

BLUEPRINT

FOR A FAITH THAT WORKS

Sermon-Based Study Guide
Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church
James 4.1-10 | August 4, 2019

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I. Introduction to this Study

This week we continue reading the blueprint drawn up by Jesus' younger, half-brother. In the verses before us, James frames what life looks like when we don't employ the wisdom given by God.

II. Connecting with One Another

Can you remember, as a child, having one singular, exclusive, best friend?

What happened when they weren't your best friend anymore?

III. Study the Text

- a. Begin by rereading last week's passage, James 3.13-18. Then continue reading through 4.3.

What theme connects the end of chapter 3 with the beginning of 4?

- b. Imagine being asked why people quarrel, fight, or wage war. What reason would you give?

In the first three verses of chapter 4, James gives his own explanation. How does James' explanation differ from your own?

- c. When James addresses the "desires that battle within [us]" he uses the word *hēdonē*, where we get the English word "hedonism."

What desires battle within you? How could they prompt you to quarrel and fight?

What trusted friend can you talk with about these desires?

- d. In verse 3, James explains why some are not having their prayers answered. What reason does he give? What does that have to do with it?

- e. Read James 4.4-6.

James accuses his readers of adultery, but he doesn't mean they have been unfaithful in their marriages. What does he mean?

- f. We read about "the world" throughout the Christian Scriptures. On one hand, we know that "God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son..." On the other hand, we read that "friendship with the world means enmity against God."

What do you think James means by "the world"?

- g. What are some ways Christians can easily drift along with "the world" that are actually in conflict with God's will as revealed in Scripture?

How, then, can we be *in* world but not *of* it?



After thinking about that previous question, read Romans 12.1-2. How does Paul answer that question? How can we be in the world but not of it?

h. Read James 4.7-10.

James gives a number of commands in these verses. What are practical ways you could live out each one? Take your time and make some notes below:

Submit to God:

Resist the devil:

Draw near to God:

Repent (Wash/Purify):

Grieve your sin:

Humble yourself:

i. What an astonishing statement: "Draw near to God and he will draw near to you."

What holds you back from drawing nearer to God?

j. James seems to think that humility has something to do with resisting the devil and drawing near to God. What is the connection?

IV. Pray

a. Before praying, pause and reflect on your most common prayer requests. What are they? How well do they align with God's "good, pleasing and perfect will"?

b. Confess any way that you have become friends with the world – and receive God's forgiveness,

c. Ask for God's wisdom in knowing how to *love* the world without being *friends*,

d. Pray for the ministry of Good Shepherd, that everything we do would invite all people to grow into a Christ-centered life in God's family.

V. Digging Deeper

a. For other examples of "adultery" as unfaithfulness in relationship with God, see Jeremiah 3, Ezekiel 16, and Hosea 1.

