

James 4:1-10

Discussion Group Questions

6. Being a friend of the world results in conflict with others, yourself, and God. Why is it so hard to see the conflict within ourselves and with God?
7. External conflict is the result of internal conflict. When you look at the relationships in your life, if there is conflict, have you owned up to the fact you are part of the problem?
8. What steps are you taking in your family to model for your spouse, kids, parents, and siblings what it means to take a stand against the devil?
9. What does it mean to grieve, mourn and wail over your sin? How have the tears you shed opened your eyes to the truth about God and the greater grace he gives?
10. Do you believe that if you draw near to God that he will draw near to you? Share a time in your journey with Jesus where you could feel the love of God as you drew near to him.
11. Read 1 Chronicles 28:9. How would your life be different if someone would have shared these words with you as a kid? How many of the students and children in our church will hear this message from their parents? Should they? How could these words change a person, a church, a community, the world?
12. What does it mean for God to lift you up and what are some examples of how he has continued to form you into the image of his Son?

May 25, 2008

LESSON 8

Rev. Dan Luebcke

For discussion following the sermon on May 25, 2008

Wholly Surrendered - To God or To The World?

Key Points

In last week's text, we were challenged to look deeply into our hearts and consider if the wisdom we are living our lives by comes from heaven or from the devil. The test to see which wisdom you live by was to consider whether you are harboring bitter envy and selfish ambition, or whether you are pure, peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy, good fruit, impartial and sincere. Now James brings us to the climax of this section and says that either you are wholly surrendered to God or to the world. This manifests itself in how we live. Living a life that puts our own desires at the center results in being the enemy of God.

But in his grace, he has provided a way out through humility. Those who lay their pride at the foot of the cross and submit to God, resist the devil, come near to God, wash their hands, purify their hearts, grieve, mourn, wail, change their laughter to mourning and their joy to gloom, and humble themselves before the Lord, will be lifted up and promised a seat at the banquet table.

Leader's Guide

Personal Preparation

- Do the actions of your life show that you are double-minded or single-minded in your devotion to God?
- When was the last time you thought about the fighting and quarreling that comes out of your mouth and actions, and not coming from what someone did to you but coming from the evil desires of your heart?
- How great is God's grace to save you? Why is it so easy to forget? Why do we think God's grace can't save those who are far from him?
- What desires are battling inside you that are causing you to look more like a friend of the world than a friend of God?
- Ask someone you know, love and respect this week if the actions in your life display that you love God or the world.
- What areas of your life need to be submitted to God?
- Have you forgotten that you can take a stand against the devil now that you are "in Christ?" What does taking a stand against the devil look like in your own life?
- How has your definition of repentance changed after you considered James' call in verses 7-10?
- In verses 7-10, which of the ten commands do you struggle with the most? Why? What steps can you take this week to move one step closer to being more conformed to the image of Jesus Christ?
- Who is an enemy of God in your circles that needs to hear about the repentance James speaks about?
- Think back to what your relationship with your earthly father was like and whether or not when you drew near to him, did he draw near to you?
- Do you believe that you can know God intimately? Do you believe it's possible to experience God like Paul did in Acts 17:27?
- Read Philippians 2:5-11 and journal your thoughts about how Jesus is the ultimate model of humility.
- Find ten minutes this week to be in solitude and silence and read verses 7-10 over and over asking God to find any offensive way in you.

Group Preparation

What James says in verses 7-10 is the culmination of all that has preceded it. Go back through and read each section of scripture that we have studied and add verses 7-10 to the end of each reading (see especially 2:14-26; 3:1-12; 3:13-18).

Discussion Questions:

1. What causes you to fight and quarrel in your relationships with your family, friends and co-workers (4:1-2)?
2. What does it mean to be a "friend of the world?" Why does James equate it with hating God and committing adultery?
3. What should one who realizes he/she is not a genuine Christian do as a result of this text?
4. How would you explain verse 7 to an 8-year-old this summer at VBS? Or in your home?
5. Why does James use Proverbs 3:34? What does it mean that God opposes the proud? What does it mean that God gives grace to the humble?