

James Chapter 4

In the previous chapters James focuses on two matters, wisdom and the tongue, that help introduce the topic of the fourth chapter, quarreling within the Christian church.

Psalm 133:1 “How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity!”

Believers should be able to live together in unity, but the Bible gives us many illustrations when they didn’t:

- *Lot quarreled with his uncle Lot in Genesis 13.*
- *Absalom created a war for his father David in 2Samuel 13-18*
- *The disciples argued over who was greatest in the Kingdom of God.*
- *Galatians tells us believers were biting & devouring each other (5:15)*

James 4:1-3

NOTE: The Greek word for desires is the source of our word “hedonism.” (NIV Study Bible).

1. What is the lifeblood of sin?
2. How do our desires create dissension, division and even church splits?
3. What do selfish desires do to us internally?
4. How do they then impact the church?
5. What reason does James give for having unanswered prayer?
6. What do wrong prayers do to us internally? What can they reveal about our spiritual life?
7. Our actions and our speech reveal a lot about what we give our attention to. We covet, we get jealous, we get envious, verse 2 says we do not get what we want. How do we prevent this from poisoning ourselves & spreading it to the church?
8. There usually isn’t a “magic moment” that changes our wrong outlook, what advice do you give to cure this poison, this heart problem?
9. What causes us to sometimes get mad at God?
10. Again, where do we need to place our focus and direct our prayers?

James 4:4-6

1. In verse 4, what does James mean by “*Adulterous people*” and “*friendship with the world?*” Why does James write so strongly against this?
2. Since we live in this world, how are we to interact with those who do not believe in Christ yet at the same time take precautions to not be negatively affected?
3. Our bodies, by themselves, are neutral, without sin. When we accept Christ we get the Holy Spirit, the new nature, yet we still have internal struggles because the old nature isn’t removed or instantly transformed. What struggles do we face regarding the old man and the new man?
4. James quotes Proverbs 3:34, how is pride involved in our struggle between our flesh and the Spirit?
5. How do these verses relate to the quarreling within the Christian community?

James 4:7-12

1. The word “*submit*” is a military term which means “*get into your proper rank.*” How can you determine whether or not an area of your life is not submitted?
2. What does God want us to rely on versus what the devil wants us to rely on?
3. How does submission determine church unity?
4. Verse 8 – how does someone draw near to God?
5. What point is James making in verse 9?
6. What is the benefit of you humbling yourself?
7. How are we lifted up?
8. Verse 11-12, *why are these verse even in the bible? Don't we know this?*
9. How do you get caught off guard in this way?

James 4:13-17

1. How should our relationship with Christ change how we live daily and relate to the world around us?
2. Some decisions need to be made quickly, is James referencing these too?
3. What is verse 14 saying about life?
4. How can pride interfere with our decision making?
5. What is praying God's will for your life?
6. Is life uncertain for us? Is it for God?
7. Explain verse 17.

James 4

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

⁴You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.

⁵Or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us? ⁶But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says:

"God opposes the proud

but shows favor to the humble."

⁷Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

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

¹³Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." ¹⁴Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. ¹⁵Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that." ¹⁶As it is, you boast in your arrogant schemes. All such boasting is evil. ¹⁷If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn't do it, it is sin for them.