# Submit, Resist, and Draw Near

Pastor Mark Johnson on Repentance, Spiritual Security, and the Promise of God’s Presence

**Pastor Mark Johnson** | Friday, October 16, 2026 | Host: Mark Burns

## Program Summary

In this Friday room-of-friends edition of Mark & Friends, Pastor Mark Johnson moves from the previous studies of pride and humility in James 4:6 into James 4:7–10. He asks what genuine repentance means and describes it as a change of mind and purpose that produces a real turning from sin toward God. Repentance begins with acknowledging God's holiness and receiving the mercy offered through Jesus. Pastor Mark then traces a practical sequence for spiritual maturity and security: submit to God without reserving areas of life for self-rule; resist the devil and temptation, sometimes with the help of accountable Christian friends; and draw near to God, trusting His promise to draw near in return. Mark Burns highlights the difference between conviction, which draws people toward Jesus and real change, and condemnation, which leaves them feeling defeated. The study concludes by reflecting on how God's presence transformed biblical figures and inviting every listener to walk in that presence daily. The discussion is scheduled to continue the following Friday, October 23.

## Key Takeaways

• Repentance is more than regret: it changes my mind, direction, and actions.

• Awareness of God's holiness and my need for mercy can lead me toward Jesus rather than away from Him.

• Submitting to God means surrendering my will, attitudes, desires, priorities, and excuses.

• Singing about surrender is not a substitute for obeying God in daily life.

• Conviction moves me to turn and grow; condemnation merely weighs me down.

• James places submission before resistance: I cannot rely only on my own willpower to fight temptation.

• Accountable Christian friends can help me resist persistent patterns and remain faithful.

• A repeated struggle is different from a cherished sin I refuse to surrender; keep fighting and seeking God's help.

• Drawing near to God is a promise of relationship and His sustaining presence, not just religious activity.

• God's presence transformed Jacob, Gideon, Samuel, David, Isaiah, Peter, and Paul.

• Daily spiritual security is cultivated through surrender, resistance, and drawing near to God.

• The invitation of James 4:8 is for the listening friend as well as the people gathered in the studio.

## Scripture References

• James 4:6–10

• James 4:7

• James 4:8

• Romans 8:1

• 2 Corinthians 5:17

• Hebrews 4:14–16

• 1 Peter 5:8–9

• Philippians 2:12–13

• Psalm 73:28

• Genesis 32:24–30

## Quote of the Day

“Conviction draws you closer to God.” — Mark Burns

## Broadcast Notes

The opening Scripture, James 4:7–10, is read by Frank Lesko, whom Mark thanks for attending during a busy campaign season. Pastor Mark Johnson notes that the group spent two previous Fridays on James 4:6 and expects to spend this and the following Friday on verses 7–10. He begins by asking the room to define repentance; participants describe a decisive change of direction involving action. Pastor Mark distinguishes Christian repentance from merely changing a habit: it includes a new awareness of sin, openness to God's mercy, and a genuine turning away from what previously seemed acceptable. The group discusses why some believers remain faithful while others drift away, including the role of habits, loneliness, and desires not surrendered to God. Pastor Mark presents submission as unconditional surrender of will, attitudes, desires, and goals. He illustrates the everyday implications in church participation, honesty, faithfulness, kindness, and loving enemies. Mark Burns then distinguishes Spirit-led conviction from condemnation: conviction draws toward Jesus and changes behavior, while condemnation can leave a person feeling defeated. The next command is to resist the devil; several participants stress the importance of submitting first rather than attempting resistance in self-reliance, and they commend accountability from other believers. The final movement is to draw near to God. Pastor Mark reflects on the transforming presence of God in biblical lives and invites listeners to seek that presence each day. Mark closes by previewing the October 23 continuation and directing listeners to GreatNewsRadio.org and WLUJ.org.

## ❤■ Practical Applications

• Ask God to show me one area where I have offered only partial surrender.

• Name a behavior I have excused and agree with God's Word about it.

• When convicted, move toward Jesus in confession and repentance rather than hiding in shame.

• Write down the difference between feeling guilty and actually changing direction.

• Before resisting a temptation, pray, 'Lord, I submit this desire to You.'

• Invite a trusted Christian friend to pray with me and ask about a recurring struggle.

• Review whether my commitments and private choices match the worship words I sing.

• Choose one concrete act of honesty, kindness, faithfulness, or love for an enemy.

• Spend unhurried time in Scripture and prayer, intentionally drawing near to God.

• Remember a season when God's presence strengthened or changed me and thank Him.

• Use James 4:7–8 as a short prayer whenever I feel spiritually weak.

• Encourage a friend who is struggling that continued repentance and dependence on God are worthwhile.

## Today's Challenge

For seven days, begin with James 4:7–8. Each morning pray three sentences: 'Lord, I submit myself to You.' 'Give me strength to resist what draws me away from You.' 'As I draw near, help me recognize Your presence.' Identify one specific area of surrender, take one practical step to resist an unhealthy pattern, and spend at least a few quiet minutes drawing near

through prayer and Scripture. At week's end, reflect on how God has helped you respond.

## Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for Your mercy and the promise that when I draw near to You, You draw near to me. Search my heart and reveal where I have made excuses for sin or held back part of my life from Your authority. Give me a repentant heart—not merely regret over what I have done, but a willingness to change my mind, direction, and actions. Teach me to submit my will, attitudes, desires, goals, and habits to You. When Your Spirit convicts me, help me turn toward Jesus instead of hiding in condemnation. Give me strength to resist temptation and humility to seek the encouragement and accountability of faithful believers. When I fall short, keep me returning to You rather than giving up. I want to know more than facts about You; I want to walk in Your presence and be sustained by Your grace. Draw me close, shape my character, and make my life a faithful reflection of Jesus. In His name, Amen.

## About Today's Speaker

Pastor Mark Johnson serves at Calvary Church in Springfield and regularly facilitates the Friday Mark & Friends verse-by-verse Bible study. His teaching combines careful attention to Scripture, pastoral experience, everyday illustrations, and honest conversation. In this study of James 4:7–10, he emphasizes repentance, surrender to God, resistance to temptation, and the life-changing promise of God's presence.

## About Today's Host

Mark Burns is General Manager of the WLUJ Family of Stations and Great News Radio Network and host of Mark & Friends. For decades, he has served in Christian radio and ministry, welcoming pastors, teachers, authors, and everyday believers to conversations that encourage listeners to know Jesus, grow in Scripture, and live faithfully. In this Friday edition, he hosts the room of friends and joins Pastor Mark Johnson in applying James 4 to daily life.

## Proofread Broadcast Transcript

We're glad you're here. We're glad you're here. Fellowship is sweeter, knowing you're near.

It's so good to see you. We hope that it's clear. Everyone loves you.

We're glad you're here. We're glad you're here. We're glad you're here.

Fellowship is sweeter, knowing you're near. It's so good to see you. We hope that it's clear.

Everyone loves you. We're glad you're here. Reading from James, chapter 4, verses 7 through 10.

But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says, God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Submit yourselves, then, to God.

Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God, and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts.

You double-minded, grieve, mourn, and wail. Change your laughter to mourning, and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

That was James, chapter 4, verses 7 through 10. Oh, magnify the Lord with me. Let us exalt his name together.

It is finally Friday, October 16, 2026. Oh, listening friend, do you feel prayed up? I hope you're going to be encouraged by today's broadcast, as this room of friends has prayed for you, that God would use what's shared and said to his glory, but to fortify you on your faith journey, to encourage you, to bless you, to maybe give you a lighter step today, maybe through some humor or storytelling, but most importantly, to recognize that God loves you, he cares for you, he has a plan and purpose for your life. It's kind of incredible that the sovereign God of the universe cares enough to want to be working in and through you today, but that's a truth that's in the Bible, and he loves you, and so let's see what Pastor Mark Johnson of Calvary Church

here in Springfield has to say, but I know he's going to talk about repentance, but one of my favorite all-time verses is James 4, 8, about drawing near to God, and he'll draw near to you, and it's a promise in the scripture that if you will entertain the idea that God exists, now many of you know he exists and follow him, but if you're a seeker today and you've never come into that relationship with Jesus, well, just entertain the idea that God cares, that he wants you to draw near to him, and trust me, if you do that, he'll reveal himself to you in special ways.

Maybe it's from a neighbor or a friend. Maybe it's through the Bible teaching this Sunday when you're in church. Maybe it's as you read scripture.

Maybe it's something you hear on the radio, but he will reveal because it says if you draw near to God, he'll draw near to you. So Mark, that's a great promise, and I can't wait to hear how you're going to divide James 4, 7-10, and oh, by the way, I'm super blessed because the person reading that opening scripture is a senator candidate, Frank Lesko, and I don't get political during Mark & Friends, but here's a guy that's in the midst of a busy campaigning season that is carving out time to be a part of today's event, and so thank you, Frank, for putting this as a priority in your very busy schedule to be with us today for Mark & Friends. All right, Pastor Mark, there's my shout-out for Frank who opened up reading James 4, 7-10.

What should we learn? As we think about this, the last couple of weeks we looked at James 4, 6, and we kind of stayed right on verse 6 for two Fridays, and today we want to look at these verses, and we'll look at them this Friday and next Friday and try to dig out of them what God is saying to us, and I believe what he's really speaking to us about is this pathway to spiritual security in your life of really being in a right relationship with him. So here's the question I want to start with for those in this room, and those of you who are listening, you can kind of begin to think about what this word means to you. What is repentance? What is repentance? Does anybody have a definition of what repentance is to you? It's an extreme change in direction.

Okay, good. Which includes action. There you go.

Isn't it a turning away? Look in one way and now look in the other way. It's to change one's mind and purpose. You can repent of a lot of things.

Repentance isn't just a spiritual term. I can repent of drinking soda. I can decide I'm not going to drink soda anymore.

I'm done with it. It's not good for me. I'm done, or I can repent of eating sweets.

I can say I'm not going to do that anymore. There's all kinds of things you can turn from and say, well, my doctor says I need to do this. I better do it, and you can repent of it.

Christian repentance comes from a true sense of one's own guilt and sinfulness. It comes from an openness to God's mercy because of that sense of guilt. This is where everything starts when the Spirit moves on me.

As I become aware of the holiness of God and the impurity of my life, and I want to change from that, I want to turn from it, and I recognize that God in His relationship with me allows me to do that. Through His Son, He's offered mercy to me. What happens in that true spiritual repentance is an actual turning from it, an actual dislike for it.

Maybe before, you loved doing this thing, and now because you've repented before God and asked for His help, and He's moved in your life, you look back on it. I was talking to a close friend yesterday, and they told me something about their past, and they said to me, Pastor, I've never told anybody that. I've never told anybody about that.

I'm so embarrassed by it. I'm so heartbroken that that was ever a part of my past. And that's what happens when we come to real repentance is the Spirit of God moves in us, and we turn from things, and we find that we don't like things we used to like.

We don't excuse things we used to excuse, and we turn towards things that are really, really good for us and in His kingdom. So as you think about it, I've been thinking about a lot of people that I've known who seem to make it in faith. They have a life of faith.

Then I begin to think about some that I've known that have dropped out of faith. What is the difference between the person? I can't define it. Well, that one's a pastor, and that one isn't.

I've seen pastors lose their faith. That one was a choir member who was here for 30 years, and that one was only here for six months, and I've seen the 30-year-old one lose their faith. What puts us in a place where we walk away from our faith? Anybody have a thought on that? I would say whatever habits that you get into.

It's like Apostle Paul said, I've run the race. He didn't stop running that long-distance race and decide two-thirds into it. I'm done with it.

He continued. It's a moment-by-moment continuation. I have found that there are many reasons that people walk away from faith.

I've seen people, I'll give you a couple of those. I've seen people who were just embedded in the church, and then their husband or their wife died, and a year later, two years later, they're marrying someone who isn't committed to God, and somebody you thought would never walk away from faith walks away from faith because they want to marry this person. They're lonely, and they want to marry this person.

Sometimes it's just something I really want to do, and I don't surrender that to God. What we have here in this Scripture that we've read, I believe is a step-by-step process of true repentance, and I believe if we follow this process, daily in our life, we'll find the foundation for spiritual maturity and spiritual security in our life. You'll find God's promises, and you'll find God's presence, and it starts off with these words.

Submit yourselves, then, to God. When we become aware in our spirit that God is real, that He is our Creator, that we have lived in rebellion to His purpose, we have a choice to make. Will I deny that experience? Will I deny what I've come to understand? Or will I make that experience that I need to get right with God, and I need to turn towards Him? That is what most people who make it to heaven do, is they've got to turn to God.

We've got to do away with our excuses for sin and commit ourselves to doing what God would have us to do. Submit is a hard word. It's a hard word for many of us because it's so total.

Submit. What that means is this. I don't get any say in the matter.

If I'm submitted to God, I don't get any say in the matter. It is a surrender of my life. Submission is a surrender of my will.

It's a surrender of my attitudes. It's a surrender of my desires. It's a surrender of my goals.

It's total surrender. It's unconditional surrender. We don't come to God and say, well, I'll come to you, but I've got to keep these four things.

I'll serve you, but I've got to have this in my life. No, if we come to God, it's submit to Him. I come to God and say, I don't know how to handle anything.

I thought I did. I don't. Show me how to submit totally to you.

This is the first step of repentance. It's submission. There are no buts in submission.

There are no excuses in submission. There's no ways to look at it differently than God in submission. We are submitted to God.

If God says, don't eat peanut butter anymore, then we don't eat peanut butter anymore. Just grow your hair long. If He says, drive a stick shift from now on, I'm glad He didn't say any of those things, aren't you? Here's what He says.

He says, go to church. Get involved with the body of believers. Grow in my word.

Serve one another. Love one another. Be kind to one another.

Become the body of Christ in this world. He says to us, worship me. Put me first in your life.

Don't just sing songs about me being first. Live with me first. A lot of people go to church on Sunday morning and they sing lies.

I worship you. You are my Lord. I give you everything.

They're lying because they walk right out the door and He's not their Lord. They haven't given Him everything. They're not submitted to Him.

They've been sitting in church singing a song that moves me. It should move you to conviction. What God says to do, we do.

He says, be honest. We're honest. He says, don't steal.

We don't steal. We don't make an excuse. I'm taking this because I deserve it.

I'm taking this from Mom and Dad because they gave that to my brother and they didn't give me anything, so I have a right to take this. No. No stealing.

No stealing. I'm faithful. I'm faithful to my word.

I'm faithful to my commitments. I'm faithful to what I say in life. Then it gets really tough.

Those things are hard on their own. He says, love your enemies. Bless those who curse you.

Wow. That's really hard. Mark, I'm glad you brought up the word conviction because I think before we can repent, there has to be that conviction, but I'd like you to speak to the listener.

There's a difference between conviction and condemnation. I always describe it as conviction draws you closer to God. You see yourself as flawed.

You need the Savior. So healthy conviction, Holy Spirit-inspired conviction is great. We should welcome conviction because it helps us get refined and draw to Jesus.

So I like healthy conviction, but condemnation, it'll have us turn away from God and Satan brings condemnation. So for people to repent, doesn't that conviction, healthy conviction have to come? I believe that's a gift of the Spirit of God in us. When He moves on us, He convicts us and we become convicted.

We become not just beat up by it, but we become convinced this is the right way. It's a conviction. So I don't lie because it is a conviction of the Spirit in me that I'm not supposed to lie.

I don't cheat on my wife, not only because I promised her something, but I have a conviction in my heart that I promised her something and I'm going to be faithful to her. No matter what opportunities come our way, we keep our conviction. Condemnation makes me feel bad, but I can turn right around and do it again the next day.

Conviction makes me turn. So here's a warning. The enemy looks for the point where you don't want to submit.

He tries to dig that up. You don't want to submit your anger? You don't want to submit your mouth? You don't want to submit lust? Satan tests our submission and if he finds that place where you refuse to submit, he's going to drive that point home and work on the foundation of your spiritual security. So there has to come this point where I just say, God, whatever you say, I submit to you.

Now here's the second part. Resist the devil. Resist him.

It's just as simple as that. Resist the temptation. Go against it.

I've got to resist the temptation and submit to God. So in the acts of my life, I've got to realize the things I can't give into. Sometimes to resist the devil, I've got to get people around me that know me and hold me accountable for my words or for my temper or for my habit or for something in my life.

I've got to get them around me to help me. I'm also thinking that this submission and then resisting, this is a call to action. God's saying, okay, you're under conviction now.

You know what you're doing is wrong. Now submit to me because you're not going to be able to do this without me working in you. This resisting the devil, it says resist the devil.

It doesn't say you're going to be successful. You're probably going to fall on your face a whole bunch of times, but by trying to do that, you are demonstrating your sincerity that you really are trying to submit and then come near to God and he will come

near to you. This is a step-by-step process.

So you submit, then you resist, and God will come and give you the strength to do it. So if there's something that you're trying to get rid of, some sin that's got its teeth in you and you can't let go of it, there's hope. You're like, I can't get rid of this.

That's why it's called a besetting sin. It's got a hold of me. But God promises that he will help you through this.

You will be able to get rid of this, but you have to keep on going through the process. Submit over and over again. There's a difference between the thing in my life that I'm just holding on to and the thing in my life that I'm fighting.

I'm called to resistance. I'm called to fight it. I'm called to stand against it.

And so we have to be a people who know that our God is watching and he's with us, but we have to resist. I think Dan had a good point. I think so many of us get this backwards.

Verse 7, we resist first. We try to fight this temptation or whatever it is. I did that for years as a young Christian only to fail, because we can't do it in our own strength.

But we submit and then we resist and then we have the strength. We try to get it backwards. We try to resist and then submit, but that's not how it goes.

Part of the first step of that submission is to agree with God, this is wrong. This is wrong. I don't make excuses for it.

My temper, when I blow up at my wife and scream and yell at her, this is wrong. I shouldn't be doing this. This is just dead wrong.

I can't act this way. And there comes that moment of recognizing and submitting to the truth instead of saying, well, my dad always yelled at my mom or that's just the way my people are. We have hot tempers and we blow up.

No, we look at it and we say, I'm supposed to be a new creation. That's wrong. It's clearly revealed the word is wrong.

And I'm submitting the authority of how I feel about things to God. Now, God helped me to overcome what's been a habit in my life, what's been natural in my life. In the Amplified Version, submit to the authority of God.

That's what we're doing. And why does Satan come or our enemy come? And knowing our weak points, as you said, that's where he'll tempt us because I think the ultimate for Satan, he wants to be the authority. He is after God.

That's where the real battle is, isn't it? Between those two? I mean, it affects us, but the real battle, it seems to me... I don't think the devil really has that much interest in us. No. Other than that God loves us.

Right. And how can he get to God? The only way he can get to God is through us. Yes.

He can't get to God any other way. He's not going to go throw God off the throne. No.

He's not going to overcome God's will. Where he has a place to fight is with our will. And that's why we have to submit to him.

So let's get to this last point because here's where the life of this comes. It says, come near to God. Draw near to God.

Now think about the audience James is writing to. He's writing to Jewish believers who are dispersed around the empire of Rome. This must have seemed very strange to them.

Draw near to God. Only priests were allowed to come into God's presence. This is a new thing.

Maybe a prophet could meet with God, but you and me, we didn't have any access to God. Certainly not the common person didn't have access to God. We couldn't go up on the mountain and meet with God.

Those were special anointed people in that time. What we need to understand is that the presence of God is a game changer. Jacob got in the presence of God and became Israel.

Gideon got in the presence of God and became a man of courage. Samuel got in the presence of God and became a prophet. David thirst and hungered after God's presence and became the forefather of the Messiah.

Isaiah found himself in the presence of God and knew that he was undone. Think of all the people. Peter became a man of boldness because of the presence of God that fell on him.

Paul became a servant and an apostle because of the presence of God moving in his life. The presence of God changes us from knowing about God to being sustained by God and in God. So here's the call of the lesson.

Walk in this presence of God every day. Take those moments to invite Him into your life, to invite His presence to guide you, to recognize what needs to be submitted to Him and say, God, I see this. I need your help.

I'm drawing near to you, and I'm going to draw near to your presence and expect you to sustain me. And I think, Pastor Mark, that we can submit to God when we recognize His character. He's sovereign, He's holy, He's righteous.

He is to be feared, but He's loving and full of grace and mercy, and He desires all to come to know Him. So, listening friends, submit, resist, and draw near to God, and He'll draw near to you. If you missed a portion of today's broadcast, want to hear it again, pass it on to a friend, or have ministry resources that'll help you in your walk with Jesus, stop by GreatNewsRadio.org or WLUJ.org and listen under the Mark & Friends tab.

We'll continue this study next Friday, October 23rd, as we look at James chapter 4, around verses 7 to maybe 14, somewhere in there. I hope you can join us again. Thanks for listening, thanks for being a part of our radio listening family.

This is Mark Burns and Pastor Mark Johnson in a room of friends with the Ministry of Great News Media. God bless you, and have a great day, night, and weekend, and be in church on Sunday. Woo-hoo!