



MONDAY 16 JANUARY 2017

SERIES: THE LETTER OF JAMES

Read: James 4:1-3

Plug In...

James specifies internal conflict leads to external conflict. A battle within overflows into the relations around you (4:2). The word 'murder' is a word that means violence or fighting (which of course can lead to murder). People fight because they don't have what they want. They're missing the critical ingredient. James says, ask God.

Chew It Over...

It has been said, when resources become limited and our desires are 'unlimited', we fight. In a Christian relationship, in Christian community, our desires get ordered right – we love God as the provider of all, we love others. We need to learn the path to having the things we need is not through coveting and fighting. Following that road we lose (4:2b). Plenty of asking occurs in James' letter (1:5; 4:3; 5:13). Do you regularly ask the Father of Lights for all sorts of things in your day-to-day life? Have you asked over the little and middle type things, not just the big stuff?

Prayer Suggestion

Pray that God will enable you to turn away from the flawed path in obtaining what we want and need. Ask God for what you need.



TUESDAY 17 JANUARY 2017

SERIES: THE LETTER OF JAMES

Read: James 4:3

Plug In...

Ask, but ask rightly. Jesus said ask too (Matthew 7:7).

Chew It Over...

Jesus' teaching on asking helps us figure out what to ask rightly looks like. Jesus' teaching on prayer means asking which is framed by seeking God's name, God's kingdom, His will (Matthew 6:9-10).

Prayer Suggestion

First ask that we are about God's name, kingdom, and will before our pleasure. Then ask for what you need. Ask that our pleasure is to see God's face, His glory, His reign!



WEDNESDAY 18 JANUARY 2017

SERIES: THE LETTER OF JAMES

Read: James 4:4-5

Plug In...

Verse 5 is difficult to translate. The word is 'spirit' but is it a capital Spirit (to indicate God's Spirit) or a smaller spirit (to indicate ours). In James, 'spirit' has already been used to indicate the spirit of a human individual (2:26) and James challenges people over their negative passions, jealousies, and desires. Therefore, the translation could be "the spirit he caused to live in us envies intensely". James cites "Scripture says" this. We cannot locate as a specific scriptural text . Therefore, it is likely James is claiming *all* Scripture shows this. James' point: the Bible reveals the doctrine of sin, displays human history as a record of people warring and fighting with each other. It is a record of humans selfishly striving.

Chew It Over...

Earlier this week we considered the marks of worldly wisdom. Today, see if you can find those attitudes of verses 1-3 that expose worldliness. Are you worldly? Learn again the Bible asserts this is the world's problem and it places them as enemies of God. The response, humble yourself before God.

Prayer Suggestion

Pray asking God to change you; that you might turn away from what the world offers and trust completely in Him.



THURSDAY 19 JANUARY 2017

SERIES: THE LETTER OF JAMES

Read: James 4:6-10

Plug In...

James isn't merely providing a bit of commentary (i.e., the world as we know it has always been about humans with misdirected energies), more so, James broadcasts the consequence: *God resists the proud*. To live worldly is very dangerous in God's economy.

There is a parallel phrase to line one: "God resists the proud". Line two: "but He [God] gives grace to the humble". This verse is the gospel centre of the Letter to James.

Chew It Over...

View this important paradox in James. On the one hand believers must *do* what they know, obedience is required or face judgement. Yet, the on other hand, James says this to a group who break these very commands often discovering they're still worldly. Facing up to this reality is where James delivers us. James wants us to look in the mirror and admit it. Then, humble ourselves and again receive mercy and grace from God. Further, this action submits to God and the Devil flees. Draw near to God and you will be cleansed and God will continue to make you single-minded in life of misdirected energies.

Prayer Suggestion

Pray for the posture of humility. Praise God that He will exalt you because of the atonement through Jesus Christ.



FRIDAY 20 JANUARY 2017

SERIES: THE LETTER OF JAMES

Read: James 4:11-12

Plug In...

These verses jog earlier themes (2:8-13; 3:1ff). James warns about the danger of permitting worldly thinking amongst God's people. Particularly, jealous and critical speech for it poisons the community of God's people.

Chew It Over...

Couple of questions:

1. Answer the following "yes" or "no". Is your speech often:

- slanderous?
- generous?
- wise?
- constructive?

2. What steps can you put in place to help you change to generous, big hearted, kind and merciful speech?

Prayer Suggestion

Pray that God would help you to change to be generous, big hearted, kind and merciful in your speech!



WEEKEND 21-22 JANUARY 2017

SERIES: THE LETTER OF JAMES

Read: James 4:13-17

Plug In...

Getting all that James as so far said in his letter develops for us a way of living day-to-day in this world. James teaches God is present and always at work. God is overseeing history and so certain questions have to be asked about basic life.

Chew It Over...

What assumptions seem to underlie the thinking of those pictured in verses 13-17?

With history moving around and history coming to an end in Jesus, there is an urgency to all of life. How does the continual recognition of God's sovereignty and our lack of control affect your approach to life?

How now shall we live?

Prayer Suggestion

Pray for a generous heart that seeks treasure in heaven. Ask for forgiveness regarding the times you have been more like the rich people in this section.