

James 4 – Study Guide

¹What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?

²You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. ³You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.

⁴You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. ⁵Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, “He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us”? ⁶But he gives more grace.

Therefore it says, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” ⁷Submit yourselves therefore 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, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹Be wretched 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.

¹¹Do not speak evil against one another, brothers. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. ¹²There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?

¹³Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit” — ¹⁴yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. ¹⁵Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.” ¹⁶As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. ¹⁷So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.

Icebreaker:

What’s something you’re good at? What’s something you’re bad at?

Verses 1-3: Are there any passions you’ve had in the past that have caused fights, quarrels or relational tensions in your life?

What are practical ways to prevent passions from waging war within us?

Verse 4: Are there ways you’ve danced with danger through friendship with the world?

Verses 5-6: How can we humble ourselves?

Verse 7: How have you seen this truth play out in your life?

Verses 8-10: Have you experience God’s presence from drawing near to him?

What role does repentance have in your life?

Verses 11-12: What’s the difference between speaking against a brother and speaking against his sin?

Verses 13-16: What areas in life are you prone to the arrogance James speaks of here?

Verse 17: What areas of life do you struggle to do the right thing?