

## James 4:1-12 ~ Submit Yourself to God ~ Discussion Questions

Memory verse James 4:7-8a

1. In Verse 4:1, who is fighting and quarreling?
2. What do families and friends commonly fight about? How often?
3. What does James say is the root cause of fights and quarrels between people? (4:2)
4. What are the two main behaviors that James criticizes in Verses 4:2-3?
5. Why doesn't God give some people what they ask for? (James 4:3, Isaiah 55:89, 2 Peter 3:8, Philippians 4:6-7, John 15:7)
6. James says that "anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God." What did Jesus say about God and the world? (Matthew 6:24, John 15:18-19)
7. Can we love both God and the world? What happens if we try to love both? (1 John 2:15-16, also Matthew 6:24)
8. How can we avoid loving the world? (James 4:6, Proverbs 3:34)
9. In Verses 4:7-10, James offers ten commands. Let's name them:
  1. \_\_\_\_\_ yourselves
  2. \_\_\_\_\_ the devil
  3. \_\_\_\_\_ to God
  4. \_\_\_\_\_ your hands
  5. \_\_\_\_\_ your hearts
  6. \_\_\_\_\_
  7. \_\_\_\_\_
  8. \_\_\_\_\_
  9. \_\_\_\_\_ your laughter
  10. \_\_\_\_\_ yourselves.
10. Jesus summed all this up in two commandments. What are they? (Matthew 22:37-39)
11. What is James saying in Verses 4:11-12? (Matthew 7:1-5)
12. What is the difference between pride and a sense of accomplishment?

## James 4:1-12 ~ Questions for Small Groups

1. Verse 4:5 is extremely confusing. Below are several different versions of 4:5. What do you think is the best way of interpreting it? (The entire paragraph of Verses 4:4-6 may help you find meaning in Verse 4:5 or it may not). The word “Scripture” in 4:5 does not refer to a specific verse but rather the phrase represents the overall teaching of Scripture.

NIV: Or do you think Scripture says without reason [a]that the spirit he caused to live in us envies intensely? Footnote [a]: Or that God jealously longs for the spirit that he made to live in us? Or that the Spirit he caused to live in us longs jealously?

NLT: What do you think the Scriptures mean when they say [a]that the spirit God has placed within us is filled with envy? Footnote [a]: Or that God longs jealously for the human spirit he has placed within us? Or that the Holy Spirit, whom God has placed within us, opposes our envy?

The Message: And do you suppose God doesn't care [that you choose to become a friend of the world]? The proverb has it that “he [God] is a fiercely jealous lover.”

One commentator says, It is God who describes Himself as jealous for the devotion of men. To some this may seem odd, but this is truly an act of love.

2. The commands James gives in verse 4:9 seem rather counter-intuitive and negative. (Also see Matthew 5:4) Below are three translations of James 4:9. How would you explain what he is asking of us? Is there a way of putting a positive spin on it?

KJV: Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.

NIV: Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom.

NLT: Let there be tears for what you have done. Let there be sorrow and deep grief. Let there be sadness instead of laughter, and gloom instead of joy.

3. What two main sins are we guilty of when we judge others? (Psalm 94:1-2, Proverbs 6:16-19, 8:13, 11:2, 13:10, 16:18)

4. What can you do this week to help reduce pride and bring more humility into your life?

5. How do we reconcile conflicting advice such as:

A) “Show some pride!” “Stand Up for yourself!” “Walk tall!” “Don't be a doormat!” “Be proud of who you are!” “Stick out your chest and hold your head high!”

B) “Show some humility!” “Keep your head down!” “Don't put yourself above others.” “Pride goes before a fall!” “Learn to be humble!” “Who do you think you are?”

## **James 4:1-12 ~ Submit Yourselves to God**

<sup>1</sup> What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? <sup>2</sup> You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. <sup>3</sup> When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

<sup>4</sup> You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. <sup>5</sup> Or do you think Scripture says without reason that the spirit he caused to live in us envies intensely? <sup>6</sup> But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says:

“God opposes the proud  
but gives grace to the humble.”

<sup>7</sup> Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

<sup>8</sup> Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. <sup>9</sup> Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. <sup>10</sup> Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

<sup>11</sup> Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it. <sup>12</sup> There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you—who are you to judge your neighbor?