



TRANSFORMED

DEVOTIONS CONNECTING TEENS TO CHRIST

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

James 4:9-10 ESV

Season of resistance

Ben and Lauren had another fight. It was their third one in a week, and Ben was exhausted. He was tired of all the problems in their relationship. In desperation, he turned to God in prayer. A thought struck him, “Maybe my biggest problem is not the external fights I’m having with Lauren, but the internal fight inside of me.”

Ben’s prayerful thought echoes James chapter 4. In verse 1 of this chapter James says, “What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from your desires that battle within you?”

Our biggest problem is the fight that goes on inside of each of us, each and every day—the fight between the sinful, selfish nature that hates God’s will and the new nature, born again by God’s Spirit to live for him. If we’re going to resolve the other problems in life, this problem must first be resolved.

All of us sense the battle between these two natures when we struggle to do what is loving and right towards God or others.

James’ words lead us to humbly confess to God all of the times we let that old selfish nature win—when we fall to the devil’s temptations, hurt others, and want to blame others for all of our problems. When we confess, God reminds us that he graciously forgives us because of Jesus, who never fell to the devil’s temptations and won the battle with the devil through his death on the cross and resurrection.

James’ words also lead us to stay in the fight—to never give up! Staying in the fight means humbly submitting to God, resisting the devil, and drawing near to God.

God is calling each of us to humbly resist sin and wage war against it in our own hearts and lives. When we do, we have the promise of God to empower our new nature with his Spirit and to lift us up with his grace when we fall.

Prayer: Victorious Jesus, oh how I struggle in the fight against temptation. Thank you for forgiving me for the times when I fall. Give me your Spirit to stay in the fight and resist sin. Amen.