

REAL FAITH IN THE REAL WORLD

Practical Wisdom From the Book of James

SMALL GROUP LESSON 6

James 4:1-10

In this chapter, James shows his mounting passion and urgency and gets to the “nut” of his message – the inner state of our hearts which will produce the outer works God desires.

Read James 4:1-4

Question: What do you tend to get into arguments or fights about with people? What is the inner desire or need that usually causes the argument?

Desires/pleasures translates the Greek word hēdonē, which means simply “pleasure,” but often with the connotation of a sinful, self-indulgent pleasure (we get our word “hedonism” from it). It consistently has this negative meaning in the NT (Luke 8:14; Tit. 3:3; 2 Pet. 2:13) - Douglas Moo commentary

Question: What are some reasons our prayers may not be answered?

In Verse 4, James harshly calls them adulterous people. Read Jeremiah 3:6,19,20 and Ezekiel 16:30-32.

Question: Given these verses and James 4:4, in what ways can we be adulterous toward God?

Read James 4:5-10

Question: James 4:6 is a comforting verse. In what ways do we need more grace?

Question: Why would God “oppose” the proud? How is walking in pride contrary to a walk with God?

Question: What are the strong imperatives (commands) that he emphasizes here in verses 7-10 that will bring us into a right inner relationship with God?

1 Peter 5:5–11 is a parallel passage to this one. Read it together and compare it to the James passage. **How does reading that passage help in understanding the James passage?**

Question: How do we resist the devil?

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Question: How do we come near to God?

Question: Does verse 9 mean that God is against laughing? What does it mean?

Question: How will humbling and submitting ourselves before the Lord result in the outward signs of faith that James has been urging us in throughout the book? Do you agree this is a central, important teaching of the message of James (the “nut”)?

FOR PRAYER

Possible areas to ask for prayer:

- Any people or situations with whom or in which you tend to get into fights or quarrels
- Ways in which you struggle with pride

Extra Credit! More verses for study

ESV Study Bible: Echoes of Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount in James

James 1:2 -> joy amid trials -> Matthew 5:10-12
James 1:4 -> exhortation to be perfect -> Matthew 5:48
James 1:5 -> asking God for good things -> Matthew 7:7-11
James 1:17 -> God the giver of good -> Matthew 7:11
James 1:20 -> against anger -> Matthew 5:22
James 1:22 -> hearers and doers of the word -> Matthew 7:24-27
James 2:5 -> poor inherit the kingdom -> Matthew 5:3,5
James 2:10 -> keeping the whole law -> Matthew 5:19
James 2:13 -> merciful receive mercy -> Matthew 5:7
James 3:12 -> know them by their fruits -> Matthew 7:16
James 3:18 -> blessings of peacemakers-> Matthew 5:9
James 4:2-3 -> ask and you will receive -> Matthew 7:7-8
James 4:4 -> serving God vs. friendship with world -> Matthew 6:24
James 4:9-10-> consolation for mourners -> Matthew 5:4
James 4:11-12 -> against judging others -> Matthew 7:1-5
James 4:13-14 -> living for today -> Matthew 6:34
James 5:2-5 -> moth and rust spoiling earthly treasures -> Matthew 6:19
James 5:10 -> prophets as examples & patterns -> Matthew 5:12
James 5:12 -> against oaths -> Matthew 5:33-37