

Trust God, not your stuff

Submit yourselves therefore to God. (James 4:7)

It may be that the hardest thing God asks of us is to give up our faith in everything that's not God. But such is the path to genuine friendship with the Almighty.



1. A great battle rages over who will _____

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. Or do you think Scripture says without reason that the spirit he caused to live in us envies intensely? (James 4:1-5)

- It's an age-old battle: reason versus passion, rationality versus instinct, *super-ego* versus *id*, restraint versus impulse, duty versus pleasure, Spirit versus flesh. The struggle to be human involves the discipline of our passions.

- When lusts are left unbridled:

_____	→	_____
_____	→	_____
_____	→	_____
_____	→	_____

- God is a jealous God (Exodus 20:5), but our passions are jealous gods, too. The first step towards intimacy with God requires saying "no" to our passions and "yes" to God. Will you make this decision?

2. Intimacy with God is found when we _____

But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up. Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it. There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you-- who are you to judge your neighbor? (James 4:6-12)

- Learn from the first three steps of Celebrate Recovery: (1) We admitted we were powerless over our addictions and compulsive behaviors, that our lives had become unmanageable. (2) We came to believe that a power greater than

ourselves could restore us to sanity. (3) We made a decision to turn our lives and our wills over to the care of God.

- The second step in finding friendship with God is to turn our lives over to Him. When we submit to God, the devil flees. When we draw near to Him, He draws near to us. When we humble ourselves, He gives us the grace we need.
- It is counter-intuitive to let go and trust God. But ask yourself these questions:
 1. How's it working _____?
 2. Do I want to drag my pain all the way to my grave?
 3. Do I have the joy, the peace, and the contentment God offers?
- A special note on judging: James wants us to rid ourselves of arrogant and condemning spirits. But He expects us to identify sinful behavior in others and win them to Christ (James 5:19-20). You should point out the speed limit to reckless drivers; but leave the sentencing to the courts.

3. By trusting God we learn that _____

Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that." As it is, you boast and brag. All such boasting is evil. Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins. (James 4:13-17)

- The truth is that you were never really in control in the first place.
- The third step: Do your part with excellence, then _____

4. And if you need more motivation, here are _____

Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming upon you. Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days. Look! The wages you failed to pay the workmen who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty. You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter. You have condemned and murdered innocent men, who were not opposing you. (James 5:1-6)

- God often gives us wealth as a blessing, but He expects us to use our wealth to honor Him.
- Selfishness, loving money, and greed are vices that will cost you your soul.

Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. (1 Timothy 6:17-18)