

# Five Steps To Power

James 4:6-12



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**FOCAL Read Responsively** James 4:6-12, 17 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. [7] Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. [8] Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *ye* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *ye* double minded. [9] Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and *your* joy to heaviness. [10] Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up. [11] **Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of *his* brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. [12] There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another? .... [17] Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth *it* not, to him it is sin.**

A Sunday School teacher asked her kids, "Why should children be quiet in Church?" One little boy replied, "**Because people are sleeping**".

**Dr. A.W. Tozer**, a great evangelist from yesteryear, once said "**The number one priority of the Church is not to preach the Gospel. Our priority is to be *prepared* to preach the Gospel.**" Tozer wasn't speaking of just what the Pastor-Preacher does, he was speaking of the whole Church.

When the world looks at the local Church they often see a tug of war between two different groups over various mundane subjects. Churches play tug of war over things

like **music** (I like traditional, no, I like contemporary); like the **building** (I love this old sanctuary, no, I want a new sanctuary); like **Bible versions** (I like the 1611 King James, no, I like the New International) and so on. We must never forget that in any tug of war eventually one side will lose, and will end up with a face full of mud. When two sides pull against one another in a local Church *it is the Church that loses*. It is the Church that gets the comical mud facial. The world - watching from the outside - walks away while laughing at the free show we gave them.

When the world isn't watching a fighting Church, they're looking at a *do nothing* Church. There's a small town in Europe that has a large Clock in a tower. They keep the Clock wound up, though long ago the hands fell off the clock. It's a totally useless clock, regularly wound up but useless. There are many Churches that are regularly wound up but, just like that clock, do absolutely nothing. They just sit there. The world is not changed by a sitting Church, nor is Satan challenged by a do nothing Church.

What does the Lord want us - as His people - to do? How can we please our Lord and make a difference in our world. James tells us that the path to powerful living is available to every Christian and every Church as long as we take these five steps:

1. Follow God
2. Forsake Sin
3. Fight Satan
4. Fellowship With Other Believers
5. Find What God Wants Me To Do - and DO it!

Let's look at each of these points as James lays them out for us:

## 1. I Must Follow God

**FOCAL James 4:7** Submit yourselves therefore to God. ....

The first step to powerful living is to **follow God**. The Apostle uses two words to describe how we should follow God.

**Word Study** He says "**submit yourselves**". This is the Greek (**υποτασσω** pronounced *hoop-ot-as'-so*).

The first use of this word is found in the life of our Lord Jesus when He was but a twelve year old boy. Joseph and Mary had journeyed with a large caravan to Jerusalem to keep the Feast of the Passover. At the end of the Passover Mary, Joseph, and the caravan headed back to Nazareth. What they didn't know was that Jesus was still "**in the Temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions**" (Luke 2:46). On finding Jesus Mary His earthly mother asked, "**Why have You done this, Jesus? Don't you know we were worried about You?**" Jesus replied, "**Why did you look for Me? Don't you know that I am supposed to be doing My Father's business?**" (Luke 2:49). The Bible says that following this exchange Jesus left the Temple. We read:

**Luke 2:51** {Jesus} went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and **was subject** unto them ...

Here's where we see that word HYPOTASSO. Jesus **was subject, was surrendered, was submitted to** Mary and Joseph. Since He was not of age as an adult Jesus obeyed His parents as any good child should do. He surrendered His rights and authority and placed Himself under their rights and authority.

If Jesus - eternal God in the flesh - surrendered Himself to God and to Mary and Joseph, shouldn't we do the same thing for God's glory?

When we **submit ourselves to God** we recognize that **God is our Father, Jesus is our Lord, and the Holy Spirit is our Guide.**

**Psalms 100:3** Know ye that **the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.**

We need to understand that *God does not need us*. He is God. He loves us. He cares for us. He wants us. *But He doesn't need us.* **We bring nothing to the table of redemption but our dirty hands. We can do nothing worthy unless we do it for God and through God.** We must submit to the Lord, surrendering our "rights" and "privileges" to Him. We cannot be born again unless we surrender ourselves to God. We cannot grow and become effective as believers unless we say to God, "Whatever You want, Lord, I will do. Yes, Lord. I come to do Your

Will."

**ILLUSTRATE** Dr. Ravi Zacharias told the story of a man named **Henry Martin**. Henry was a man that was terribly afflicted with warts. He had warts on his hands, on his body, warts on his face and across his eyebrows. Though Henry was a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ he was not very pretty to look at. But the Scripture says,

**FOCAL James 4:6** But {God} giveth more grace. ....

Though Henry was not a beautiful man on the outside, he was intellectually a genius. Henry was a **Cambridge** scholar who often went to sporting events, but hid from associating with people because of his deformity. **But God giveth more grace.** A young girl by the name of Lydia met Henry and fell in love with him.

One day Henry was sitting in a Church service and the pastor was talking about the need of missionaries in India. Henry sensed the Lord was calling him into the mission field. When he went to Lydia and asked her what she thought about it she shocked him. "Absolutely not! I will not go to India!" Henry begged and pleaded with her, but she would not budge. A few weeks passed and daily the Lord's call to India kept growing in Henry's heart. Henry knew that he had a choice to make, either Lydia or India. But as he prayed the Lord made it clear to him that the decision wasn't between Lydia or India - it was between Lydia or GOD. Henry went to India to preach the Gospel. Like the Apostle Paul he was beaten and placed in chains, but still he preached. Henry died when he was just 31 years old, but before he died he

preached the Gospel in India and Persia. He also translated the Bible into three languages - Hindustani, Persian, and Arabic - so the people could read the Word of God in their own language. He left a legacy that will never die because Henry lived surrendered to the Lord that saved him!

You will leave absolutely *no legacy* on this earth but a tombstone unless you follow and submit to God in your life.

## 2. I Must Forsake Sin

The second step to powerful living is to **forsake sin**. When people hear this they immediately think of the Oprah Winfrey/ Doctor Phil sort of self help program. Most preachers talk about forsaking sin as if it were a Nike® commercial by saying, "**Just Do It**". That's not what the Scripture tells us.

**ILLUSTRATE** I often get calls from people who study the sermons posted on the bibleteacher.org website. One man called this past week who shared with me and sought God's answer for his problem. This man is a born again believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. He had a sin in his life that was overwhelming him. No matter how much he fought against the sin it seemed as if it always won. He said he tried and tried, but eventually this sin would creep back in and he would feel defeated and dirty because of it.

This is a common problem among many Christians. The

problem, dear friend, is *not* the sin, but it is the way that we *try and fix it ourselves*. Let me ask you the same question that the Apostle Paul asked the Galatian Christians:

**Galatians 3:1-3** O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? [2] This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? [3] Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

When you were saved were you saved by *just being better*? Or did you *call upon the Name of the Lord to be saved*? Did you look up to God and say "I'll just work a little harder to be better so You will receive me into Your family", or did you do as the Publican did in Jesus' sermon:

**Luke 18:13-14** And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as *his* eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. [14] I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather than the other*: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

That which saves us is *not our own hand, but the pierced hands of God*. He Who makes us better is not us, but the Holy Spirit of God Who enters our lives at the point of salvation. When you were saved you were saved because

you turned away from embracing sin and turned toward God as your only Hope. The Bible calls this repent and be converted.

**Acts 3:19-20** Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; [20] And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:

You say to God to be saved, "I turn from the way I am, and seek Your Way. Jesus is The Way, the Truth, and the Life, and I believe He gave Himself for me!" When you do this the Bible tells us that God causes you to be **born again or regenerated** (John 3:3; 3:7; 1 Peter 1:23). The Bible also tells us that **God the Holy Spirit comes into the framework of your life. He now lives and abides in you** (John 14:17). This Holy Spirit **abides with you FOREVER** (John 14:16). It is the function of God the Holy Spirit to:

**John 16:13-14** .... **guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. [14] He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.**

It is the Holy Spirit's job to *feed the believer the truth of God*. He does this by taking the Word of God and by imparting its truth to your soul.

How does a believer forsake sin? **He feeds on the Word**

of God. He relies, by faith, on the Holy Spirit. I can guarantee you, dear friend, that if you will draw near to God by prayer and reading His Word then He will draw near to you. This is what James tells us:

**FOCAL James 4:8** Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *ye* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *ye* double minded.

**Word Study** The words "draw nigh" is the Greek *Aorist Active Imperative* of (ἐγγιζω pronounced: *eng-id'-zo*) ENGIDZO, which means "to make yourself near to".

Jesus used this same word to indict the Pharisees in:

**Matthew 15:6-18** ... {you have} **made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. [7] Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, [8] This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. [9] But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.**

The Pharisees (and our Churches are filled with them today) took the Word of God and - instead of letting God the Holy Spirit use that good Word to feed their souls - they *manipulated the Word for their own purposes*. They **honored God with their lips, but their hearts were far from Him**. They took in the Word of God - not to draw near to God - but to use it for their own benefit.

God's Holy Word.

**5 Minutes a Day Reading His Word**  
**5 Minutes a Day Praying Over The Read Word**  
**5 Minutes a Day Asking God To Give You**  
**Application**

This is the *minimum*, but it is a good place to start. Forsake sin by drawing near to God's Word. **Cleanse your hands and purify your hearts by putting your mind into the Word of God.**

### **3. I Must Fight Satan & Fellowship With Other Believers**

I put these two points together because we usually get mixed up at this point. Too many believers are **fighting with one another while they fellowship with Satan.** That's the wrong order. The Bible says:

**FOCAL** James 4:7, 11-12 ... **Resist** the devil, and he will flee from you. .... [11] **Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law:** .... [12] There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?

**Word Study** The word **resist** is the Greek (ανθιστημι pronounced *anth-is'-tay-mee*) APOTITHEME - a compound word which means "to stand against".

The Christian forsakes sin by realizing that he is indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God. He then **draws near to God** on a daily basis by **reading the Word of God, asking the God the Holy Spirit to explain that Word to Him.**

I tell every Christian that they should have a daily regular devotional time with God. If you will **draw near to God by reading and prayerfully considering His Word then that Word will feed you spiritually and you will grow.** Sin will lose its hold on you - but only through the operation of God.

**ILLUSTRATE** The great evangelist **Dwight L. Moody** gave a wonderful illustration of the Christian walk. He said that there was a terrible train wreck with many people hurt and killed. During the inquiry the watchman was asked "**On the night that this accident occurred, did you wave your lamp?**" The watch man replied, "**Yes, I waved my lamp**". The board of inquiry asked, "**But why didn't the train stop?**" The watchman replied, "**Before the accident occurred I was distracted. When I realized that another train was coming I grabbed my lamp and ran outside *but the lamp had no fuel in it.* I waved my lamp, but the lamp was not lit.**"

Unless Christians **daily read and prayerfully consider the Word of God** they are, like the watchman, waving an unlit lamp. **Draw near to God by daily reading His Word.** Practice, at a minimum, a 5-5-5 approach to

We are to **stand against** Satan but to **stand with our brothers and sisters in the Lord.**

**ILLUSTRATE** A mother heard her children fighting in another room. She went in and asked, "**What are you fighting about?**" What they were fighting about was trivial and childish, so the mother said "**You need to forgive one another and go back to playing.**" She left the room. Some time later a storm came up outside and the mother, concerned that the children might be out in it, went looking for them. She called out and heard the children's muffled answer. They were in the closet. She opened the closet and said, "**What are you doing in here?**" The children - hugging one another - replied "**We're in the closet forgiving one another**".

I often pray that God will keep the storms coming so maybe you would all **get in the closet and forgive one another.** As a pastor I often have to chase sheep that wander from the flock because their nose is out of joint over one thing or another.

Another word for a sheep away from the flock is "stupid", and there are scores of stupid Christians throughout America.

The Bible says that God's people are to come together on a regular basis to love one another, to encourage one another, and to help one another. **He that speaketh evil of his brother and judgeth his brother speaketh evil of the law and judgeth the law.** We are commanded in

Scripture to:

**Hebrews 10:23-25** Let us hold fast the profession of *our* faith without wavering; (for he *is* faithful that promised;) [24] **And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: [25] Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.**

We come together as Christians to **provoke one another to love and good works.**

The Christian is designed by God to work together with other Christians. The Apostle Paul made this clear when he wrote:

**1 Corinthians 12:13-14** For **by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. [14] For the body is not one member, but many.**

The Holy Spirit binds believers together in a local Church. Each member of that local Church has a job to do, a gift to exercise, an encouragement to give. The world is tough out there, and Satan's power is strong. But **greater is He that is with us, than he that is in the world (1 John 4:4).** God works through the Church. He wants the Church to work together to gather souls for His Kingdom through the preaching of the Gospel of Christ. Our Lord Jesus said:

**Matthew 9:37-38 ... The HARVEST truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; [38] Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest.**

We as believers need workers that are HARVEST oriented. The HARVEST is plenteous. There are many souls to be saved.

In many local Churches the CRITICS are plenteous and the laborers are few. The JUDGES are plenteous but the laborers are few. My brothers and sisters, this must never be the case at this Church.

Actively stand against the devil - and actively stand WITH your fellow believers. Do not make your Pastor hunt for you on Sunday. Do not make him waste his time chasing you about so he can change your diapers. Get in God's Word daily, and get in Church regularly.

#### **4. I Must Find What God Wants Me To Do**

**FOCAL James 4:11, 17 ... if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. ...**

**CONTEXT James 4:17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.**

If you belong to God you are expected by God to DO the things of God.

**ILLUSTRATE** A lady came to Dwight L. Moody one time and said, "Mr. Moody, I don't like the way that you do evangelism." Moody asked her, "How often do you, dear lady, tell others about Jesus Christ in a given week?" She replied, "I never do." Moody replied, "Well, dear lady, I don't like the way that you DON'T DO evangelism."

Christians are called to a life of DOING for God. Jesus said:

**John 14:21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.**

Christ manifests Himself to the believer who does what He says. We are called to DO for the glory of God. Jesus said **if you love Me, keep My commandments (John 14:15)**. One of the greatest sins to plague the Church today is not homosexuality and other sexual sins.

One of the greatest sins to plague the Church today is the sin of **knowing to do good, and doing it not.**

Until you, dear Christian, **do the things God has placed on your heart** you will not walk in power. God wants His people to walk in power.

**ILLUSTRATE** In the old Westerns you could always tell the good guys from the bad guys by the hat they wore. Good guys always wore white hats. Bad guys

always wore black hats. The only way that a Christian can be told from a non-Christian is not his hat, but *his heart and his hand*. The Bible says:

**Philippians 2:12-13** Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. [13] For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure.

If God is not working in you and through you, you may not be saved.

God saves from the inside out. When the woman taken in adultery was saved **she went and sinned no more**. When the **Samaritan woman at the well** was saved she went and told her whole town to come and see Jesus Christ the Messiah. When **Zacchaeus the tax collector** was saved he return his ill gotten gains to those he had robbed. An inward change is always evidenced by an outward action. Are you doing the things that God wants you to do? If not, are you saved?

May God give the answer to these questions.



**FOCAL Read Responsively** James 4:6-12, 17 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. [7] Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. [8] Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *ye* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *ye* double minded. [9] Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and *your* joy to heaviness. [10] Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up. [11] **Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of *his* brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. [12] There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another? .... [17] Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth *it* not, to him it is sin.**

### **1. I Must Follow God**

James 4:7; Luke 2:51; Psalms 100:3; James 4:6

**Word Study** "submit yourselves" is the Greek (υποτασσω pronounced *hoop-ot-as'-so*) meaning \_\_\_\_\_

- You will leave absolutely *no legacy* on this earth but a \_\_\_\_\_ unless you follow and submit to God in your life.

### **2. I Must Forsake Sin**

Galatians 3:1-3; Luke 18:13-14; Acts 3:19-20; John 3:3; 3:7; 1 Peter 1:23; John 14:17; John 14:16; John 16:13-14; James 4:8; Matthew 15:6-18

- It is the Holy Spirit's job to *feed the believer the truth of God*. \_\_\_\_\_

**Word Study** The words "draw nigh" is the Greek \_\_\_\_\_

- The Christian forsakes sin by realizing that he is indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God. He then **draws near to God** \_\_\_\_\_

### **3. I Must Fight Satan & Fellowship With Other Believers**

James 4:7, 11-12; Hebrews 10:23-25; 1 Corinthians 12:13-14; Matthew 9:37-38

**Word Study** The word **resist** is the Greek (ανθιστημι pronounced *anth-is'-tay-mee*) \_\_\_\_\_

### **4. I Must Find What God Wants Me To Do**

James 4:11, 17; John 14:21; Philippians 2:12-13

One of the greatest sins to plague the Church today is the sin of \_\_\_\_\_