

DAILY BIBLE READINGS - Week of January 8, 2023

THEME: "Letter of James"

SPIRITUAL WAR

Sunday **Read James 4:1-10**

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you." One identification of the true Christian is given to us in II Timothy 2:3: *"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."* We are engaged in spiritual warfare. Satan's declared war against God's people in the Battle of Eden when he successfully tempted Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit. Satan opposes God by presenting deceit and falsehood to tempt people to ignore or reject the truth of the Most High God. Realizing that His arch-enemy would attack His people, God has equipped us with spiritual armor to defend against Satanic attacks. That armor is detailed in Ephesians 6:11-18. The armor emphasizes having faith in God and His eternal truth as revealed in the Bible. It is our sword and our shield, giving us both an offensive and defensive weapon! Jesus Himself gave us an example of how to ward off Satanic attacks as recorded in Matthew 4:3-4: *"And when the tempter came to Him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But He answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."* Using the power of God's Word, Jesus won that battle and gave us a strategy for winning spiritual battles: submit to God and resist the devil!

LISTENING

Monday **Read James 1:19-22**

"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath." In His Word here in the book of James, God gives to us some very important instructions about effective conversation. The passage mentions the two parts of conversation, or at least what should be the two parts: speaking and listening. It is good to use both our ears and our mouth in the important practice of conversing. Obviously, from the instruction we are given here, it appears for the most part people are quick to speak, but faulty in listening. We speak to share our thoughts, and we listen to find out what the other person is thinking. Notice that God tells us to pay particular attention to what the other person has to say. Too often, people seem to be more involved in loading than listening in conversation. Instead of hearing the other person's thoughts, they are thinking about what they want to say and never benefit from the comments of others. Listening is a common courtesy; it is essential for effective conversation. Not to pay attention to the viewpoints of others is cheating ourselves from expanding our awareness and appreciation for those with whom we are speaking.

CONVERSE

Tuesday **Read John 4:4-9**

"There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink." In this conversation that Jesus had with the Samaritan woman at the well, He gave us a great lesson in effective dialogue. Jesus took the initiative in opening up a conversation with someone who was not expecting to speak with one who was a total stranger. Asking for a drink or water was His way to bring important spiritual and eternal issues into the discussion. By asking for her help, He got her attention. It probably made her feel important in that it was someone asking for her assistance. Maybe Jesus was really thirsty, but more important to Him than a drink of water was that the woman would know how to have the assurance of eternal life. Not only did she give Jesus her attention, she could not wait to share her experience with others. It appears that the willingness of Jesus to go out of His way to converse with a woman resulted in many people placing their faith in God and His eternal Word by meeting the Savior of the world! Does not this experience in the life of

our Lord gives us a valuable lesson in soulwinning? A simple conversation about an ordinary physical need resulted in an individual getting on the road that leads to heaven. It was not an evangelistic rally; it was a private chat!

PROACTIVE FAITH

Wednesday Read James 2:17-20

"Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works." True faith in God results in actions in obedience to God. That faith comes from paying attention to what God has told us, the truth of Romans 10:17: *"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."* Believing in someone involves far more than simply believing in his or her existence; it means believing what they have to say. True faith in God is far more than believing in the existence of God; it involves knowing what He has said and what else He wants us to know. It goes even farther than just finding out what God has said, it means to do as He has instructed about life. Today's Bible reading warns about just reading God's Word with no follow-up in our actions. Actions are proof of faith! Inaction means a lack of faith! It is important to put feet to our faith!

COMPASSION

Thursday Read Luke 10:30-36

"But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him." Jesus gave His followers a real lesson on showing compassion in this account of a Samaritan coming across a man in desperate need. The injured man lying on the roadside had been ignored by many who passed by; but this Samaritan stopped and gave him aid. Of all the attributes of our Lord, one that stands out is His compassion. We read of that compassion of Jesus in Matthew 9:36: *"But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd."* This compassion is what our Lord expects of His followers as they rub shoulders with all the people in their spheres of influence. Christians have the answer to the abundant life: the message of the gospel. Our compassion for the lost will compel us to witness!

WATCH YOUR TONGUE

Friday Read James 3:1-6

"Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell." One of the very important lessons for living the Christian life is this one about the use of our mouth. Words can be very destructive, or they can be very helpful to others. We are taught an important lesson about the Christian life in I Thessalonians 5:11: *"Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing."* It should be the practice of Christians to build each other up, never to tear others down!

KINDNESS

Saturday Read Genesis 50:18-21

"But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them." One of the great illustrations of words bringing relief to others is this one in Jacob's family that had been

torn apart because of the jealousy of the older siblings for Joseph. That hatred resulted in their selling him into slavery. After years of separation, God arranged things in such a way that the brothers were put in a position where they had to face the brother whom they had hated. But this time the brother was in the position of authority and could have sought revenge. Instead, Joseph showed compassion and kindness; and the family of Jacob was reunited! Showing kindness always brings favorable results, and brings honor to our Savior!