

Joel Gregory: Steps Back Home

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Joel Gregory: Steps Back Home (James 4:6-10)

Joel Gregory recounted how even birds, fish and dogs want to go home—covering hundreds or thousands of miles to get there. The *Wizard of Oz* resonates with so many, because “deep in the heart of every human is a desire to come home,” he declared. God wants people to come home to him, Gregory added.

Gregory sees in James’ letter several steps back home to God. The first step is to submit to God, laying down our pride. The second step, resisting the devil, follows directly from the first.

Third is to draw near to God, who is already drawing near to you, Gregory proclaimed. “Cleanse your hands,” the fourth step back home, Gregory described as taking up holy habits even before “you feel like it.”

Fifth, “purify your heart,” or “guard your center,” as Gregory put it. Finally, the last step back home is to “feel it,” he continued, to mourn over one’s sin in order to rejoice over one’s salvation by God’s grace.

Gregory delivered this sermon May 21, 2023, for the morning worship

service of the [Second Baptist Church](#) in Little Rock, Ark. He is professor of preaching, George W. Truett Endowed Chair in Preaching and Evangelism, and director of the Kyle Lake Center for Effective Preaching at Baylor University's [Truett Theological Seminary](#).