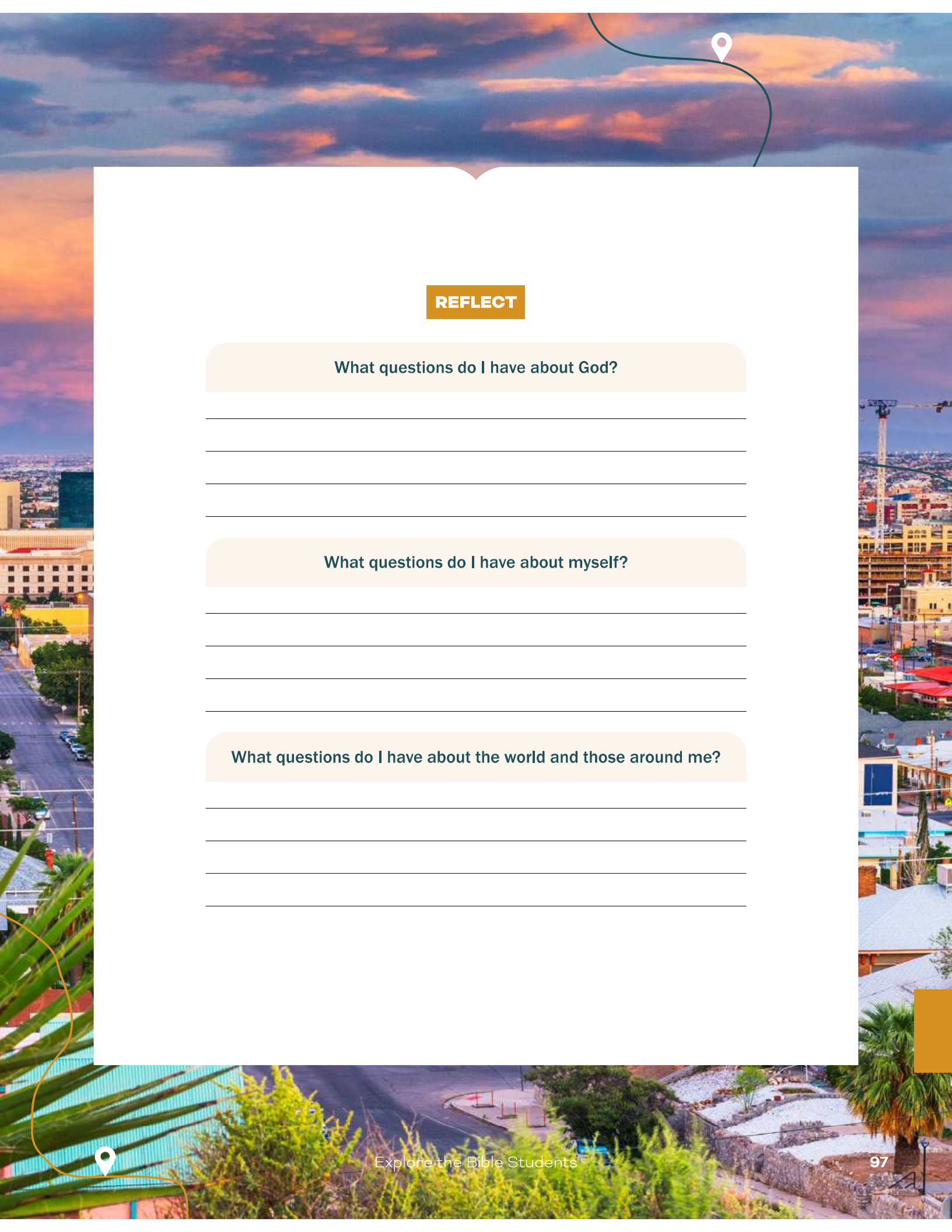


Session 12

Draw NEAR

CENTRAL TRUTH | We are called to be humble before God and obey Him.

Meeting new people and making friends can be exciting or scary, depending on your past experiences and your current situation. No matter what brings us to make new friends, certain characteristics draw us toward people while others repel us. Typically, we look for people with common interests who are kind, thoughtful, funny, loved by others, and hopefully, who love Jesus. But making friends with people who don't make good choices or don't have our best interests at heart can lead us the wrong way. This week, we'll see James call out some believers for doing exactly that, telling them that being friends with the world makes us enemies with God. That's not the life God wants for us though. We are called to be humble before God and obey Him, and James tells us how to do that too.



REFLECT

What questions do I have about God?

What questions do I have about myself?

What questions do I have about the world and those around me?

JAMES 4:1-6

¹What is the source of wars and fights among you? Don't they come from your passions that wage war within you? ²You desire and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and wage war. You do not have because you do not ask. ³You ask and don't receive because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures. ⁴You adulterous people! Don't you

know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? So whoever wants to be the friend of the world becomes the enemy of God. ⁵Or do you think it's without reason that the Scripture says: The spirit he made to dwell in us envies intensely? ⁶But he gives greater grace. Therefore he says: God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.

JAMES 4:7-12

⁷Therefore, submit 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, sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹Be miserable and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you. ¹¹Don't

criticize one another, brothers and sisters. Anyone who defames or judges a fellow believer defames and judges the law. If you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. ¹²There is one lawgiver and judge who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?

JAMES 4:13-17

¹³Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will travel to such and such a city and spend a year there and do business and make a profit." ¹⁴Yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring — what your life will be! For you are like vapor that appears for

a little while, then vanishes. ¹⁵Instead, you should say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that." ¹⁶But as it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. ¹⁷So it is sin to know the good and yet not do it.

Day01

PROVERBS 3:34-35



Refer to page 5 for a description of the 7 Arrows of Bible Reading.

READ & RESPOND

Have you ever been around someone who acts like he or she is better than everyone else? Today's passage tells us God strongly resists the proud and mocking person. If you act arrogantly and dismissive toward God or others, you invite His opposition. But the verse says God gives grace—undeserved favor and help—to the humble! If you choose humility, God promises you will inherit honor and respect. The foolish person might think they gain respect by acting arrogantly, but they only earn shame. Choose to be humble and let God be the one who lifts you up.



What is the promised reward for the wise, and what is the consequence for fools?



The Lord gives grace to the humble. What does this teach you about what God values most in our hearts?



How can you encourage a friend to aim for the honor that comes from wisdom instead of the temporary attention that comes from foolishness?

MEMORIZE

On a piece of paper, write down **James 4:7** five times. Doing this makes all the different parts of your brain turn on at the same time, which forces you to think about the information in a much deeper way.

PRAY

Lord, Your favor rests on the humble heart. Help me to resist the temptation to be prideful or to mock others. Help me to live with wisdom and humility so that my life brings You honor.

Day02

JAMES 4:1-6

📍 READ & RESPOND

James asks a powerful question: Where do our fights and arguments come from? He answers that they come from the selfish desires battling inside us. We want things, and when we can't get them, we become angry, jealous, and hostile. We "do not have because [we] do not ask," but even when we do ask, we often ask with wrong motives—just to satisfy our own desires. James warns us that pursuing the world's ways makes us an enemy of God. But there is hope! God gives greater grace to help us change. If we choose to be humble before God, He will lift us up and give us the strength to obey Him.

↓ How does friendship with the world make you an "enemy" of God?

→ What does this passage demand you do instead of being proud or seeking worldly acceptance?

↔ How should knowing that God opposes the proud change the way you talk about yourself and your accomplishments?

📍 MEMORIZE

Using your phone, tablet, or computer, write out **James 4:7** in a notes app using emojis. Be creative! Send the emojis to a few friends or family members and see if they can decipher the verse.

📍 PRAY

Lord, I am guilty of a selfish heart, but You give a greater grace that helps me change. Help me be humble in a way that honors You.

Day 03

JAMES 4:7-12

READ & RESPOND

James continues this part of his letter with practical advice on how to fight our selfish desires: We must submit ourselves to God. This means choosing humility and placing ourselves completely under God's authority. We do this by actively drawing near to God and turning away from sin. We should mourn our sin, but when we humble ourselves, God promises to lift us up, providing strength, comfort, and deliverance. In this humility, we shouldn't be critical of one another—we should recognize that we are all in different phases of spiritual growth. Instead of judging others, our job is to focus on obeying God in our own lives and leaving all judgment, which belongs only to God, in His hands.

↑ What does this passage tell you about God's desire to have a relationship with us?

↓ What is it that makes us want to put others down? What reason does this passage tell us not to do it?

→ What is a practical way you can "draw near to God" this week?

MEMORIZE

Let's map out this week's verse. Write out **James 4:7**. Underline the important nouns in the verse. Circle the important verbs. Put an appropriate symbol next to any word that might be important.

PRAY

God, draw near to me. As You work in my life, teach me how to be humble. Teach me how to draw near to You.

Day04

JAMES 4:13-17

📍 READ & RESPOND

Today, James reminds us that we are completely dependent on God for everything, especially our futures. We can make all the plans we want, but it is the Lord who determines our steps (see Prov. 16:9). When we make plans without asking the Lord's will, we are being arrogant! Life is fragile, and we have no control over it. Instead, we are called to be humble before the Lord, recognizing that things only happen if He wills them to happen. When we brag about our future apart from God, we are actually boasting in evil. We must seek the Lord's will for our lives and be obedient to what He reveals to us.

🔄 How does James show us how dependent we are on God?

↑ Because God knows the future while we don't, what does this tell you about His wisdom and sovereignty?

→ How have you trusted God with your plans? How do you need to surrender your future plans to Him?

📍 MEMORIZE

Go for a walk! Recite **James 4:7** aloud while walking. Assign one phrase to a set number of steps (for instance, walk five steps while saying the first phrase).

📍 PRAY

God, my life is but a vapor in Your eternity. I am so dependent on You. Reveal to me Your will for my life, and give me wisdom to follow it.

Day 05

1 JOHN 2:15-17

 READ & RESPOND

The way of the world can often seem fun, but John gives us a critical warning: Do not love the world or the things in it. This means we shouldn't let the world's attitudes, like lust, greed, and pride, control our desires, because these things do not come from God. If we choose to love the world's ways, the Father's love will be choked out of us. Why? Because the world and everything that tempts us is temporary—it's passing away! Instead, we must choose to be humble before God and obey Him, desiring His eternal path over the world's temporary promises. When we choose His will, we will remain with Him forever.



What are the two main things this passage commands us not to love? What are some of the things of this world that you encounter?



How are you being distracted from doing God's will? What needs to change to reshift your focus?



Write a simple prayer asking God to help you examine your heart and remove any love for the "world" that might be keeping you from fully loving Him.

 MEMORIZE

Once you know **James 4:7**, teach it to someone else—a sibling, a parent, or a friend. Explain what it means and why it's important.

 PRAY

Lord, remove from my heart any desire for the things of this world and replace it with a passion for You and Your will. Help me to grow in my understanding of You.