

# WARNING AGAINST THE LURING PLEASURES OF LIFE!

Ya'aqob/James 4:1-12

19<sup>th</sup> of the 8<sup>th</sup> month 2020/2021

Shalom all,

As part of this week's Sabbath readings, where we will be going through the last 3 chapters of **Bemidbar/Numbers**, and take a journey through the various stops and departure points of Yisra'el's journey through the Wilderness, we will also be reading the passage from **Ya'aqob/James 4:1-12**, which presents for us a clear warning against the dangers of seeking after the things that we should not be and reminds us of how we, in our sojourning as pilgrims, are to abstain from the fleshly lusts which battle against the being.

Kěpha reminds us, in:

**Kěpha Aleph/1 Peter 2:11-12** *"Beloved ones, I appeal to you as sojourners and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts which battle against the being, 12 having your behaviour among the nations good so that when they speak against you as evil-doers, let them, by observing your good works, esteem Elohim in a day of visitation."*

As we hear Kěpha's appeal, to abstain from fleshly lusts that battle against the life, we recognise how alive and important this appeal still is to us today, especially as we recognise how the pressures of a fleshly driven world are increasing daily, at an alarming rate. Being steadfast, in being faithful sojourners and ambassadors of the coming reign of our Master, is something that we must hold fast to, ensuring that our behaviour, whether in word or deed, is always a good witness of our Master and Elohim!

The Greek word that is translated as 'appeal' is the word **παρακαλέω parakaleō** – **Strong's G3870** which means, *'call near, invite, invoke, exhort, encourage, appeal, beg'*.

This word is used in a variety of forms, for example:

- a) when summoning someone to an action that is required;
- b) to beseech others for an urgent response to help;
- c) to 'exhort', as in the context used to encourage soldiers headed for battle; as well as
- d) to 'comfort and encourage', especially in times of hardships and grief.

Kěpha's appeal, is certainly a call to action which calls for an urgent response on the part of the hearers of his appeal, as well as an exhortation of encouragement to the beloved faithful, to keep standing firm in the belief, amidst the raging pressures of life that are manifested in fleshly lusts that arise amidst a consumer driven world!

The Greek word that is translated as 'abstain' is **ἀπέχομαι apechomai** – **Strong's G567** which means, *'abstain, hold oneself of, refrain, hold back, keep off, be away, keep distant'*.

The Greek word that is used here for 'fleshly' is **σαρκικός sarkikos** – **Strong's G4559** which means, *'pertaining to the flesh, fleshly, carnal, material things'*, and is used to describe that which is governed by the sinful human nature and not by the Spirit of Elohim.

In other words, it is used to describe those who walk according to the flesh and not the Spirit, which indicates those who walk according to whatever seems right in their own eyes, as opposed to walking in humble submission, and loving obedience, to the Torah and commands of Elohim!

The Greek root word that is translated as ‘lusts’ is ἐπιθυμία *epithumia* – Strong’s G1939 which means, ‘*lust, desire, lust after, desiring what is forbidden, deep desire and longing for, coveting*’.

Sha’ul reminds us of our need to renounce the lusts which battle against us:

**Titos/Titus 2:11-12** “**For the saving Gift of Elohim has appeared to all men, <sup>12</sup> instructing us to renounce wickedness and worldly lusts, and to live sensibly, righteously, and reverently in the present age**”

What I also want to make clear here, is that the ‘lusts of the flesh’ can also be applied to that “deep longing and desire to have things changed and different”, or “the coveting of a different circumstance” and, in so doing, will cause one to do whatever it takes to achieve it, even if it means departing from the prescribed path of set-apartness!

Lusting in the flesh, is not only the longing for and desiring of the things, that you may tend to day dream about, but it can also be the drive to make the change to one’s fleshly circumstances, that can so quickly cause one to set aside the commands of Elohim and conveniently neglect a proper obedience to His Torah, in order to satisfy those fleshly needs and demands!

The Greek word that is translated as ‘battle’ is the word στρατεύω *strateuō* – Strong’s G4754 which means, ‘*to make war, to fight*’.

The Greek word that is translated as ‘life’ is ψυχή *psuchē* – Strong’s G5590 which means, ‘*breath, soul, heart, mind, life, being*’, which is the Greek equivalent to the Hebrew word נֶפֶשׁ *nephesh* – Strong’s’ H5315 which is ‘*a soul, a living being, the inner being of a man*’.

Sha’ul tells us that though we walk in the flesh, we do not battle according to the flesh:

**Qorintiyim Bět/2 Corinthians 10:3-6** “**For though we walk in the flesh, we do not fight according to the flesh. <sup>4</sup> For the weapons we fight with are not fleshly but mighty in Elohim for overthrowing strongholds, <sup>5</sup> overthrowing reasonings and every high matter that exalts itself against the knowledge of Elohim, taking captive every thought to make it obedient to the Messiah, <sup>6</sup> and being ready to punish all disobedience, when your obedience is complete.**”

Sha’ul is basically saying the same thing as Kěpha, and that is that we are to stand firm in making sure that our obedience is made complete, by having our behaviour among the nations good, as we walk in the Torah of our Master and Elohim, in a world that wages a fleshly war against a called for set-apartness, which our Elohim desires!

**We are to live sensibly, righteously, and reverently in the present age!**

The gift of life teaches us through the Torah how to strip away that which does not belong and disciplines us to be able to bear fruit of righteousness, if we are actually willing to be trained by it! (**Ib’rim/Hebrews 12:11**)

Ok, so it teaches us to say no to that which we must say no to, while at the same time it also teaches us how we are to live:

### **1 – SENSIBLY**

The Greek word that is translated as ‘sensibly’ is σωφρόνως *sōphronōs* – Strong’s G4996 which means, ‘*soberly, with sound mind, temperate, sensibly*’ and comes from the word σώφρων *sōphrōn* – Strong’s G4998 which means, ‘*sound mind, self-controlled, prudent*’ and this is made up of the two words –

- a) σώζω sōzō – Strong’s G4982 which means, ‘*safe, well, to save, preserved, restore*’ and  
 b) φρήν phrēn – Strong’s G5424 which means, ‘*midriff, heart, mind, thought*’ – in other word, ‘*thinking*’.

The word σώφρων sōphrōn is used 4 times Sha’ul’s letter to Titos (1:8; 2:2; 2:5; 2:6). We are to live sensibly, meaning that we are to be sober and have a sound mind, which takes captive the thoughts.

What is the opposite of being sober?

Being drunk!!!

Now, in terms of Scripture, we see that those who live lawlessly are living so, as the result of being drunk with the wine of whoring!

What is whoring?

It is to commit adultery!

In other words, whoring is what happens when one steps outside of the clear boundaries of a marriage covenant and breaks their commitment, through a complete disregard for the instructions that are given for living set-apart and showing true love to one’s betrothed!

Living sensibly in this age, can only be done with a renewed mind, which diligently meditates on the Torah day and night and does not turn aside, or wander, from the Torah!

## 2 – RIGHTEOUSLY

The Greek word that is translated as ‘*righteously*’ is δικαίως dikaiōs – Strong’s G1346 which means, ‘*righteously, just, upright*’, and we know from Scripture, what the clear definition of righteousness is:

**Debarim/Deuteronomy 6:25 “And it is righteousness for us when we guard to do all this command before יהוה our Elohim, as He has commanded us.”**

The Hebrew word that is used here for ‘*righteousness*’ is תְּשׁוּבָה tseḏaqah – Strong’s H6666 which means, ‘*righteousness, righteous acts, merits, righteous deeds*’ and is the feminine form of תְּשׁוּבָה tseḏeq – Strong’s H6664 which means, ‘*righteous, just, righteousness*’.

**Mishlĕ/Proverbs 12:28 “In the way of righteousness is life, and in its pathway there is no death.”**

**Hazon/Revelation 22:11-12 “He who does wrong, let him do more wrong; he who is filthy, let him be more filthy; he who is righteous, let him be more righteous; he who is set-apart, let him be more set-apart. 12 “And see, I am coming speedily, and My reward is with Me, to give to each according to his work.”**

The Greek word that is translated here as ‘*be more*’ is the word ποιέω poieō – Strong’s G4160 which means, ‘*to make, do, accomplish, keep, work, acts*’, and is translated as ‘*does*’ in:

**Mattithyahu/Matthew 7:24 “Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine, and does them, shall be like a wise man who built his house on the rock”**

A derivative of this word, is the verb ποιητής poiētēs – Strong’s G4163 which means, ‘*a doer, a maker*’, which is translated three times as ‘*doer*’ in:

Ya'aqob/James 1:22-25 "And become **doers** of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 Because if anyone is a hearer of the Word and not a **doer**, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror, 24 for he looks at himself, and goes away, and immediately forgets what he was like. 25 But he that looked into the perfect Torah, that of freedom, and continues in it, not becoming a hearer that forgets, but a **doer** of work, this one shall be blessed in his doing of the Torah."

We are to become doers of the Word and not just hearers only!

To 'be more' righteous implies a continual obedience to the proper hearing, guarding and doing of His commands, and in doing so, being diligent in cleansing ourselves from all defilement of the flesh!

In our immersion in the Name of יהושע Messiah we are cleansed and our conscience before Elohim is made clear and clean, which we are to keep clean through being more righteous!

Do not be like those who are becoming more wrong and more filthy, but rather be one who is being more righteous and more set-apart!

And if you are asking how you can do this, then the answer is clear – dig into the Word, look intently into the mirror of the Word and meditate day and night on the Torah of Elohim, holding fast to the true and narrow way, clinging to Elohim with both hands, so that you become stronger and stronger, perfecting your set-apartness before the face of Elohim!

### 3 – REVERENTLY

The Greek word that is translated as 'reverently' is εὐσεβῶς eusebōs – Strong's G2153 which means, '*reverently, piously, devout*' and expresses a pure devotion and commitment to the proper respect and honour that is to be given unto our Master and Elohim.

This gift of life instructs us how to live a sober and upright life, that walks in the fear of Elohim, with eyes fixed on Messiah, as we look forward with great expectancy His soon return – the return of our Beloved Saviour, who gave Himself for us, in order to redeem us from ALL LAWLESSNESS!

Now that we have established the need to be more righteous and make sure that we abstain from the fleshly lusts which battle against the being, let us take a closer look at the passage from **Ya'aqob/James 4:1-12**, and hear the clear warning that is being given, against the luring pleasures of life!

Please turn to **Ya'aqob/James 4:1-12** and read

As we go through this short passage, I must remind you that this letter that Ya'aqob wrote, was to the 12 tribes who were in the dispersion!

In other words, this letter was written to those who claimed to be part of Yisra'el and therefore, we take note that this very clear letter, was written to believers!

This in itself, ought to give many a sobering wake up call, as they may just be in danger of allowing the pleasure of this life to be that which hinders their ability in being set-apart and righteous!

In this section, Ya'aqob continues to present the themes of jealousy and strife, which are mentioned in Chapter 3:13-18:

**Ya'aqob/James 3:13-18 "Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by his good behaviour his works in meekness of wisdom. 14 But if you have bitter jealousy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast against and lie against the truth. 15 This is not the wisdom coming down from above, but it is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. 16 For where jealousy and self-seeking are, there is confusion and every foul deed. 17 But the wisdom from above is first clean, then peaceable, gentle, ready to obey, filled with compassion and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. 18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace."**

Ya'aqob is making a clear distinction between being wise and being foolish. The wise guard righteousness and have their minds set on that which is from above, giving no room for the folly of jealousy and selfishness, which results from the earthy demonic dangers of the lusts of the flesh.

Here in Chapter 4, he is not just speaking against the falsehood of foolish teachers who are not teaching righteousness, but he is now addressing problem of the jealousy and strife that was being seen within the whole community.

He highlights that envy and strife comes from within a community and herein, we are able to see a clear warning against the dangers of this creeping into the life of the body, and highlights how important it is for us to make sure that we are encouraging one another daily and building each other up in the set-apart belief, as opposed to falling prey to the dangerous lust of selfishness and pride!

He presents the question of where do fightings and strivings come from, as it was clear that this was a problem among the dispersion!

The Greek word that is translated as 'where' is **πόθεν pothen** – Strong's G4159 which is an interrogative adverb which means, '**from where, why, how?**' and can also have the meaning of '**from what place?**'.

He was basically saying, "Where did that come from?" and being written in the interrogative form, we can see the heart behind his words, which was designed to give a clear wake-up call to those who had been given over to the desire of satisfying the lusts of the flesh.

The fightings and strivings that were arising should not have been room to rise, yet this was a huge issue that was hindering the growth of the body. This same issue is one that is still happening today and is causing many to lack the ability of growing in maturity of the Word.

The Greek word that is translated as 'fightings' is **πόλεμος polemos** – Strong's G4171 which means, '**war, battles, quarrels, fights, fightings, dispute**'.

The Greek word that is translated as 'strivings' is **μάχη machē** – Strong's G3163 which means, '**fight, strive, dispute, conflict, quarrel**', and comes from the word **μάχομαι machomai** – Strong's G3164 meaning, '**to fight, argue, quarrel**'.

Sha'ul tells Timotiyos where strife comes from – it comes from verbal battles – and in speaking of 'one who teaches falsely', he says in:

**Timotiyos Aleph/1 Timothy 6:4 "he is puffed up, understanding none at all, but is sick about questionings and verbal battles from which come envy, strife, slander, wicked suspicions"**

We must steer clear of ‘**verbal battles**’ that lead to strife, slander and all forms of wickedness, for it will render our slaughterings as dysfunctional before our Master! Give no room to strife and put an end to it is the call for us today!

**Titos/Titus 3:9 “But keep away from foolish questions, and genealogies, and strife and quarrels about the Torah, for they are unprofitable and useless.”**

We would do well to heed this instruction – stay away from strife and quarrels about the Torah!

The enemy is always seeking an opportunity to get us into a heated debate and argument over matters of the Torah; and while we are to certainly proclaim the Truth and defend it and guard it by doing it, we must be careful not to fall into useless arguments that just cause strife, which many who refuse to hear the Truth want to do!

Give no room for strife!

Ya’aqob answers the question of where fightings and strivings comes from, by presenting an interrogative question which has the answer and is rhetorical, in a sense, as the obvious answer is given in the question being presented!

Fightings and strivings come the pleasures which battle against the members!

The Greek word that is translated as ‘**pleasures**’ is ἡδονή *hēdonē* – Strong’s G2237 which means, ‘**pleasures, lust, desire for pleasure, enjoyment**’, and comes from the word ἡδομαι *hēdomai* which means, ‘**to enjoy oneself, indulge in pleasures**’.

It is from this word that we get the English word ‘**hedonism**’ which, according to Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, is understood as meaning, ‘**the doctrine that pleasure or happiness is the sole or chief good in life**’.

There are so many people today, who live by this principle and are doing “whatever it takes” to indulge in fleshly pleasures and, in the process, they so quickly cast the Torah aside, as being something that is non-existent and unnecessary for them to follow.

Our Master clearly warns us, in the Parable of the Sower, that the pleasures of life is one of the things that choke out the Word:

**Luqas/Luke 8:14 “And that which fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with worries, and riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to perfection.”**

As we know from the Parable of the Sower, we are clearly told that the seed that is sown among the thorns is choked out, and we are told what the thorns are:

**Mattithyahu/Matthew 13:22 “And that sown among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the worry of this age and the deceit of riches choke the word, and it becomes fruitless.”**

**Marqos/Mark 4:18-19 “And others are those sown among thorns, these are they who hear the word, <sup>19</sup> and the worries of this age, and the deceit of riches, and the desires for other matters, entering in, choke the word, and it becomes fruitless.”**

From these three accounts we are able to clearly identify the thorns that choke out the Word and cause a heart to become fruitless!

The Greek word translated as ‘**worries**’ is μέριμνα *merimna* – Strong’s G3308 which means, ‘**cares, worries, anxieties**’.

This Greek word can also render the understanding of, **'being pulled in different directions'**. Have you ever felt like you are being pulled in so many directions, that you do not know which way to turn?

The sad reality, is that most of us often allow anxieties to consume us and when this does, then the very Word that has been deposited gets choked out – now think about this:

'choking' it is not a nice experience!!!

Worries choke out the good deposit.

We are to be on guard and watch, and be careful for this not to happen!

When one has any of these 'thorns' in one's heart, then the Word cannot be sown in, in order to bear the proper fruit of righteousness that is worthy of repentance!

The pleasures of life have a way of choking out the Word because the focus on the things of the flesh drown out and destroy the desire to grow and nurture the Truth of the Word, as the need to gratify the flesh fights against the Word that is sown on thorny ground!

Sha'ul tells us, in his letter to Titos, that we were once foolish, when we served fleshly pleasures, but now we have been redeemed from that futility and we should live like it:

**Titos/Titus 3:3-7 "For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, led astray, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in evil and envy, being hated and hating one another. 4 But when the kindness and the love of Elohim our Saviour toward man appeared, 5 He saved us, not by works of righteousness which we have done but according to His compassion, through the washing of rebirth, and renewal by the Set-apart Spirit, 6 which He poured out on us richly through יהושע Messiah our Saviour, 7 that having been declared right by His favour we should become heirs according to the expectation of everlasting life."**

It is the pleasures that battle against the members!

There is a battle which happens within the body and it is often an all-out war!

This battle which happens in the members can present to us a clear picture of the battles that rage within our own beings, as we seek to mind the matters above and not the earthly, as well as the divisions that arise between various members of the body, due to the jealousy and greed that rages in those who do not have what others have!

In **verse 2** he presents the clear resulting truth of the battles that rage and cause fighting and strife, and that is the desiring for that which one does not have!

The Greek word that is translated as 'desire' is the word ἐπιθυμέω epithumeō – Strong's **G1937** which means, **'desire, covet, lust, seek that which is forbidden'** and is translated as 'lusts' in

**Galatians/Galatians 5:17 "For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh. And these are opposed to each other, so that you do not do what you desire to do."**

How many of you have found yourself looking at, or seeking, things that you know you should not! This can cause sin, and can bring a breach in the wall, which can affect the entire assembly!!!

No matter how pretty the worldly ways of worship may appear – hear the clear call to be on guard against being drawn into desiring that which is not fitting for the House of Elohim!

For set-apartness befits the House, forever!

Do not get captivated by what the 'evil woman' (whore) does.

Titos/Titus 2:11-12 **“For the saving Gift of Elohim has appeared to all men, 12 instructing us to renounce wickedness and worldly lusts, and to live sensibly, righteously, and reverently in the present age”**

Romiyim/Romans 13:12-14 **“The night is far advanced, the day has come near. So let us put off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. 13 Let us walk becomingly, as in the day, not in wild parties and drunkenness, not in living together and indecencies, not in fighting and envy, 14 but put on the Master יְהוָה Messiah, and make no provision for the lusts of the flesh.”**

One of the greatest challenges that we face in this world today, is our continued ability to make sure that we make no provision for the lusts of the flesh, and what many believers often neglect to do, is take an account and assess their daily walk, perhaps due to the fast paced lifestyles of today, that keep many so consumed, in what can be classified as “a survival mode”.

When simply trying to survive each day and somehow face the demanding challenges to make ends meet, the danger of becoming distracted, and consumed, by the daily battles of life, is that one’s walk of set-apartness may often be in danger of being neglected.

Desiring what you do not have can lead to some very damaging battles and this is what we are to guard against, as we learn to be content in all circumstances!

The issue that was being addressed here was simple:

**You do not have what you want! As a result of this, you are jealous and are unable to get what you are lusting after. This burning lustful desire results in fighting, because you do not have and you do not have, because you do not ask!**

**You ask, but do not get what you want! Why?**

**Because your motives are wrong! You are seeking to satisfy fleshly desires and, in the process, are adulterating yourself away from the clear righteous path of set-apartness, having no reverence with contentment.**

When one seeks what the world has to offer, you are in severe danger of making yourself a friend of the world, and in the process, you end up making yourself an enemy of Elohim! Ya’aqob’s letter is a clear warning for us, to be reminded not to give in the cravings of the flesh and not fall prey to the luring distractions of the world.

We are to resist the temptations of the wicked one, who is constantly trying to lure us away from being steadfast and satisfied in the Master and His Truth!

The enemy seeks to lure one away through:

**1 – The lust of the eyes:** We do not have to look to far today, at the depravity of the worldly desires that are put on display, done so with the intent at causing people to covet and crave what they do not have. The visual stimulation that is being marketed before the eyes of all, is so dangerous, that many are being hypnotised by the fantasy of being better off, if they get what is being presented as something that is supposedly needed.

**2 – The lust of the flesh:** once the enemy can get your eyes set on the fleshly matters, then the desire to have that which one does not have, grows intensely, eating away at the inner being, through vain and empty reasonings as to why one would be better off if they obtained what was been put on offer. The flesh will tell you that you will feel much better if you have that which your eyes have been fixed upon.

This is a warning against turning our eyes away from being properly fixed in the Prince and Perfector of our belief!

**3 – The pride of life:** Once a persons eyes are taking off of the truth of the Word, reverence with contentment is lost and humility gets cast aside, as the need to humble oneself and submit to the Master and His Torah, gets pushed aside as the desire to gratify oneself takes over and selfishness takes control, and you begin to reassure yourself that you will be better off by having what is being put on display and will do whatever it takes to make sure you get what you want, even if it means hurting others along the way.

These 3 things are not of Elohim and are therefore to be guarded against, so that we can learn to be content and be satisfied with the wondrous blessing and provision our Master gives to us.

There is nothing wrong with being physically blessed, as it is a gift and blessing from Elohim, but when we lose sight of our ability to give thanks in all circumstances, we may just be in danger of setting our eyes on that which actually does not satisfy, despite the raging war that the flesh presents!

Ya'aqob presents to us the clear solution, to these dangerous battles that arise:

### **1 – Subject yourself to Elohim!**

The Greek word that is translated as 'subject' is ὑποτάσσω hupotassō – Strong's G5293 which means, *'to place or rank under, to subject, to obey, put in subjection, to submit to one's control, to yield to one's admonition or advice'*.

This is also used as a Greek military term meaning, *"to arrange [troop divisions] in a military fashion under the command of a leader"*.

In non-military use, it is used to describe, *"a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, and carrying a burden"*.

The proud are resisted while the humble are favoured!

Ya'aqob then goes on to tell us to subject ourselves to Elohim, resist the devil and he will flee from us!

Here we can see the clear link between humility and proper subjection versus pride which resists and rejects the need to submit and obey!

Our Master and Elohim, יהושע Messiah, is our Commander and Chief unto whom we are to faithfully subject ourselves in complete humility, as we walk in and stay in Him through the diligent loving obedience of guarding His commands, which is righteousness for us!!!

As we subject ourselves to Elohim and put aside all evil, deceit, hypocrisy, envy and all forms of corrupt speech, and draw near to our Master and Rock of our deliverance, we are then built up, as living stones, into a spiritual house and dwelling Place for the Most-High, in order to humbly serve faithfully, as a set-apart priesthood.

Building our lives in any other way, that contradicts or compromises complete set-apartness through stubbornness and pride, will cause us to be destroyed.

True humility causes one to submit to and be in subjection to the commands of our Master and Elohim.

Resistance to faithful subjection to walking in His Torah and commands reflects a heart that is full of pride and will be resisted by Elohim!

The Greek word ὑποτάσσω hupotassō – Strong’s G5293 comes from two words:

- 1) ὑπό hupo – Strong’s G5259 which means ‘*under, in subjection to*’, and
- 2) τάσσω tássō – Strong’s G5021 which means, ‘*to place, set, appoint, order, arrange, ordain, establish, designate*’.

What becomes very clear in the Greek is that in true humility is seen in one’s complete subjection to being under the orders and commands of our Master and Elohim.

Humility does not resist or cast away the need to submit to and walk in the commands but rather walks in subjection to that which has been established and designated for us to do!

## 2 – Resist the Devil

The Greek word translated as ‘resist’ is ἀνθίστημι anthistēmi – Strong’s G436 which means, ‘*to set against, withstand, oppose, resist*’, which comes from the two words:

- 1) - ἀντί anti – Strong’s G473 which is a primary preposition that means, ‘*over against, opposite, instead of*’ and
- 2) - ἵστημι histēmi – Strong’s G2476 which means, ‘*to make to stand, to stand firm, be established, stand upright, stand ready and prepared, be of a steadfast mind, to uphold and sustain the authority of something*’.

What we can see from this clear instruction, is that we are to be against the established order of the devil and his authority over the things of the flesh!

One cannot properly resist the devil if they have not properly subjecting themselves to Elohim. If you do not take a firm stand in the Master and stay in Him, then your feet will be found to be standing on the sandy ground of the enemy.

When you resist the devil, he will flee from you! He will flee from you only if you are resisting him from the secure position of being rooted and grounded in the love of the Master and are properly armed in His Torah, equipped to stand and after having done all, keep standing!

## 3 – Draw near to Elohim

When we subject ourselves to Elohim and His clear prescribed order, through proper obedience to His Torah, and we are properly dressed in His armour, then we will be able to confidently resist the devil and not only have victory, but will be confident in our ability at drawing near to our Master, having our hearts sprinkled and cleansed from a wicked conscience!

The Greek word that is translated here as ‘draw near’ is ἐγγίζω eggizō – Strong’s G1448 which means, ‘*to make near, come near, approach, draw near, come close*’.

Ya’aqob was, in essence, giving us a reminder that we are to cleanse our hearts and minds when drawing near to Elohim and we learn how important it is for us to not bring in ‘uncleanness’ into fellowship, but rather, we are to have hearts and minds that have been cleansed and set-apart unto Elohim. This, in many ways, is a warning against bringing in disruption, division and rebellion into the gathering of the set-apart ones, on יהוה’s Appointed Times!

## 4 – Clean up your life

The call to cleanse hands and purify hearts, is a clear call to be done with the pleasures of the flesh and be done with lawlessness and selfishness and pride, by making sure that our hands are cleansed to guard the Truth. Hands, in Scripture, is often used as a clear metaphor for our works and actions. In other words, what we do, and so, we are therefore able to see what Ya'aqob is teaching us here.

We are to make sure that we are guarding righteousness and be done with sin and lawlessness.

The bronze laver was used in the Tabernacle, for the priests to wash their hands and feet, where they would take water from the bronze laver and wash their hands and feet, before doing service in the Tabernacle. This is a clear picture of how we are to allow the Word to be that which washes us and causes us to serve in the complete perfection of set-apartness and truth. As we look intently into the mirror of the Word, we are to make sure that we allow the Word to wash us, so that our works of obedience can reveal that we have hands that have been cleansed.

The Torah is to be in our hearts and in our mouths, to do it and having hearts cleansed, also speaks of having hearts that are being properly tilled, so that the Good Word that is planted in, through a proper daily meditation thereof, has the ability to grow and not be choked out by the pleasure of life, but rather, be able to grow and bear the peaceable fruit of righteousness, reflecting the clear fruit that is worthy of repentance!

When we loathe our old ways, we won't fall back to them! True repentance entails a turning away from the false and turning to the Truth, hating the evil and false way and not finding pleasure in what we once did in error.

#### **5 – Humble yourself – let go of pride!**

The Greek word that is translated as 'humble yourself' is the verb ταπεινώω *tapeinoō* – Strong's G5013 which means, '*to make low, be brought low, be humbled*', and we see this verb being used in:

**Mattithyahu/Matthew 18:4** "Whoever then humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the reign of the heavens."

**Mattithyahu/Matthew 23:12** "And whoever exalts himself shall be humbled, and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted."

This verb is also used to describe the pure humility of our Master:

**Pilipiyim/Philippians 2:8** "And having been found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, death even of a stake."

We would do well to follow our Master's example and walk even as He walked!

We either walk in humility and shall be lifted up by our Master or try to exalt and boast in ourselves and try to be important, which will cause us to be put low and humbled by Elohim!

Shelomoh teaches us the following, in:

**Mishlê/Proverbs 29:23** "The pride of man brings him low, but the humble in spirit obtains esteem."

The parable highlights the clear difference between pride and humility.

The Hebrew word used here for 'pride' is גָּאָוָה *ga'avah* – Strong's H1346 which means, '*majesty, pride, arrogance, haughtiness, swelling pride*', and comes from the root verb גָּאָה *gaah* – Strong's H1342 meaning, '*to rise up, grow, lifted, risen, highly exalted*'.

Tehillah/Psalm 31:23 “Love יהוה, all you His kind ones! For יהוה guards the trustworthy ones, and exceedingly repays the doer of **pride**.”

Tsephanyah/Zephaniah 3:11-13 “In that day you shall not be put to shame for any of your deeds in which you have transgressed against Me, for then I shall remove from your midst your **proud** exulting ones, and you shall no more be haughty in My set-apart mountain. 12 But I shall leave in your midst an oppressed and poor people, and they shall trust in the Name of יהוה. 13 The remnant of Yisra’el shall do no unrighteousness and speak no falsehood, nor is a tongue of deceit found in their mouth. For they shall feed their flocks and lie down, with none to frighten them.”

The Hebrew word used here for ‘humble’ is שָׁפַל shaphal – Strong’s H8217 which means, ‘*low, abased, humble*’, and comes from the root verb שָׁפַל shaphel – Strong’s H8213 which means, ‘*to be or become low, to be abased, brought low, laid down, humbled, set in a lower place*’.

The humble obtains esteem and the Hebrew word that is translated as ‘obtains’ is תָּמַךְ tamak - Strong’s H8551 which means, ‘*to uphold, retain, hold up, support*’, which is used in:

Tehillah/Psalm 41:12 “And I, You **uphold** me in my integrity, and set me before Your face forever.”

יהוה upholds and supports the righteous in their integrity, and this we can be sure of!

The Hebrew word that is translated as ‘esteem’ is כָּבוֹד kabod – Strong’s H3519 which means, ‘*honour, esteem, reverence, splendid*’, which comes from the root verb כָּבַד kabed – Strong’s H3513 which means, ‘*to be heavy, weighty or burdensome, to give high esteem and respect and honour*’, and is often translated as ‘praise’ that is to be given to יהוה!

In **Mishlĕ/Proverbs 3:35** we are told that the wise inherit esteem and this is symbolically saying that the wise will be lifted up and receive the just reward for righteousness, in the day of the esteem of Elohim, whereas the fools will receive shame and be disgraced!

## **6 – Submit to the True Judge!**

Ya’aqob makes it clear that we have One Judge and we would do well to remember that, as we submit to His right-rulings and His Torah, which is our life!

When we take heed of the clear warning against the luring pleasures of life, by properly submitting to our Master and Elohim, guarding to do all He has commanded us and being steadfast, in keeping our eyes fixed on Him, then we will be able to stand and be victorious against the battles of this life, that rage in our members!

We have been given a perfect Torah to keep us completely safe and secure in our Master, who gives us all we need for life and reverence, and knowing this, ought to cause us to be vigilant against the dangerous luring tactics of the pleasures of life, which only harm and divide.

We are called to be built up in set-apartness and, in doing so, we are to build each other up in the most set-apart belief. Therefore, in this clear warning against the luring pleasures of life, hear the call to be steadfast and secure, in Him who gives us all we need to serve Him and worship Him, in Spirit and Truth!

**Timotiyos Aleph/1 Timothy 6:6-8 “But reverence with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought naught into the world, and it is impossible to take any out. 8 When we have food and covering, we shall be satisfied with these.”**

**Ya’aqob/James 1:21-22 “Therefore put away all filthiness and overflow of evil, and receive with meekness the implanted Word, which is able to save your lives. 22 And become doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”**

The Greek word that is used here for ‘implanted’ is ἔμφυτος *emphutos* – Strong’s G1721 which means, ‘*engrafted, implanted by nature, implanted by another’s instruction*’, which is constructed from two Greek words:

- 1) ἐν *en* – Strong’s G1722 which is a primary preposition denoting a fixed position (in place, time or state) meaning, ‘*in or on, with, by*’; and
- 2) φύω *phuō* – Strong’s G5453 which is a verb meaning, ‘*to bring forth, produce, spring up, to be born*’.

What we are able to clearly recognise, is that our Teacher of Righteousness has come and caused His Word to be engrafted upon our hearts and, by His Spirit, He has implanted the Good Deposit that must spring up and produce the fruit of righteousness!

As we continue to seek first the reign of Elohim and His righteousness, we must make sure that we do not sow His good seed among thorns that choke out the Word, but keep our hearts pure, clean and undefiled, as we put away all filthiness and overflow of evil!

This we can only do when we become doers of the Word and not hearers only!!!

How is your heart? Are there any thorns that choke out the Truth present?

Thorns of worry, deceit, pleasure of life, selfishness, pride, fears or other matters of this life?

If the heart is left untilled a few thorns will quickly become a dangerous life-choking bush that will restrict any fruit worthy of repentance from being brought forth!

## **WARNING AGAINST THE LURING PLEASURES OF LIFE!**

Taking heed to this warning, will cause us to be diligent in breaking up the ground of our hearts, get the thorns out and sow righteousness, as we receive with meekness the implanted Word, in order to bear much fruit as we stay in the Master and be done with sin and the pleasures of life!

יהוה *Yehovah* bless you and guard you; יהוה *Yehovah* make His face shine upon you and show favour to you; יהוה *Yehovah* lift up His face upon you and give you shalom!