



**SERIES: FEBRUARY – MARCH FAITH IN REAL LIFE**

**SPEAKER: NAT CRAWFORD**

**Thursday, 03/17/2022**

**Scripture: James 4:8-10**

**TITLE: Affair Recovery**

On more than one occasion, I've gotten into a fight with my wife over the phone. It doesn't happen very often, but it does happen. And I know that when I come home, I've got two options: to hide, or make things right. You see, I know that if I come home after a marital altercation and act like it didn't happen, I'll be on the couch. I can't draw near to my wife until I remove my pride and restore the relationship.

Our relationship with God isn't any different. Our pride drives a wedge between God and us. And before we draw near to Him, we need to make things right. How? This is what James says in James 4:8-10 (CSB).

*Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be miserable 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.*

One of the misconceptions in our faith is that forever forgiveness means perpetual harmony in our relationship with God. But our affairs with this world cannot be dismissed. We all struggle with pride and cheating on God. Thankfully, God is always forgiving of His children. And He wants a whole relationship with us.

James has been talking about what it means to live like a Christian. It doesn't save us, but it does reveal our hearts. In chapter 4, James talks about the danger and destructiveness of our pride and selfish ambition. It is disruptive in our community and in our communion with God. We need to come back to God, be repentant and submit to Him. What's the benefit? Restored fellowship and overflowing grace.

In verse 8, James says, "*Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.*" This is the right response as we humble ourselves and submit to God as King. We rededicate our love and allegiance. So we mourn our pride. We anguish over our sin. Not because we are going to get whacked by God. Not because we're in jeopardy of losing our salvation. We mourn, humble ourselves, and draw near to God because we've hurt our beloved friend. So we return humble and ready to commit fully again. And what will God do? He will exalt us. Why? Because we are His masterpiece.

So here's my challenge for you today: draw near to God. I can't or won't tell you how many times I've turned my back on God today. But I mourn. I repent. And I want to draw near to God. He will exalt you when you do come back to God. It is in our submission that the devil loses his

influence. It's in our closeness to God that the world does not look so great. It's in our love of Christ that our love of sin diminishes. So today, draw near to God and prepare to be lifted up by God like a father smiles and embraces his child.

When we draw near to God, we will win the day.