

Studies from the Epistle of James

James 4 (New American Standard Bible)

4: 1-10 The word of God

4: 11-12 Judging

4: 13-17 Sinful self-confidence

Things to Avoid

¹What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? ²You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. ³You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.

⁴You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. ⁵Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: "He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us"?

⁶But He gives a greater grace Therefore it says, "GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE."

⁷Submit therefore to God Resist the devil and he will flee from you. ⁸Draw near to God and He will draw near to you Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.

¹¹Do not speak against one another, brethren He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge of it. ¹²There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you who judge your neighbor?

¹³Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit." ¹⁴Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. ¹⁵Instead, you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that." ¹⁶But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such

boasting is evil. ¹⁷Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.

Questions:

Things to Avoid

¹What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? ²You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. ³You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.

- James now concerns himself with the things that create quarrels and conflict within the group of believers.
- What are the pleasures that wage wars?
- What is the significance of lusting and not having?
- What does James mean when he writes that lust without having leads to murder?
- How does envy lead to fighting and quarreling.
- What is the significance of not having because we do not ask?
- How do wrong motives keep us from receiving?
- What is wrong with spending on our pleasures?

⁴You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. ⁵Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: "He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us"?

- How is friendship with the world hostility toward God?
- Do we choose the world over God? Why does this make us God's enemy?
- What does scripture say about this?
- James writes that we think scripture speaks to no purpose. Why would he write this?
- Does God jealously desire the spirit he made to dwell in us?

⁶But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE."

- What is the thought behind James' statement that God is opposed to the proud, but gives Grace to the humble.

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- "Submit to God" means what?
- Resist the devil means what?
- Why does the devil flee from those who resist him?
- What happens when we draw near to God?
- Why do sinners need to cleanse their hands?
- Why do the double minded need to purify their hearts?
- What does James mean when he writes about being miserable, morning, weeping, laughter turning to mourning and joy to gloom?
- What is the significance of humbling ourselves in the presence of God? Why would this make Him exalt us?

¹¹Do not speak against one another, brethren He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge of it. ¹²There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you who judge your neighbor?

- Why is it important that we not speak against each other?
- Why is it important that we not judge each other?
- Why is it wrong to judge the law?
- Why should we do the law and not judge it?
- Who is the one Lawgiver?
- Who is the one Judge?
- Then why would we choose to judge our neighbor.

¹³Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit." ¹⁴Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. ¹⁵Instead, you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that." ¹⁶But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil. ¹⁷Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.

- What is wrong in the statement: "**Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit.**"
- How are we like a vapor?
- Why is this similarity to a vapor significant?
- Why is it better to insert the understanding, "if it is God's will" into our plans?
- Why is boasting in arrogance evil?
- If we know the right thing and do not do it, we are guilty of sin?