



Good Shepherd
Sermon-Based Study Guide
James 4.1-12 | October 26, 2025
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I. Introduction to this Study

We learned last week that earthly wisdom causes disorder, but heavenly wisdom leads to peace (3.15-18). So why don't we have (true) peace in our homes, jobs, and churches on a consistent basis? Perhaps we are operating with the wrong kind of wisdom. As James continues in his letter, he offers some tough heavenly insights into this daily struggle and reality...

James is setting before his people a basic question – whether their aim in life is to submit to the will of God or to gratify their own desires for the pleasures of this world? He warns that, if pleasure is the policy of life, nothing but strife and hatred and division can possibly follow.

Here's what I believe the Lord wants to have us focus on this week (amid all the daily battles we face):

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....

II. Connecting with One Another

- Whom did you quarrel most with growing up? When you quarrel, do you seek to understand what desire is really motivating you?
- How does coming near to God (vv. 7-8) strengthen you?

III. Study the Text

Read **James 4.1-12**

Verses 1-3:

- What explanation for fighting & waging wars does James give in this passage?
- What does James say is the root cause of quarrels and fights among people?
- How do our desires and motives affect our prayers, according to v. 3?
- Have your desires ever caused conflict? How could James' words relate to that?
- From your experience and knowledge of the Scriptures, what are some of the symptoms of friendship with the world?



Verses 4-6:

- What does James mean by “friendship with the world is enmity with God”? (see Luke 16.13, Romans 8.5-8, 1 John 2.15-17, 3.8)
- How does pride create distance between us and God?
- What does it mean that “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble”? How have you seen this play out in your life or others’?
- God provides plenty of grace for us to overcome our envy, craving for pleasure, and consequent quarreling (v.6). He offers abundant grace to respond to Him with full devotion. Why does He give us grace only if we are humble, never if we are proud?

Verses 7-10:

- What steps does James outline for drawing near to God?
- Why do you think James emphasizes mourning and humility in this passage?
- How can you practice “submitting to God” in your daily life?

Verses 11-12:

- What warning does James give about speaking evil against others?
- What is “the law” in v.11 (see James 1.25, 2.8, 12)?
- What is the difference between slander and judgmentalism and identifying sin in order to stand against it?
- How does judging others conflict with God’s role as lawgiver and judge?
- What’s the difference between discernment and judgment? How can we avoid crossing that line?

IV. Prayer

Spend time in prayer together:

- What desires battle within you, against you? Is pleasure or God the dominant concern of your life? Examine your actions and ask God to show you yourself as you really are....
- What areas do you need to resist the devil today?
- Do some of the confessing, mourning, and humbling yourselves that James urges. Be specific and honest in your confessions.

V. Digging Deeper

- On resisting the devil, see Matthew 4.1-11, Ephesians 6.10-18, 1 Peter 5.6-11, 1 John 5.18.
- James sandwiches his advice on resisting the devil, drawing near to God and having pure hearts between comments on humility in verses 6 and 10. Apparently humility has something to do with these directions. What is the connection?

