



Lesson 8: Getting Close to God (4:1-17)

As we are very familiar with at this point, throughout the epistle of James there are various subjects dealt with. The link that ties all these subjects together is that they are _____ of true, genuine faith. James 4 certainly fits into this basic theme. In summary, James 4 is all about how we can grow in our faith as we strive to be closer to God.

KEY VERSE = _____

How close are you to God? I can tell you exactly how close you are. You are as close as you want to be. God is as willing to get close to you as you are willing to get close to Him. We ought to be consciously, conscientiously, and constantly be drawing near to God and we ought to be doing it on a daily basis.

James makes it very clear in chapter 4, if you want to be close to God there are some things that you must not do.

DON'T _____ WITH OTHERS (4:1-3)

Having declared at the end of chapter three that true wisdom is filled with peace and false wisdom is filled with strife, James naturally begins chapter four with some remarks on the genesis of strife. Strife springs from our own _____. The word "lusts" (*hedonon*) literally means "_____". "It is the source of our English word "hedonism," the designation of the philosophy that views pleasure as the chief goal of life.

So where does all this fighting come from? Problems comes when you put your _____ above what others want!

DON'T _____ THE _____ (4:4-5)

One of the most definitive and decisive statements in all of the Bible is found in verse 4, "Friendship with the world is _____ with God."

He who determines to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God, not because God _____ him but because he _____ God.

DON'T RESIST GOD'S _____ (4:6-10)

To whom does God give grace? God gives grace to the _____. To whom then does God withhold his grace?

The _____ are resisters of God's grace. The great danger of is that it feeds off our goodness. It wants us to feel good about ourselves. Pride is the _____ of the soul. Its roots go deep; only a little left behind sprouts again. Its seeds lodge in the tiniest of cracks and it flourishes in good soil.

DON'T _____ YOUR FRIENDS (4:11-12)

_____ others is a blasphemous sin. Those who speak evil of other believers set themselves up as judges and condemn them. They thereby defame and disregard God's law which forbids slanderous condemnation.

This becomes another test of genuine growing _____. Where you have a life pattern of habitual, malicious, condemning, slanderous speech, it betrays an evil heart not a new creation in Christ.

DON'T _____ GOD'S WILL (4:13-17)

Being self-sufficient and relying completely on yourself is a terrible sin in the sight of God. Why? Because self-sufficiency is _____ without _____.

Life is short! Find out God's will for you right now and do it! Most people go about living life the way they want, seldom considering God. The Christian should be different. He should live as one who acknowledges God and confesses his dependency on Him.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

It is well past time that you learned what to put on your plate. By that I mean you need to recognize what should be important in your life and live like it. Your life is a mist. It is here today and gone tomorrow. Live with one purpose in mind –

GETTING _____ TO GOD!

The challenge from James remains the same today as it was when this letter was first written to the church at Jerusalem. The sad reality is that there still remain Christians who dwell apart from close fellowship with their Savior.