

# Choose Carefully

## James 4:4-10

James will be encouraging us to ask, “What worldly systems am I depending on, instead of depending on God?”

### What?

Turn from what will crumble to God, who gives grace to the humble

Three foundational truths—

First, friendship with the world makes you God’s enemy

The top three worldly support systems are position, prosperity and pleasure

Second, God yearns jealously over us

Those who are friends of God take great comfort in this, but those who make themselves His enemy will see a different side of His jealousy

The second part of this truth is “but He gives more grace”

We don’t need God to lighten up; we need His grace

Third, God arranges Himself in battle against the proud, but gives grace to the humble

Verses 7-10 contain the exhortations based on these truths

Submitting to God (7a) and humbling ourselves (10) are the same thing—the general command, and the verses in between (7b-9) contain the specifics of this humble submission

Connection with Jesus—

*Philippians 2:6-9, ESV—He did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant... He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him...*

Jesus held the highest position in the universe, equality with God, but left that to take the lowest position on earth

His death was more than an example—it supplied us with the enabling to follow in His footsteps

**The Big Question—How can we obey verses 7-10?**

These verses contain 10 commands; it sounds like we have to do all this stuff, like a to-do list

But these are all one action of turning away and turning to

We turn away from the devil, and our identity as sinful and double-mind people

We turn to God with clean hands and pure hearts

As we turn, we may have sorrow because of wasting life

God makes grace available to enable us to willingly choose

### So What?

We need to allow our difficulties to show us where we have turned away from God, and turn back to him

Now is the time to maintain nearness to God, purity of heart, and separation from worldly support structures

The promises in all of this are three-fold—the devil will flee from you; God will draw close to you; the Lord will lift you up

The last word—David

*Psalm 24:3-4, ESV—Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false...*

### Now What?

Let the Lord show you through this crisis what world systems you’re depending on too much  
Don’t let up in staying near God