

## Seek What Matters

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### James 4:1-10 NIV

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? [2] 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. [3] When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

[4] 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. [5] Or do you think Scripture says without reason that the spirit he caused to live in us envies intensely? [6] But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says:

**"God opposes the proud  
but gives grace to the humble."**

[7] Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. [8] Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you *double-minded*. (see vs. 4) [9] Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. [10] Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

#### 1. God is the Source (vs. 2)

You don't have because you don't ask God... We have to realize that God is the source of everything. He's the One that supplies our needs. If we need help, we should ask Him. If don't pray, how can God answer our prayer??? Prayers that are not prayed are useless. Everything good comes from God.

**James 1:17 NIV** Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

## **2. Check Your Motives (vs. 3)**

Sometimes people pray to God, and don't get what they ask for... why??? Because they pray with the wrong motives. I could ask God for a Porsche, but that doesn't mean I'll get one. A good parent doesn't always give their child everything they ask for, neither will God. He knows what is best for us, and sometimes He'll tell us no, because something we want isn't best for us. We have to ask God with the right motives, and then we'll receive whatever we ask for. Our **motive** is the reason we do something. In this case our motive is why we ask God for something. When you pray, ask yourself... *is this something I want for my own entertainment, or is this something I need or that I could use to bless others with????* God won't spoil us, but He does like to bless us. I prayed for a pick-up truck, and God blessed me with one!!! I am overjoyed to drive my little 84' Mazda. Sometimes God will give us what we want, even if we could do without... like a good parent, he likes to give us gifts, but he won't ruin us.

## **3. You can't serve 2 masters (vs. 4)**

**Reread vs. 4.** What is this verse talking about??? Does this mean if we have human friends, that we are God's enemies??? Of course not!!! Does it mean that we should destroy the planet because we don't want to be the "earth's" friend. Should we burn down the rainforest, throw our trash on the ground, and pee in our drinking water, just to prove we're not the "earth's friend"??? Of course not!!! This verse means the same thing Jesus said in...

### **Matthew 6:24 NIV**

No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.

Jesus and James both want us to know that we can't serve 2 masters. We can't serve God and stuff. We can't pursue after the things of this world, living only to make our wallets fat, and to get a lot of junk, and also seek God. It doesn't work. We have to make a choice. Who will you serve??? Will seek God first, trusting that He'll take care of your needs, or will your life consist of spending all your time and energy pursuing worldly pleasures.

**-Imagine:** A man named Barry spent his whole life chasing after money and stuff. All he wanted to do was have a huge house, two awesome cars, lots of money in the bank... and he got all that. He is old and laying on his death bed, sick with cancer. **ASK:** *Do you think Barry might look back on his life and wish he'd done something different???*

**-Imagine:** Joshua pursued God with all his might. He trusted God to take care of his needs, and though he never got rich, he always had food to eat, and clothes on his back. Joshua enjoyed worshipping God, not just at church, but with his lifestyle, everyday. Joshua led many people to the Lord, and he taught Sunday school at his church. He got to tell a lot of 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders about God. Many of those kids from his Sunday school class are now missionaries, pastors, and Godly fathers and mothers, who are raising their kids in God. Joshua did whatever God ever asked him to do. He's also old now, and he's laying on his death bed, dieing from cancer. **ASK:** *Do you think that Joshua wishes he could have served God less, and gotten more stuff???*  
The point is, I don't think there has ever been anyone who looked back at their life and wished they'd served God less. **Serving God brings fulfillment, serving the world does not.**

#### 4. Resist Satan, Seek God (vs. 7,8)

The devil is always out to destroy you. He wants you to fall into sin and reject God. The devil wants your life to be all messed up, but God wants what is best for you. The devil (or one of his little imps) will whisper in your ear. He'll try to tempt you and tell you to sin. The devil will tell you... "He SSSSally... don't lisssten to your parentsssss... they're losers. Just go to the party anyway. Jusssst lie to them and tell them you're going to see a movie."

You need to tell him to get lost!!!

The devil may come and whisper in your ear... "Hey man, check out that chick... she's hot sssstuff man. It's ok to ssssstare at her, everybody's doing it. Just lust after her... she'll never know the difference. It's ok to look as long as you don't touch."

You need to tell Satan to get lost, and turn your head the other way!!!

Don't let Satan play you... you have to let Him know who's boss. God is your boss. So resist the devil, and seek after God. The more you seek God, the better your relationship will be with Him. The closer you get to God, the closer He'll get to you.

**Illustration:** Have volunteer take one step at a time toward you. Take two or three steps, each time they take one. Embrace them.

#### 5. Humility Before Honor (vs. 6,10)

Everyone wants to be recognized. We all want to matter. And that's ok. The world tells you to get to the top, you've got to push everyone else out of the way, and claw your way up... even if you have to lie to get there. The Bible tells us if you want to be lifted

up higher, you have to lower yourself. Humility comes before honor. God's way is to take the way of a servant.

**Mark 9:35 NIV**

Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all."

"True humility is not looking down at your-self, but looking up to God." -Judson Cornwall

True humility is realizing that without God you'd be nothing, but that God does love you and that you do matter very much.

To truly be great, we must learn to look out for others, and give God the glory for all the great things He's done.

When we humble ourselves, God will lift us up.

**Altar Call:**

One way we humble ourselves is through true repentance. It's when we admit to God we are sinners, and we need His forgiveness. Only then can we be set free. God wants to set some people free tonight.