Coronavirus Social Distancing Daily Devotion #27

God is Not Hiding

**James 4:8 (NASB)** *8  “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded*.”

Years ag, my brother and I would play the game hide and seek. Usually, when it was my brother’s turn to count, he would cheat and count faster than I could hide. That was frustrating but fun at the same time. I remember when I would be the one hiding, my heart would pound as my brother got closer. And when he discovered my location, I would either fuss that he cheated or maybe peek a little to see where he would hide when it was my turn to count.

Sometimes life feels like God is hiding Himself from us and no matter how much we cheat or peek, He is no where to be found. But the truth is, it is never God who is hiding from us. It is we who have hidden from God. James makes that clear. Notice God says, “If you will draw near to Me, then I will draw near to you.” The emphasis is not that God has left us or is hiding, but that our sinfulness has blinded us from seeing Him. You remember what He said, **Hebrews 13:5 (NASB)** "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU," So the problem is never God. The problem is always us.

If you notice the rest of the verse, God emphasizes the problem. We are sinners whose hearts are filthy with the effects of sin, therefore, His command is for us to cleanse ourselves. Our hearts need to be purified. We need to step back and ask the Lord to forgive us for anything that may be blocking our sight, so we can see Him clearly. Notice James says the problem is we are double-minded. That means we often get lost in the worldliness of our lives and focus on what we can literally see and at the same time try to keep a close relationship with God. It won’t work. God will always be hidden behind our sin.

It is also true that God seems hidden when He is in the process of purifying us or judging us for some sin. If you listen to some other references you will hear God calling for people to remove themselves from their sinful tendencies. For example, ***Malachi 3:7 (NASB)*** *7  "From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from My statutes and have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you,"* ***Zechariah 1:2-3 (NASB)*** *2  "The LORD was very angry with your fathers. 3  "Therefore say to them, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, "Return to Me," declares the LORD of hosts, "that I may return to you," says the LORD of hosts.”*

Listen to what God says about the soul who is right with Him:

* ***Psalm 73:28 (NASB)*** *28  “But as for me, the nearness of God is my good; I have made the Lord GOD my refuge, That I may tell of all Your works.”*
* ***Psalm 42:1-2 (NASB)*** *1  “As the deer pants for the water brooks, So my soul pants for You, O God. 2  My soul thirsts for God, for the living God; When shall I come and appear before God?”*
* **Psalm 63:1-2 (NASB)** *1  “O God, You are my God; I shall seek You earnestly; My soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You, In a dry and weary land where there is no water. 2  Thus I have seen You in the sanctuary, To see Your power and Your glory*.”

During this social distancing, God wants us to see Him. But in order to do so, He wants us to examine our hearts and confess the sins that keep us focused on the world. He wants us to clear our minds of anything that blinds us to His gracious kindness and work in our lives. He wants us to draw close to Him by looking into our souls and then we will see that He has never gone anywhere. Maybe this time of being separated and alone is God’s way of giving us quietness to examine what’s really going on inside our hearts.