

# CLEAN HANDS AND A PURE HEART

*Paul Epps*

Be subject therefore unto God; but resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye doubleminded (Jam. 4:7-8).

In the above reading we see our responsibility as Christians in submitting ourselves unto God. This teaching is an appeal for us to forsake pride and place ourselves under the authority of God. If we submit our will unto God, we shall have as our aim in life reverence and obedience to God's moral law. By thus doing we shall allow God to have His way in our lives—controlling us in body and mind, in intellect and conscience, also in our actions and habits. In submitting ourselves unto God so that we may have “clean hands” and a “pure heart,” notice three things that we must do:

**We must resist Satan.** We cannot serve God and Satan at the same time. Some members of the Lord's church are trying to play both sides, but this is impossible! James has already stated that “the friendship of the world is enmity with God” (Jam. 4:4). Too, our quarrel is not with anyone else but Satan. Let us be sure that we are not at odds with our brother in Christ; he is not our enemy; our enemy is Satan. We are to love our brother in Christ and fight against our common enemy, the Devil. One thing is sure—if we do not resist him, he will not flee from us.

**We must come near unto God.** The closer we come to God, the further we remove ourselves from Satan. In fact, he will take his flight from us. Too many members of the body of Christ are trying to see how close they can stay to the border line of the kingdom of Satan. To successfully resist the devil is to walk with God, which means that we must first get right with the Lord and remain close to Him. “Drawing nigh” (close) is a figurative use of the verb and is associated with spiritual worship or service to God. In the Old Testament, it is used of the priestly service regarding those who draw nigh to God at the altar to purify themselves and to serve (Exo. 19:22; Eze. 44:13).

**We must put away our sins.** We cannot “draw nigh to God” if we love our sins. Drawing nigh unto our Father involves repentance, which too many of us do not wish to acknowledge. We abhor the idea, of our brethren looking upon us as “a sinner.” But the Scripture says that we must “cleanse our hands” from sin, and “purify our hearts” (from our secret sins known only by our Father in heaven). The emphasis here is upon those who have become backsliders. They are admonished to repent and purify themselves and worship the Lord. ~