sinner and repent.

**Commandment #5—“...and purify your hearts, you double-minded!”**

Aren’t we amazed as we’ve been going through this series how much of the Epistle of James goes right back to the Sermon on the Mount, right back to the teachings of Jesus in the book of Matthew. You might want to do this for an independent study yourself, go through the book of Matthew and just compile all the things that relate directly to the whole Epistle of James. If someone would go ahead and do that and send it to me, maybe I could go ahead and compile it and have it there as part of the Bible study in the final analysis.

This is always true and this is why people come up with ‘double-mindedness.’ You can’t serve the world *and* God at the same time, because in the

world you’re going to do as the world. If you’re going to serve God, you have to do it *His* way.

Matthew 6:24: “No one is able to serve two masters... [It’s not possible. You can for a while, but]: ...for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to *the* one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon... [mammon not only means money, but it also means the things of the world] ...Because of this I say to you, do not be anxious about your life *as to* what you shall eat and what you shall drink; nor about your body *as to* what you shall wear. Is not life *more* than food, and the body more than clothing?” (vs 24-25).

I saw something that was very interesting. I cam across Pat Robertson’s 700 Club. He does a fairly good job on quite a few things, but he was interviewing a minister who worked in the black ghettos and was trying to help solve the problems of the ghetto, which is men who promulgate illegitimate children, men who do not marry the children, women who do not marry the men. All of that breeds poverty. You want to know why there’s so much poverty in any ghetto, not just black, anyone, because there’s sin and not being responsible!

He said that when he leads them to Christ—they repent and they change and they follow God’s way, they let God clean up their lives, they marry the women that they should marry, the women marry the men that they should marry and rear and train the children in the way that they ought to, guess what miracle takes place? *In three years they are completely out of poverty!* They’re not rich, they’re out of poverty; they’re off welfare; they are off the dole.

This applies: If you truly seek Christ, He will take care of all of these things—won’t He? But you’ve got to apply yourself. There’s a very good example. Let’s see another example of this. This shows where sin originates. That’s why you have to purify your mind. Sin originates in the mind. That’s why the 10<sup>th</sup> commandment is ‘***You shall not covet.***’ That is telling you are responsible for your own mind, and that sin begins in the mind. Jesus brings that out here:

Matthew 5:27: “You have heard that it was said to those *in ancient times*, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you, everyone who looks upon a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (vs 27-28). Being a Christian our minds then are to be purified! How are they to be purified?

- with the Word of God
- by the washing of the water by the Word
- by the Holy Spirit of God

All of those things together, to where then we become responsible and we put these things out of our mind. We train ourselves through the Holy Spirit and the Word of God not to get involved in that kind of thing; not to be in situations where that could even arise.

Let's cover some more on this and see what we can learn about purifying our hearts because that's where sin originates and let's see what the religious leaders did.

I saw on 20/20 the other night where they were talking about the 'end-timers.' Have you ever heard of the 'End-Timers'? The 'End-Timers' are those who went down into Lake City, Florida, and they've got a big compound there and they're the only ones that know the 'Truth' and they must obey their leader, whose name is Brother Meade. They completely cut themselves off from the whole world totally. That is going to end up being a total disaster and disgrace for any form of Christianity, and people will say, 'See! See! All you Christians are nuts out there.' But what do most religious leaders do? Same as that Brother Meade, same as the Pharisees, etc.! It brings on problems and difficulties.

Matthew 23:25: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!... [sanctimonious pretenders] ...For you cleanse the outside of the cup and the dish, but within you are full of extortion and excess." Yes, they would clean their hands, but unless you clean your hands and purify your mind—as James says—then you're going to be just as the Pharisees.

Verse 26: "Blind Pharisees! First cleanse the inside of the cup and the dish, so that the outside may also become clean. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whited sepulchers [graves], which indeed appear beautiful *on the outside*, but within are full of the bones of the dead, and of all uncleanness. Likewise, you also outwardly appear to men *to be* righteous, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness" (vs 26-28). They are 'double-minded; they profess with their mouth they are serving God, but they're not! All of those things apply.

Now, let's look at the human heart, and this is what needs to be changed. This is why James says that God is giving greater grace. God is able to overcome all of these things within human beings if they truly change. But they've got to turn to God!

Mark 7:21: "For from within, out of the hearts of men... [that's why James says purify your heart you double-minded] ...go forth evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickednesses, guile, licentiousness,

an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness; all these evils..." (vs 21-23).

If you want to know what sin is, sin goes beyond just the Ten Commandments. It even covers:

- an evil eye
- pride
- foolishness

*as well as the overt sins of*

- murder
- fornication
- adultery

"...all these evils go forth from within, and *these* defile a man." (v 23). So, the whole character that James is telling us is that it doesn't do any good just to do *the hands*, or as Jesus said, *the outside*; ***you must also do the inside!*** This is what will come from within unless the Spirit of God is there and the Word of God to cleanse it and to purify your heart.

Let's see the repentance Psalm 51, and this shows that the Bible is consistent all the way through. There are times when people say that you can't trust the Bible because it contradicts itself here and there. The problem with that sort of thing is they don't understand the Bible, or that *their view* of it is just on the surface, so it looks like a contradiction, but it's not! Psa. 51 agrees exactly with what James is teaching.

Psalm 51:10: "Create in me a clean heart, O God..." God is the One Who has to create it. After all, isn't that the whole purpose of the New Covenant? Isn't that what God said? 'Behold the days come that I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. I will put My laws into their hearts and minds; in their inward parts.' ***All of God's way has to be created in us, and it is a clean heart!***

Verse 10: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me." This is talking about the repentance of David after his sin with Bathsheba; so you know that this is real repentance! What he's saying here is that *this is the only way* that it's going to be done.

Verse 11: "Cast me not away from Your presence..." He's coming back to God very humble and repentant. Where was he? *He was far from God!*

"...and take not Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and let *Your* free spirit uphold me" (vs 11-12).

We'll talk about joy in the book of James, because he also talks about that in relationship to sin.

1-John 1:7: "However, if we walk in the Light, as He is in the Light, *then* we have fellowship with one another, and **the blood of Jesus Christ,**

**His own Son, cleanses us from all sin.** *The blood of Jesus Christ is cleansing us from every sin!* See how that ties right in with Psa. 51: 'create in me a clean heart, O God.' That's what conversion is all about.

**Commandment #6—"Be grieved and mourn and weep..."**

This is repentance! This is describing the action of repentance, so you could classify this as repentance. Let's see how this repentance is very, very important. After he said that Jesus Christ will "...cleanse us from all sins," and the very fact that you want to repent over it means that it is a cleansable sin.

Verse 8: "If we say that we do not have sin..." In other words, you're not repentant; you're not confessing your sins; you're not getting rid of your sins.

"...we are deceiving ourselves... [we are lying to ourselves] ...and the Truth is not in us" (v 8). That's part of the 'double-mindedness.'

Verse 9: "If we confess our own sins, He is faithful and righteous, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." So, you see how one step leads to the next step, leads to the next step.

Verse 10: "If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us."

Let's see the whole repentance of David, and you can actually take Psa. 51 and you could break it down into the *Ten Commandment to Overcome Worldliness* that we find in James 4.

- Is this not returning to God?
- Is this not coming back to God?
- Is this not resisting the devil?
- Is this not fleeing from the devil?
- Is this not cleansing his hands?
- Is this not purifying his heart?

Psalm 51:1: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your loving kindness; according to the greatness of Your compassion, blot out my transgressions." Yes, we want them blotted out; God will forgive them and cover them, provided that you repent. Look at David's attitude here.

Verse 2: "Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity... [not just the hands, not just the mind alone, but thoroughly] ...and cleanse me from my sin, for I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me: (vs 2-3).

- Don't you think that David was weeping?
- Don't you think that he was mourning?

- Don't you think that he was grieving?
- Yes!

You find in the account of his repentance that **he fasted for a whole week and prayed on his face**, trying to plead with God that the baby wouldn't die. The sentence was that the baby was going to die. God did not answer that prayer, because God had already given the judgment. He said that the child is going to die. But later, in God's mercy, the next child of Bathsheba was Solomon and he became the king to succeed David.

Verse 4: "Against You, You only, have I sinned..." Think of it for a minute:

- he sinned against Bathsheba
- he sinned against the new child
- he sinned against Uriah the Hittite, the husband of Bathsheba
- he sinned against God
- he sinned against Israel

But, when you get down to it, why does he say: "Against You, You only, have I sinned..."? *Because:*

- God is the One Who is the Lawgiver!
- God is the One Who gave the Law!
- God is the One Who's sitting there in judgment!

Ultimately, though you sin against other people, which is true, ultimately every sin is against God! You have to realize that and understand that; every sin is against God!

"...and done evil in Your sight... [He saying, 'I'm confessing all of this, God] ...that You might be justified when You speak and be in the right when You judge.... [then he talks about his own nature]: ...Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me" (vs 4-5).

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Notice what he said about his own nature, v 5: "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." That's not saying his mother sinned in conceiving him, but that sin was inherent in him from the time that he was conceived. That is New Testament doctrine: 'the law of sin and death' *resides in every human being*. That's why all sin! That's why 'all have come short of the glory of God.' So, what we need to do is ask God to create in us this new nature, ask God to change our heart and mind. *We also need the control of the sin that is within us*, which only God can give.

Here's how to do it, v 6: "Behold, You desire Truth in the inward parts..." What is Truth? *God's Word is Truth!* That's what to fill your heart and mind with!

One of the best ways to overcome worldliness is to replace the thoughts of worldliness with the thoughts of God, with His Word. Let it wash and cleanse your mind, as it should.

“...and in the hidden part You shall make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop... [like a scouring pad—scrub, cleanse and get rid of] ...and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow” (vs 6-7). Doesn’t that tie right in with Isa. 1:16-19? *Yes, it does!* Ties in there exactly, perfectly, the same wordage and the same terminology.

Verse 8: “Make me to hear joy and gladness that the bones, which You have broken, may rejoice. Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Cast me not away from Your presence, and take not Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the **joy of Your salvation...**” (vs 8-12).

Why? Because he had the joy of sin and now he wants the joy of God’s salvation! He was enjoying Bathsheba! He was enjoying the sin! And that turned to sorrow and bitterness and cursing and condemning. Now he’s saying, ‘God, I’ve had enough of that! **“Restore to me the joy of Your salvation...”**’

Acts 2—here’s one of the basic, first Scriptures that you probably ever heard in your life when it finally came to your attention what you need to do to make yourself right with God. And it’s still true today! What is so absolutely important with the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is this: ***It is the continually atoning propitiation!***

- **expiation**—to remove or atone in a one-time action; to expiate
- **propitiate** means a *continuous means of removing of sin, of forgiving of sin*

The sacrifice of Christ applies to us today as it did the very first time you heard this preached:

Acts 2:37: “Now, after hearing *this*, they were cut to the heart; and they said to Peter and the other apostles, ‘Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?’” So, the very first message that Peter preached was almost identical to the *Ten Commandments to Overcome Worldliness*.

Verse 38: “Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent and be baptized each one of you... [Is not baptizing a cleansing? *Yes, it is!*] ...in the name of Jesus Christ for *the* remission of sins, and you yourselves shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit”

So, when it says there in that commandment: **be grieved and mourn, and weep**, it means you go to God, you confess your sins. You weep, you cry,

you mourn—and then it goes into the next one: “...let your laughter be turned into grieving...” and right into the next one: “...and your joy into mourning.”

**Commandment #7—“...let your laughter be turned into grieving...”**

- Why?
- What kind of laughter is this talking about?
- Is this a commandment against laughter?
- Is James saying, ‘Don’t you ever laugh; you’ve got to go around and you can never laugh at anything’?

*NO!*

- this is talking about the laughter of sin
- this is talking about the joy of sin

The next time you go into a restaurant and there’s a bar there, listen to all the laughing and the hilarity that’s going on. ***That is the laughter and joy of this world!*** That kind of laughter and joy needs to be turned into grieving.

Ecclesiastes tells us very clearly about this kind of wrong joy, this kind of laughter and sin, this kind of hilarity of filthiness. A lot of the comics that you see on television fit right into this. Most of the things that they talk about, and most of their jokes—not all, but most; especially those that have to do about adultery and fornication and homosexuality and all of this—***are all the laughter of sin!*** This is what James is saying that we need to turn into grieving.

Solomon said that he was going to experiment in everything that there was to experiment in the world, partly because he didn’t believe God.

Ecclesiastes 2:1: “I said in my heart, ‘Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good.’ and, behold, this also *is* vanity. I said of laughter, ‘*It is* madness,’ and of mirth, ‘What does it accomplish?’ I sought in my heart to give myself unto wine, yet, conducting my heart with wisdom; and to lay hold on folly... [foolishness and stupidity] ... until I might see what was good for the sons of men, what they should do under the heaven the few days of their life” (vs 1-3).

So, he said, ‘Well, we’re made to laugh, we’re made to have joy, so let’s have a ball! Let’s have a blast! ***That’s part of worldliness!*** That’s exactly what he did! Let’s see the conclusion; let’s see what he says this kind of laughter does. What we’re actually seeing is where James undoubtedly, from the Word of God, got this principle and put it into the *Ten Commandment to Overcome Worldliness*.

Ecclesiastes 7:2: “*It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting... [Why? Because you can learn some purpose in life!] ... for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart. Sorrow is better than laughter; for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better*” (vs 2-3). ***This is repentance!***

Another place he says, in the Proverbs, that ***‘laughter is healing to the soul.’*** It’s joy when it’s the good kind of laughter, and the good kind of joy. What we’re talking about here in repenting is the bad kind, the sinful kind.

Verse 4: “The heart of the wise *is* in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools *is* in the house of pleasure. *It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise than for a man to hear the song of fools*” (vs 4-5).

This is exactly what we’re talking about. If you want to see the laughter and hilarity of stupidity, turn on Arsenio Hall sometime. Turn on your joke channel sometime. You will see that that’s the kind of stuff to repent of. That’s what James is talking about here in ***‘grieving and mourning and laughter be turned to grieving.’***

**Commandment #8—“...and your joy into mourning.”**

Let’s see how that applies. This is the wrong kind of joy. Let’s really be honest about this whole thing as we’re looking at it. Do we not train our children to laugh at sin? *Think about it!* How do we start them out? *On cartoons!* The hit! The slap! To kill! To shoot! To drop! To throw! To lie! To sneak! To steal! And it’s all ‘funny’ cartoons! So, the world is full of it; it’s all the wrong kind!

Psalms 31:1: “In You, O LORD, have I taken refuge...” Trust! That’s what you need to do in your heaviness, in your gloominess and your sorrow and you repentance!

“...let me never be ashamed; deliver me in Your righteousness. Bow down Your ear to me; deliver me quickly...” (vs 1-2). In this attitude that you would be in:

- you’re repenting
- you’re seeking God
- you’re drawing close to Him
- you’re praying

“...be my strong Rock, a fortress of defense to save me; for You are my Rock and my fortress; therefore, for Your name’s sake lead me and guide me. Pull me up out of the net that they have hidden for me...” (vs 2-4).

All the trappings of Satan; all the things that

kept you in this. If you’ve been caught in the net of worldliness, you do the same thing. ***You ask God to help retrieve you out of that!***

“...for You are my strength. Into Your hand I commit My spirit... [the very words of Christ on the cross] ... You have redeemed me, O LORD God of Truth” (vs 4-5). So here it shows how this can be.

Hebrews 11—we will see what Moses did. There is pleasure in sin for a season. There is pleasure in doing wrong for a season. Just like today, so many people are on drugs and dope; yes, *there is a pleasure for a time!*

I just read in the paper this morning to where they found three young men dead in a pickup truck, which is the very epitome of what I’m talking about here. Guess what they were doing for their kicks? Guess what kind of drug they took? Innocent enough—or supposedly—they closed the doors on their pickup truck and they rolled up the windows so that nothing would escape and they had across their laps a tank of nitric oxide, which is ‘laughing gas.’ Here to have their laughter, to have their fun, their kicks, their high, laughing gas. I imagine they sat there and laughed and laughed.

Imagine you saw one of the Pink Panther movies with Detective Crusoe where they have one where he comes in with the laughing gas. He’s going to pull the tooth of this individual. They’re all laughing. Well, here these three men were in there in this pickup truck and I imagine they were laughing and having a hilarious time while they were breathing in all of this laughing gas and then BANG!

They didn’t have time to let their laughter turn to mourning. They didn’t have time to be grieving and be in heaviness. ***They died!*** That’s the kind of laughter it’s talking about here. That’s the kind of sin that this is talking about.

Talking about Moses; Moses had an opportunity, he was called Pharaoh’s son. Sometimes there are difficult choices for us. After all, laughing makes us feel good. People want to feel good.

- What’s wrong with feeling good in the Lord?
- What’s wrong with having joy in the Lord?

There’s enough sorrow in this world and we all carry enough sorrow that is true, but we have to make choices just like Moses did.

Hebrews 11:24: “By faith Moses, after becoming a great *leader*, refused to be called *the* son of Pharaoh’s daughter.” He had to make a choice; that’s what all of these things are here for us—***choices!***



Verse 25: “Choosing to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than to enjoy *the* temporary pleasure of sin.” We could just say ‘Amen’ 10,000 times over for this age in which we live.

I know that we’re living in a difficult time. Perhaps the worst time for Christians to survive that there has ever been, because the judgment of God is not being executed in vengeance, because He’s storing it all up for the Day of Vengeance. This frustrates us! Because having to live *in* the world and not *of* the world, we see all of these things going on and we wonder: What is God doing? *God is doing nothing, because He’s storing it all up! He’s going to save it for the end!* We have a choice to make, just like Moses did.

Verse 26: “For he esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt because he was looking intently to the reward.... [he forsook Egypt]: ...By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king...” (vs 26-27).

**Commandment #9—“Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will exalt you.”**

This ties right back into the first commandment. How do humble yourself? *One of the best ways of humbling yourself is exalting God!*

- God is exalted
- God is Holy
- God is true
- God is righteous
- God is great
- God is good

What are we, as human beings? *Even the very best thing that we could possibly ever do is nothing compared to anything that God can do!* We need to keep that in mind; we need to understand that.

Psalm 66:5: “Come and see the works of God; He is awesome in His deeds toward the sons of men. He turned the sea into dry land; they... [the children of Israel] ...went through the river on foot; there we rejoiced in Him. He rules by His power forever...” (vs 5-7). ***Exalt God!***

One of the way you humble yourself is not only to repent, to weep, mourn and be grieving because of your sins, but to exalt God:

- that God is righteous
- that God is Holy
- that God is perfect
- that God is love
- that God is all of these fantastic, marvelous and magnificent things

—because that’s what He is! And that humbles you! That’s why it says in Psa. 19—***‘the heavens declare the glory of God.’*** They do! Fantastic! Marvelous!

Psalm 145:1—speaking of exalting God first: “I will extol You, my God, O King... [he’s exalting God] ...and I will bless Your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless You; and I will praise Your name forever and ever. Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable” (vs 1-3).

We can live our whole lives and we can know just a teeny, minuscule about God’s way and what He’s done and what He’s created. Just go out and look at the grass.

- Do you know how it grows? *No!*
- Do you know what makes it grow? *The sun and water!*
- But what makes it grow? *You don’t know!*
- How does that have life? *Because God gave it!*
- What makes a seed sprout? *God does!*
- How does it do it? *You don’t know!*

But you know if you put it in the ground and you put the water on it and it’s not freezing, but it’s warm and the sun comes out, it will grow and you will have a plant! Whatever that plant is, it produces its fruit. ***God did all of that!*** The smallest little, teeniest, tiniest little thing!

Verse 5: “I will speak of the glorious splendor of Your majesty and of Your wondrous works. And men shall speak of the might of Your awesome works; and I will declare Your greatness. They shall pour forth the memory of Your great goodness and shall sing of Your righteousness” (vs 5-7).

Why is it important to exalt God? That’s when the true joy of God and the joy of salvation starts coming from God! Then you’re focusing on God and not yourself. You have repented of your sins.

- you have wept
  - you have mourned
  - you have grieved
- you’ve asked God to*
- cleanse your hands
  - cleanse your mind
  - purify your heart

***Now you’re exalting God!***

Verse 8: “The LORD is gracious and full of compassion; slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. The LORD is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works. All Your works shall praise You, O LORD; and Your saints shall bless You. They shall speak of the glory of

Your kingdom and talk of Your power, to make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His kingdom” (vs 8-12).

This is a whole prophecy of the coming Kingdom of God on this earth. *What a tremendous and marvelous thing that is going to be!* God is not going to come down here and band-aid Babylon the Great. *No!* He’s going to destroy it! He is going to level it! Every mountain is going to be made into a valley, and every valley is going to be made into a mountain. All the cities are going to be destroyed. Man is going to be humbled and come crawling to His God, and say, ‘Oh, God, You alone have the way.’ That’s the attitude we all need to have right now.

Verse 12: “to make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His kingdom. Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion endures throughout all generations” (vs 12-13).

There’s not one generations of human beings that is going to escape God’s way and responsibility to God. If they sin, they won’t escape sin. If they repent to God and accept the salvation of Jesus Christ they can be saved.

Verse 14: “The LORD upholds all who fall... [if you stumble into worldliness, God will pull you back] ...and raises up all who are bowed down.... [regardless of what your situation is He will help you] ...The eyes of all... [every living thing] ...wait upon You, and You give them their food in due season. You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing. The LORD is righteous in all His ways and loving in all His works. The LORD is near unto all who call upon Him, unto all who call upon Him in Truth” (vs 14-18)—through repentance, grieving, mourning, the Word of God.

Verse 19: “He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He also will hear their cry, and will save them. The LORD watches over all who love Him, but all the wicked He will destroy. My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD, and let all flesh bless His Holy name forever and ever” (vs 19-21).

This Psalm I chose to go through to show how that in your repentance and in your sorrow you can come out of that by praising and exalting God.

**Commandment #10—“Brethren, do not talk against one another....”**

This has more to do with the exalting of yourself by your own spiritual bootstraps of:

- how bad ‘so and so’ is

- how ‘good I am.
  - Did you see them do this?
  - Did you know that she had 2mm more makeup than is allowable
  - Did you know she had such short hair or long hair
- or whatever it may be? Those may be, but don’t speak evil against brethren to make yourself better.
- Do you think you’re going to make yourself better in God’s eyes, that you condemn people who are sinning? *No!*
    - ✓ pray for them that they will quit sinning
    - ✓ pray for them that God would change their mind
    - ✓ you don’t have to speak evil of them
  - What good is that going to do?
  - Is it going to cause them to quit sinning, because you pick on them?
  - Are you going to be in better standing before God because you’ve done so?

***Nonsense! It won’t work!***

What we need to do is all love God and all love one another, and then we’ll overcome that particular problem.

I want to show one of the kings of Israel and show how greatly he sinned and how he was able to repent and recover himself before God.

**This is the account of Ahab.** Ahab married Jezebel, the daughter of the high priest of Baal from Sidon. Jezebel was the one who had all the priests of Baal. Elijah was alone—he thought totally alone—before God. Then there was the three-and-a-half years of drought which took place, and then we have the tremendous confrontation between Elijah and the 400 prophets of Baal, and how God showed that *He* was God.

Now we come to 1-Kings 21 and the evil continues even more. We find that King Ahab, under the instigation of his wife Jezebel said, ‘Okay, I want this piece of property’ What he did, he took the piece of property and furthermore, had the man killed.

- Have you ever caused people to worship Baal? *No!*
- Have you ever married the daughter of the high priest of Baal? *No!*
- Have you ever caused idols to fill the land? *No!*
- Have you directly caused someone to die, deliberately, to go take their property and keep it for your own? *No!*

I bring this out because a lot of people don’t understand that there is more grace to cover the sin,

if you repent. It's not available to you if you don't repent. Here's what happened when he went to take possession of the land:

1-Kings 21:17: "And the Word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 'Arise, go down to meet Ahab the king of Israel in Samaria. Behold, *he is* in the vineyard of Naboth where he has gone to possess it. And you shall speak to him, saying...'" (vs 17-19).

Here's the judgment of God, direct from the very mouth of Elijah, one of the greatest prophets of God.

"...“Thus says the LORD, ‘Have you killed and also taken possession?’” And you shall speak to him saying, “Thus says the LORD, ‘In the place where the dogs licked the blood of Naboth, dogs shall lick your blood, even yours.’” And Ahab said to Elijah, ‘Have you found me, O my enemy?’ And he answered, ‘I have found *you* because you have sold yourself to work evil in the sight of the LORD.’” (vs 17-20). Not only was he out there in the world, he was out there eagerly with both hands doing what he was doing.

Verse 21: “Behold, I will bring evil upon you and will utterly sweep you away... [you won't have anyone to inherit anything] ...and will cut off from Ahab him who pisses against the wall, both bond and free in Israel. And I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, for the provocation with which you have provoked *Me* to anger, and made Israel to sin.’ And the LORD also spoke of Jezebel saying, ‘The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel’” (vs 21-23). That's a tremendous sentence—isn't it? *It did happen!*

Verse 24: “He who dies of Ahab in the city, the dogs shall eat. And he who dies in the field, the birds of the air shall eat.’ But there was none like Ahab, who sold himself to work wickedness in the sight of the LORD, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up. And he did very abominably in following idols, according to all that the Amorites did, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel” (vs 24-26).

And we could all say, ‘Yes, Lord, Amen! He deserves every bit of it, because he did all these things and it's Your Word that comes out of Your mouth.’ Notice what happened. Notice the power of choice. Notice what a person can do in his own mind before God. And I'm bringing this out from the point of view that you may have some sins that you need to repent of, but ***you've got to choose to repent*** of them just like Ahab did here. Lo and behold! Look what happened!

Verse 27: “Then it came to pass when Ahab

heard these words, he tore his clothes... [in repentance] ...and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth and walked softly.” Just exactly what it says here in James 4.

Let's read these ***Ten Commandment to Overcome Worldliness*** and see how all of this is contained right here in the account of Ahab:

1. “Therefore, submit yourselves to God....”
2. “...Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”
3. “Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you...”
4. “Cleanse your hands, you sinners...”
5. “...and purify your hearts, you double-minded!”
6. “Be grieved and mourn and weep...”
7. “...let your laughter be turned into grieving...”
8. “...and your joy into mourning.”
9. “Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will exalt you.”
10. “Brethren, do not talk against one another....”

What was Ahab's first attitude when he saw Elijah? He talked against him! ‘Oh, you're my enemy.’ Did not Ahab comply with everything here that James said? *Yes, he did! Absolutely, he did!*

Verse 27: “Then it came to pass when Ahab heard these words, he tore his clothes and put sackcloth upon his flesh... [that's like wearing burlap] ...and fasted, and lay in sackcloth and walked softly.... [notice what happened when he drew near to God]: ...And the Word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, ‘Do you see how Ahab humbles himself before Me?... [See what repentance and humility can do?] ...Because he humbles himself before Me, I will not bring the evil in his days. *But* in his son's days I will bring the evil upon his house’” (vs 27-28).

Can God turn back the evil of your own sins, which you're bringing upon yourself, if you repent as Ahab did? If you follow these ***Ten Commandment to Overcome Worldliness?*** *Yes!* It's right there! *Yes, you can! Yes, it can be done!* You can come out of this world by following these ***Ten Commandment to Overcome Worldliness***—it is possible!

Do you think that Ahab had any hope up to this point? *No, he didn't!* But when he repented and changed:

- then there was *hope*
- then there was *repentance*
- then there was *forgiveness*

Showing the end result of all of this:

- that you may have fellowship with God

- that you may have fellowship with Jesus Christ
- that you may understand that your sins can be
  - ✓ forgiven
  - ✓ washed away
  - ✓ made white as snow
  - ✓ cleansed with the blood of Jesus Christ

1-John 1:7: “However, if we walk in the Light, as He is in the Light, *then* we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His own Son, cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the Truth is not in us. If we confess our own sins...” (vs 7-9). Just like Ahab—‘Oh, Lord God, You were right’—

- rent his clothes
- repented
- put on sackcloth and ashes
- fasted
- prayed
- wept
- mourned
- grieved
- gave up the laughter of sin

Verse 9: “If we confess our own sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.... [Every sin!] ... If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us” (vs 9-10).

1-John 2:1: “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin....” The object is to keep going toward God and His way, with His Spirit, that we’re not living in sin.

“...And *yet*, if anyone does sin, we have an Advocate with the Father; Jesus Christ *the* Righteous.”

- Did God not then advocate for Ahab when he repented? *Yes!*
- Do we not have Jesus Christ there to advocate for us when we repent?
- When we sin?
- *Yes!*

Verse 2: “And He is *the* propitiation for our sins... [continual atoning mercy seat; forgiveness for our sins] (unless we get the ‘big head’): ... and not for our sins only, but also for *the sins of* the whole world.”

So, *yes you can redeem yourself from worldliness!* Here are the Ten Commandment to Overcome Worldliness! Go back and read them!

James 4:6: “But He gives greater grace.... [cover your sins] ...This is the reason it says, ‘God

sets Himself against *the* proud, but He gives grace to *the* humble.”

Keep in mind everything we covered with King Ahab, you’ll see that that encapsulates everything that James is writing for us.

Verse 7: <sup>[#1]</sup>Therefore, submit yourselves to God. <sup>[#2]</sup>Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. <sup>[#3]</sup>Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. <sup>[#4]</sup>Cleanse *your* hands, you sinners, and <sup>[#5]</sup>purify *your* hearts, you double-minded! <sup>[#6]</sup>Be grieved and mourn and weep; <sup>[#7]</sup>let your laughter be turned into grieving, and <sup>[#8]</sup>*your* joy into mourning. <sup>[#9]</sup>Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will exalt you. <sup>[#10]</sup>Brethren, do not talk against one another....” (vs 6-11).

### *Those are the Ten Commandment to Overcome Worldliness!*

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order—A Faithful Version* (except where noted)

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) James 4:6-11
- 2) Isaiah 57:15
- 3) Ephesians 6:10-11
- 4) Psalm 119:150-151, 10, 9
- 5) Isaiah 1:2, 4, 16-20
- 6) Isaiah 52:11
- 7) Ephesians 5:25-26
- 8) Matthew 6:24-25
- 9) Matthew 5:27-28
- 10) Matthew 23:25-28
- 11) Mark 7:21-23
- 12) Psalm 51:10-12
- 13) 1 John 1:7-10
- 14) Psalm 51:1-12
- 15) Acts 2:37-38
- 16) Ecclesiastes 2:1-3
- 17) Ecclesiastes 7:2-5
- 18) Psalm 31:1-5
- 19) Hebrews 11:24-27
- 20) Psalm 66:5-7
- 21) Psalm 145:1-3, 5-21
- 22) 1 Kings 21:17-28
- 23) 1 John 1:7-10
- 24) 1-John 2:1
- 25) James 4:6-11

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 2 Corinthians 4
- Psalm 19

#### Also referenced: Book:

*The Dead Sea Scrolls Deception* by Michael Baigent

FRC:bo  
Transcribed: 2-7-11  
Corrected: 7/2016