**Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**James Chapter 4 Study Questions**

1. Were the brethren James addressed enjoying a unified loving relationship with each other?   
 

2. What is the source of the problems occurring amongst these brethren?   
 

3. What solution to the problems among these brethren did James give?   
    
 

4. How does humility play into our reception of salvation?   
    
 

5. Should a Christian wait until the next day to repent and confess of sin they have committed?   
 

6. What did James teach about accountability in this chapter?

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| **James Chapter 4**  **Verse 1**: *“From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?”*James chapter 3 ended with a comparison of earthly and heavenly wisdom.  Chapter 4 begins by addressing this worldly wisdom’s effect on the brethren James is addressing.  There is fighting among them, which is a direct result of worldly wisdom (James 3:15-16).  James begins this verse by questioning those addressed of the source of their fighting.  He wants to them to consider why they are fighting.  These Jewish Christians were biting and devouring one another.  In the second part of this verse James tells them where the problem is from.  It was their own lusts that caused them to err in this way.  They were using worldly wisdom.  Paul wrote of this mentality to the Christians in the area of Galatia (Galatians 5:15-17).  **Verse 2-3**: *“Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.”*  The desire of these brethren is left unfulfilled.  They have been fighting amongst themselves, but what they want has not been granted.  The Lord desires brethren to dwell together in unity (Psalms 133:1), not in division (I Corinthians 1:10).  If they desired something they should have asked God for it.  God promises to grant those things we seek (Matthew 7:7-11) so long as our requests are made in faith (James 1:6-7).  While we consider requests made in faith let’s remember that the source of our faith is the word of God (Romans 10:17).  Our prayers should be for things that we know are good, not those things that are worldly.  If our faith is in the word then our knowledge of the word will help us in requesting proper things in prayer.  Some of the prayers of these brethren were not answered because their prayers were of their own lusts.  They asked “amiss” which means “improperly or wrongly” (Thayer).  Our context shows the worldliness of these brethren.  God is not going to grant the requests of worldly people and help them to remain in sin.  **Verse 4**: *“Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”*  These brothers and sisters in Christ were committing spiritual adultery against the Lord.  Certainly other places in the Bible show God’s use of these terms to show the spiritual adultery of His people (Exodus 34:15, Jeremiah 3:20, Hosea 4:12, and Matthew 12:39).  The summary of this verse needs to be heard by all saints.  You cannot be a friend of the world and of God.  Upon conversion we are taken from the darkness of this world (Colossians 1:13).  We are not to love this world or the works of this world (I John 2:15-17).  When one becomes a Christian they must leave the cares of this world behind and follow the Lord (Luke 9:59-62).  **Verse 5**: *“Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?”*  James refers to the “Scripture” here as a whole.  It is evident because there is no one verse that he is making reference to.  We can come to the conclusion James has here, by looking at several verses, but this is not a quote of just one.  Man has his own spirit (Ecclesiastes 3:21 and I Corinthians 2:11).  Our spirit often times causes us to want what is someone else’s possession (Genesis 37:3-36 [cf. Acts 7:9] and II Samuel 11:2-27).  This is the spirit of the flesh that Paul spoke of in I Corinthians 3:3.  **Verse 6**:*“But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.”*  In answering our previous verse, James says God [the giver of the spirit of man] gives more grace.  We as mankind have proven our desire to sin, but God gave so greatly that we can overcome that sin.  God gave His only begotten son (John 3:16 and Romans 5:6-9).  James concludes this verse with reference being made to Proverbs 3:34.  This rendering of Proverbs 3:34 is a quote from the Greek translation of the Old Testament known as the “Septuagint”.  God’s view on pride is very clear in the Bible (Proverbs 6:16-19, Proverbs 8:13, Proverbs 16:18, and Proverbs 29:23).  God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble (I Peter 5:5-6).  Pride is often what stands between God and man.  Submission requires humility, but we as human beings often have a problem with admitting that we cannot do things on our own.  Ephesians 2:8-9 serves as a difficult passage to those who think they can pave their own way into Heaven.  **Verse 7**: *“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”* Submission to God requires humility (II Chronicles 7:14 and Matthew 18:3-4).  Once we submit to God we will naturally oppose the devil and all he represents.  By our resistance the devil will flee (Matthew 4:1-11).  However, once the devil flees we must remember not to get proud and think we can overcome every temptation.  Once we get that attitude we are bound to fall (I Corinthians 10:12) and as soon as we think that the devil has left we have forgotten that he is a predator (I Peter 5:8) and the nature of a predator is to attack when least expected.  **Verse 8**: *“Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.”*James expresses to these brethren that they need to come back to God.  He does so in a similar way that Isaiah did to God’s people of old (Isaiah 1:15-20).  James points out that they need to purify their hearts.  The heart of man is his soil in which the word of God works (Matthew 13:3-23).  Our hearts contain our thoughts and intentions (Hebrews 4:12).  It is important that our hearts are right so that we can obey the word of the Lord.  James concludes this verse by pointing out that they are “double minded” which shows they were doubters.  James is the only penman of the N.T. to use this phrase and he did it twice; here and in James 1:8.  **Verse 9**: *“Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.”* James tells them to react by mourning.  Sorrow brings repentance (II Corinthians 7:9-10), and that is certainly what these brethren needed to do.  **Verse 10**: *“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.”*  Again, we find the need for humility in this text.  Obedience demands us to put aside our pride.  Matthew 23:12 shows the different results of those who would humble themselves opposed to the proud who lift themselves up.  **Verses 11-12**: *“Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.  There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?”* These brethren have been at war with each other.  The attitude these brethren have towards each other is wrong (John 13:34-35, Hebrews 13:1, and I Peter 1:22).  There is judgment of motives going on that is unscriptural (Matthew 7:1).  In judging their brethren they are disregarding the law of Christ.  They are not judging righteous judgment (John 7:24).  This does not negate the need to practice discipline in the local church (Romans 16:17-18, I Corinthians 5:1-13, and II Thessalonians 3:6; 14-15).  What is wrong is when brethren use their envy and worldly wisdom to cast judgment upon brethren.  God alone is the judge who can save and condemn (II Corinthians 5:10).  The Lord is the righteous judge (II Timothy 4:8).  God alone is able to know the heart of a person (I Samuel 16:7).  **Verses 13-14**: *“Go to now, ye that say, To day or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appeared for a little time, and then vanishes away.”* After telling these brethren they are wrong and they need to change, James places a very heavy subject within our text.  Life is brief.  If we have things we need to get in order we cannot wait until later.  Tomorrow is not promised to us (Proverbs 27:1).  **Verses 15-16**:*”For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.  But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil.”*  James is bringing the reality to these brethren that life is not in our hands.  We have tomorrow if and only if the Lord grants it.  We could die today or the Lord could come tonight (Matthew 24:42).  These brethren were rejoicing in their empty talk.  We are nothing on the speck of eternity.  Life here or in the hereafter will go on with or without us.  Man needs to recognize his place!  **Verse 17**: *“Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.”*  Accountability is to those who can know.  Sin is transgression of God’s law (I John 3:4).  James is telling these brethren, now you know.  When the law is revealed no one can stand before God and say “I did not know”.  If that is truthful it was because of choice, not circumstance.  These brethren now know they must repent, they know time is limited, and James concludes by showing them they are accountable.  The price for their sins if they do not repent will be great (Romans 6:23 and Luke 13:3; 5).  **2003 by Brian A. 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