

## July 21<sup>st</sup> – Sermon Notes

Message Title: “Getting the Devil Out of the Details”

Text Passage: James 4:1-17 (NIV)

Main Idea: To get the devil out of the details submit to God by drawing near to God.

The Book of James is the earliest of all New Testament books, written between 45-50 A.D. So, some of the critical truths that are now part of Christian doctrine were still being revealed and recorded.

James’s letter is more like the Proverbs. It contains a lot of “Just cut it out and stop doing that!” to it. And that message has its place. These are things that suck the joy out of our fellowship with one another and are toxins to our spirit and create painful consequences. It’s a good thing to just stop doing those things.

But there is more to the abundant life in Christ than just stop doing bad thing and start doing good things.

The blessings of the Christian life lie not only in the obedience product but in the relational process.

So how can we get the devil out of the details, so our growth is not choked discouragement and shame? How can we read a passage like this and take it to heart with eagerness and hope?

1. By viewing the instructions of Scripture as a vision, not a threat.

Philippians 1:6 “Until the day of Christ” God will be perfecting me.

I focus on the journey not on the destination. And the most important part of the journey is not how fast I’m traveling but remembering who is with me. Who I am to Him and who He is to me.

My hope is that God’s truth will become a growing reality in my life, not because I forced it and not because I’m faking it but because I am seeing His work unfolding in my life as I trust in Him.

As James writes in verse 6 of our text, "God gives grace to the humble."

2. By remembering He is our helper and not our judge.

To get the devil out of the details "submit to God by drawing near to God."

Remember God is and forever will be "for us" not against us.

Let our first instinct be to draw near, not to withdraw. Let it be in accordance with Hebrews 4:14-16, draw near with confidence to help in time of need.

When I am at my worst. He is the best place to go.

3. By not basing my status and standing with God on how well I'm performing, but on Christ's performance on my behalf.

If James came in here and said all these things to me, I'd tell him what I'm doing about it and how I'm approaching it. I'd say, you know the part of your letter where you write, James 1:22-24 (NIV) "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like."

I look in the mirror and I face what I am relative to God's word, but in that mirror, I also see Christ standing behind me with His arms around me. When I see me, I also see Christ. He is my righteousness.

Every morning, I affirm before Him that my only claim to righteousness and to His everlasting favor is His blood. I tell Him that His blood is the only and complete remedy for my sin and my only claim to His favor.

I don't know what others are trusting in but I know where my faith is resting and on Whom. That is why I do not see this passage or any other as a threat. I do not take it lightly; I take it to the Lord.

To get the Devil out of the details, submit to God by drawing near to Him. Keep your vision of Him clear and the rest will follow.