

Prayer of Invocation

Almighty God, You have made yourself known to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Make yourself known to us in such a way that we may understand Your will and purpose for our lives today. We offer our prayers in the name and spirit of Christ. Amen.

What leads to strife (discord and feuds) and how do conflicts (quarrels and fightings) originate among you? Do they not arise from your sensual desires that are ever warring in your bodily members? James 4:1 AMP

Hedonism: the belief that pleasure is the highest good in life

**The chief end of man is to
glorify God by enjoying
Him forever**

John Piper

Senior devil said to junior devil, Wormwood:

“Never forget that when we are dealing with any pleasure in its healthy and normal and satisfying form, we are, in a sense, on the Enemy’s (God’s) ground. I know we have won many a soul through pleasure. All the same, it is His invention, not ours. He (God) made the pleasures: all our research so far has not enabled us to produce one. All we do is to encourage the humans to take the pleasures which our Enemy (God) has produced, at times, or in ways, or in degrees, which He has forbidden. Hence, we always try to work away the natural condition of any pleasure to that in which it is least natural. An ever increasing craving for an ever diminishing pleasure is the formula.”

The Screwtape Letters, C.S

Lewis

² You are jealous and covet [what others have] and your desires go unfulfilled; [so] you become murderers. [To hate is to murder as far as your hearts are concerned] You burn with envy and anger and are not able to obtain [the gratification, the contentment, and the happiness that you seek], so you fight and war. You do not have, because you do not ask.

³ [Or] you do ask [God for them] and yet fail to receive, because you ask with wrong purpose and evil, selfish motives. Your intention is [when you get what you desire] to spend it in sensual pleasures.

James 4:2-3 AMP

Unfaithful people! Don't you know that to be the world's friend means to be God's enemy? If you want to be the world's friend, you make yourself God's enemy. James 4:4 GNT

I have told you this many times before, and now I repeat it with tears: there are many whose lives make them enemies of Christ's death on the cross. They are going to end up in hell, because their god is their bodily desires. They are proud of what they should be ashamed of, and they think only of things that belong to this world. Philippians 3:18-19 GNT

Do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, “He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us”? But he gives more grace. James 4:5-6a ESV

The heart-changing truth: even when we have “friends” in the world that is hostile to God, it does not change His love for us. The Holy Spirit yearns jealously for us. Regardless of our situation, there is always grace for us. Our needs do not outstrip His grace and never will!

He Gives More Grace

Annie Johnson Flint

**He gives more grace when the burdens grow greater,
He sends more strength when the labors increase;
To added affliction He adds His mercy;
To multiplied trials, His multiplied peace.**

**When we have exhausted our store of endurance,
When our strength has failed ere the day is half done,
When we reach the end of our hoarded resources,
Our Father's full giving is only begun.**

**His love has no limit; His grace has no measure.
His power has no boundary known unto men;
For out of His infinite riches in Jesus,
He gives, and gives, and gives again!**

**Therefore it says, "God opposes
the proud, but gives grace
to the humble."**

James 4:6b ESV

How to receive more grace?

- 1. Submit to God (4:7a)**
- 2. Stand firm against the Devil and pray unceasingly (4:7b-8a)**
- 3. Clean up your acts and inner life (4:8b)**
- 4. Mourn over your sins (4:9)**

Submit to God

Submit yourselves therefore to God

James 4:7a ESV

Mourn over your sins

Be sorrowful, cry, and weep; change your laughter into crying, your joy into gloom! James 4:9 GNT

Mourn over your sins

Why It's Good To be Sad

1. Be sad that your warped way of thinking has grieved God. All sin is primarily against Him.
2. Be sad because of the effect your own assumptions have on yourself. Your own thinking is your worst enemy. Your resources and capabilities are diminished and you are the loser. Your spiritual development has been stunted because of your worldly thinking. Those assumptions you picked up when you were in a rebellious spirit towards God have made an impact upon you.

Mourn over your sins

Why It's Good To be Sad

3. Be sad because of the effect you have had on other people. Do you realize there are those who have taken you seriously? You may have said things you don't believe in now. But they were believed when you said them. It is often true that we become entrenched in a position we don't want to defend any longer but pride keeps us holding on to the old view. If you are making another person look bad by your insinuations and unsavory remarks, what if people believe you? Think carefully before you say anything negative to anyone.

RECAP

The chief end of man is to glorify God by enjoying Him forever (John Piper).

If we choose to pursue pleasures in the wrong way and with the wrong motive, it makes us enemies of God. Nevertheless, God continues to love us. The Holy Spirit yearns for us. He would give us more grace, regardless of the situation, if we humble ourselves before God, acknowledging that His ways are higher than our ways and His thoughts higher than our thoughts.

Therefore, we ought to take practical steps to:

1) submit to God, 2) stand firm against the Devil and pray unceasingly, 3) clean up our acts and inner life and 4) mourn over our sins.

Let us not wait passively for God to humble us but to take stock of our sinfulness and weaknesses. And then bow in complete submission to God, yielding our total being, our dreams, our future and everything and everyone we hold dear to Him.

May God pour forth grace, more grace into our lives and exalt us. May He show us the path that leads to life; His presence fills us with joy and brings us pleasure forever.