

Go in the Opposite Direction! v. 7-8a

- I. What is submission? It is to place ourselves under the Lordship of God and to dethrone the devil in a Divine resistance! Eph. 4.27; 6.10-20.
 - A. This can only be done with his enabling grace (v. 6). He has given us all that we need to resist the devil. Through his Spirit he has given us: truth to combat lies; righteousness to combat wickedness; peace to combat turmoil; faith to combat doubt; salvation to combat sin and death; the Word as a guiding light in a dark world. The devil is just a dog on a leash.
 - A.I. He gives a command with a promise as uttered throughout the Old Testament for the sake of covenant renewal. “Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.”
 - A.I.a) How? We draw near by prayer. He will not turn away those who come to him (John 6.35-37). Consider the prodigal son (Luke 15.11-32).
 - (A.I.a.1) Application. Are you tempted to doubt, sensuality, lust, materialism, slander, pride? Or have you already fallen to these? It is never too late to draw near to God. He will “run and embrace” you.

Purify Yourselves, v. 8b

- I. But we must repent, inwardly as well as outwardly, come with clean hands and a pure heart (Ps. 2.4).
 - A. For we are a kingdom of priests who draw near as ministers of God. We are to check ourselves before coming to the throne of grace.
 - A.I. As we approach in prayer, we are to lay it all out, honestly before God, with single devotion and single-mindedness.
 - A.I.a) Application. Or are we like the Pharisees who only wash the outside of the cup and not the inside (Matt. 23.25)? The inside of the cup is where the water (of life) is poured into and where we drink from (2 Cor. 7.1).

Grief, Humility and Exaltation, v. 9-10

- I. A true sign of repentance is grief over our own personal sins. The Christian life is a life of joy as this joy comes from God. He is now speaking of a false joy that comes from sinning against God.
 - A. This consists of laughing when there is nothing to laugh about. Enjoying our sin when God hates it. This is speaking of when we don’t see the depth of our own depravity and when we don’t view sin as God views sin. When was the last time we actually wept over our own personal sins?
 - A.I. The joy that comes from sinning is a false and superficial joy, coming from the wrong place because it is not from God (1 Cor. 5.2).
 - A.I.a) It is better to mourn now rather than later. There is blessing and grace for those who mourn (Matt. 5.4). What a joy to be forgiven in Christ! But that joy will not be ours if we tolerate our own personal sin and find joy in it.
 - (A.I.a.1) Application. And what a joy when we will experience sin no more in the presence of Christ! Imagine *no more* doubting, anger, lust, unforgiveness, bitterness! For **he** will do it.
- II. All that he has said so far can be summed up in, “Humble yourselves before the Lord.”
 - A. It is to come before God with nothing in our hands to offer him. It is seeing our need of God and our spiritual poverty. It is total submission of our entire lives.
 - A.I. Application. And there is another promise! He not only gives grace to the humble (v. 6) but he also exalts the humble! This does not come from our own efforts to exalt ourselves.
 - A.I.a) This was displayed in the life, death, resurrection and exaltation of Christ (Phil. 2.6-11) and the pattern that he called us to follow (Matt. 23.12; Luke 14.11; 18.14). But the difference is we are as the tax-collector beating our chest and confessing our sinfulness and our need of mercy and forgiveness (Luke 18.9-14). Amen.