

Joyful Life Bible Studies

JAMES 4:1-10

Lesson 15

FIRST DAY: Review James 3:13-18

1. *The wise man is to show his wisdom by his behavior.* True wisdom comes *only* from above. How can we recognize godly wisdom at work in the life of the believer?
 - a. If a person continues in the behavior of James 3:14, what do we know about him or her from James 3:13-18?
 - b. Godly wisdom is available to all believers. How has the study of James 3:13-18 awakened you to a deeper desire for His wisdom to be at work in your life?

(1.) Share a recent testimony of how you applied James 3:17,18.

Challenge: According to Job 28:(12-27)28 where can *wisdom* be found?

- a. What will be the results of *understanding*? Selah
2. Note and mark the paragraph divisions in this week's study as follows. Define the contents of each with a short sentence:
 - a. James 4:1-3
 - b. James 4:4-6
 - c. James 4:7-10
3. If ever Christians needed to be confronted with James 4:1-10, it is now. James gives a strong exhortation in these verses. He asks some tough questions and he provides his own tough answers. What would your response be if James was writing this to you and the members of your church? Some might be defensive; some might blame others; some might offer excuses. Yet, some would humble themselves and ask the Lord to examine their hearts, reveal the points that apply to them, ask for cleansing and seek the power to change. Write your response to James' admonitions in a prayer below.

*Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:
And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

- Psalm 139:23,24

SECOND DAY: Read James 4:1-3

1. James' follows his chapter 3 description of *wisdom not from above* and *wisdom from above* by showing the effect of ungodly wisdom in chapter 4. The opening question introduces the subject of this paragraph. What is the question?
 - a. How does this question compare to the last verse in chapter 3?
2. *Wars* represents a continuing state of hostility. *Fightings* speaks of the various battles. What does James 4:1b say is the source of conflict among Christians?
 - a. *Lusts* in other versions is evil desires, pleasures, passions and strong or sensual (worldly or fleshly) desires. What kinds of *lusts* could cause conflicts among believers:
 - (1.) Luke 20:46
 - (2.) John 12:43
 - (3.) I Timothy 6:10
 - b. Compare the devastation of war with the devastation created by Christians who cause strife.
3. James 4:1b recognizes that external fights start from within. They stem from desires to have something to please ourselves regardless of the effect on others or the consequences. According to the following verses, how is the Christian to relate to these kinds of desires:
 - a. I Peter 4:2
 - b. I John 2:15-17
 - (1.) These scriptures instruct us in both what to avoid, and the proper way to walk. What are we to *do*?
 - (2.) How would focusing on *doing the will of God* cause the *lusts* for the things of the world to fade?
4. Summarize James 4:2,3.

5. The word *lust* in verse 2 is not the same Greek word as used in James 4:1. This word indicates a strong passion, but it is not necessarily an evil passion. The desire may be for something good, but the method employed to obtain fulfillment is wrong. From James 4:2,3 consider the methods people use to satisfy these desires as you list their results:

<u>METHODS</u>	<u>RESULTS</u>
1. <i>lust</i>	1.
2. <i>kill and desire to have</i>	2.
3. <i>fight and war</i>	3.
4. <i>ask amiss</i>	4.

6. What does James 4:3b say is a deterrent to answered prayer?

- a. Why were the prayers of those in Isaiah 59:1,2 not answered?
- b. If our desires are in line with God's will, we have His promise our prayers will be answered. How will Psalm 37:4 help you with having the right desires?

(1.) How does *delighting yourself in the Lord* affect your desires?

Challenge: What are the ingredients for answered prayer? Use scripture to support your answer.

- a. Before you pray, what are some questions that you can ask yourself to give you more confidence in your prayers?

*©, what peace we often forfeit, ©, what needless pain we bear,
 All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer!
 -J.S.*

THIRD DAY: Read James 4:4,5

1. James now sharply rebukes these Christians. How could verse 3 be the cause of this rebuke?
2. What does James call these people in verse 4 who want to satisfy their own worldly desires rather than do God's will?

- a. Why do you think he used the term *adulteresses*?
- b. *You are like unfaithful wives, flirting with the glamour of this world, and never realizing that to be the world's lover means becoming the enemy of God.* James 4:4 J.B. Phillips How does this translation alert you to the gravity of being a *friend of the world*?

3. Describe *friendship of the world* in your own words.

- a. Often we think of worldliness in terms of actions. Keeping in mind that chapter 4 is a continuation of chapter 3, how does James describe worldliness as it is exhibited through ungodly wisdom? James 3:(15),16a

(1.) How are envying and strife examples of worldliness?

- b. According to the following scriptures, what are the results of worldliness/*friendship of the world*:

(1.) Matthew 13:22

(2.) James 3:16b

(3.) James 4:4b

- c. How do you think an attitude of worldliness begins to develop in a Christian's life?
- d. What are some of the struggles the Christian woman may have with the continual worldly influences in her life?
- e. *You should have as little desire for this world as a dead person does.* Colossians 3:3 TLB What are some preventative measures you can take to avoid worldliness in your life?

4. Write James 4:5 here. Use other versions if possible.

- a. The interpretation of James 4:5 has perplexed many commentators. One explanation is that the Spirit of God does not lead us to envy. The envying and strife that causes wars among us, that prohibits answered prayer, and that drives us to dabble in the things of the world, does not come from God. How does James 1:17 and James 3:14,15 verify this?

5. *Adultery* is a strong term. *Friendship of the world* is betrayal to God. God's love for His bride (all Christians) has been described in the Old Testament as *zeal*. *Zeal* can be described as an intense desire to possess. Many commentators believe that James 4:5 speaks of the feelings that Christians provoke in the Lord when they choose to be a *friend of the world*. The Holy Spirit yearns over us with a holy envy or jealousy to have us wholly the Lord's. He does not want us to have a divided love anymore than a bridegroom would want his bride to have other lovers. How does God describe Himself in Exodus 20:5?

a. How does Hosea 2:19,20 speak to you when you think about the deep love that God has towards you?

(1.) Share how understanding God's love helps to keep you from compromising and becoming a *friend of the world*.

*...Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love:
therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee.*

- Jeremiah 31:3 SELAH!

FOURTH DAY: Read James 4:6

1. Since our selfish desires draw us away from loving the Lord and towards a *friendship of the world*, what does God give that will enable us to stand strong and be wholly His? James 4:6a

a. Define *grace*.

b. How has experiencing God's *grace* changed your life?

2. *God resisteth the proud*. The word *resisteth* is actually a military term meaning to take one's position against an enemy, to meet in battle, to set oneself against. This is not a passive resistance that God takes, but is an active battle that He declares against the proud. The sin of *pride* hinders us from appropriating God's *grace*. Look up the following verses and record what they reveal about *pride*:

a. Psalm 138:6

b. Proverbs 16:5

c. Proverbs 16:18,19

d. How does *pride* affect a Christian's walk with the Lord?

3. Read Romans 12:10 and Philippians 2:3. Instead of self-exaltation, what should our attitude be?

a. Christ Jesus, *Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God* (Philippians 2:6) gave us the supreme example of humility. Using Philippians 2:7,8 describe the example that Jesus gave us.

4. To whom will God *give more grace*?
 - a. What do you learn about humility from the following verses:
 - (1.) II Chronicles 34:27
 - (2.) Proverbs 15:33
 - (3.) Isaiah 57:15
 - b. Why do you think humility is a condition for receiving God's *grace*?
 - c. What do you think a *humble* person understands that a prideful person does not?

Optional: Contrast *proud* with *humble* using synonyms.

5. James 4:6 refers to Proverbs 3:34, *Surely He scorneth the scorners: but He giveth grace unto the lowly*. Read the story of the Pharisee and the publican in Luke 18:10-14. Contrast their attitudes and God's reaction to their prayers.

*He that is down needs fear no fall, he that is low, no pride;
 He that is humble ever shall have God to be his guide.*

- John Bunyan

FIFTH DAY: Read James 4:7-10

1. James 4:7-10 provides the solution to the problem of the *lusts that war in our members* which create the *wars and fightings* described in verses 1-4. What is our part and the result of our obedience according to theses verses:

OUR PART	THE PROMISED RESULT
James 4:7	
James 4:8	
James 4:9	
James 4:10	

2. Once we have experienced God's grace in our hearts we become targets of the enemy and we are vulnerable to temptation. Pride further opens us up to satanic attacks. What is the remedy for this according to James 4:7?

a. How do we resist the devil according to the following verses:

(1.) Luke 4:4

(2.) Luke 10:17,19

(3.) Ephesians 6:11,13

(a.) How do we practically *put on the whole armor of God*?

3. James 4:8a instructs us to *draw nigh to God*. How do we do this?

a. Give some examples of actions, thoughts or beliefs that hinder us from *drawing nigh to God*.

4. *Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double minded.* James 4:8b A double mind indicates not only actions, but a heart that reflects a pulling between the world and the Lord. How does a *purified heart* stabilize a *double-minded man*?

5. As we *submit and draw nigh to God* we will have a clearer revelation of God's holiness and become aware of behaviors in our lives that are not pleasing to Him. Our response to that awareness should be repentance and a desire for cleansing. Isaiah had a vision where he saw the Lord in His holiness and majesty. What was Isaiah's reaction to this revelation? Isaiah 6:5

a. What was the result? Isaiah 6:6,7

b. What reactions to sin does James 4:9 call for?

(1.) To be *afflicted* means to experience the sense of wretchedness caused by sinning against God's love. What difference has seeing your sin as God sees it made in your attitude towards that sin and what steps have you taken to flee from it?

6. James 4:10a tells us to *humble ourselves in the sight of the Lord*. What does it mean to you to humble yourself in God's sight?

a. What does Proverbs 5:21 tell us about God seeing us? SELAH.

b. What is the result of this kind of humility? James 4:10b

(1.) How does Job 22:29b and I Peter 5:6 verify this?

SIXTH DAY: Review James 4:1-10

1. Nowhere in the world are broken relationships more deplorable than among believers. Christians not only have the perfect Model, Jesus, they have the manual, the Bible and the power through the Holy Spirit to walk in harmony with one another. Yet, James found it necessary to confront the church regarding *wars and fightings among them*. What attitudes still cause these frictions in the church today?
2. What are the necessary elements for answered prayer?
3. What types of things draw Christians into worldliness?
 - a. Why is this such an abomination to God?
4. Why do you think God is so compassionate towards humility and disgusted with pride?
5. What might cause a Christian to resist *submitting* to God?
 - a. What are the benefits of *submitting* and *drawing nigh to God*?
6. How has the study of this lesson affected your attitude towards sin?
7. What in this lesson especially spoke to you this week?

*All to Jesus I surrender, Humbly at His feet I bow,
Worldly pleasures all forsaken, Take me, Jesus, take me now.*

-VDV