

Book of James Study

Men of Grace

November 3, 2009

James 4:1 - 12

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Major Themes

Three major themes – repeated

- ***Trials and testing of faith***
- ***Wisdom – especially in the areas of speech and obedience***
- ***Riches and Poverty***

Main Idea

Main Idea of James

In the midst of your financial trials and social tensions you need to repent of your drift into worldliness and commit to single-minded faith in God alone

Outline

Outline of James

- I. ***Greetings (1:1)***
- II. ***Statement of Three Key Themes (1:2-11)***
 - A. ***Trials in the Christian Life (1:2-4)***
 - B. ***Wisdom (1:5-8)***
 - C. ***Riches and Poverty (1:9-11)***

Outline of James – con't

III. ***Restatement of the Three Themes (1:12-27)***

- A. ***Trials/Temptations in Relation to God (1:12-18)***
- B. ***Wisdom in the Areas of Speech and Obedience (1:19-26)***
- C. ***The "Have-Nots" and the Responsibility of the "Haves": The Thesis of the Letter (1:27)***

Outline of James – con't

IV. **The Three Themes Expanded (2:1-5:18)**A. **Riches and Poverty (2:1-26)**

1. **Favoritism Condemned (2:1-13)**
2. **The Problem of Faith without Works (2:14-26)**

E. **Wisdom and Speech (3:1-4:12)**

1. **The Power of the Tongue (3:1-12)**
2. **Wisdom from Above and Wisdom from Below (3:13-18)**
3. **The Misuse of Speech in Quarrels and Slander (4:1-12)**

7

Outline of James – con't

C. **Trials and Temptations (4:13-5:18)**

1. **Planning apart from God's Will (4:13-17)**
2. **Responding to Oppression (5:1-12)**
3. **Anointing Prayer for Serious Illness (5:13-18)**

V. **Closing (5:19-20)**

8

James 4:1-12

Main Idea

Christians should reject strife and humbly submit to God in order to be his rather than the world's friend. A key test case for demonstrating this transformation involves how one speaks to and about other people.

9

Outline of James 4:1-12

I. **The Misuse of Speech in Quarrels and Slander**A. **Christians should reject strife as stemming from friendship with the world (vv. 1-6).**

1. **The question raised and answered: Where does strife come from? From our evil natures (v. 1).**
2. **The behavior observed: Strife among Christians does not satisfy their desires (vv. 2-3).**

10

Outline of James 4:1-12 – con't

3. **The question and answer rephrased: Where does all this selfishness come from? From friendship with the world, which is incompatible with friendship with God (v. 4).**
 4. **The appeal to Scripture: God does not want us to act this way and makes it possible for us not to act this way (vv. 5-6).**
- B. **Christians should humbly submit to God in response to his friendship (vv. 7-10).**
1. **The main point stated: Submit to God (v. 7a).**
 2. **Three commands on how to do this (vv. 7b-9).**
 3. **The main point restated: Humble yourselves before God (v. 10).**

11

Outline of James 4:1-12 – con't

C. **Christians should reject slander as one particularly insidious manifestation of strife (vv. 11-12).**

1. **Slandering fellow believers slanders God's law, which prohibits such action (v. 11a).**
2. **This usurps God's role as sole judge by placing believers in a position of judging God's law instead of obeying it (vv. 11b-12).**

12

James 4:1 - 12

Matthew 5:21 - 22

21 "You have heard that our ancestors were told, 'You must not murder. If you commit murder, you are subject to judgment.' 22 But I say, if you are even angry with someone, you are subject to judgment! If you call someone an idiot, you are in danger of being brought before the court. And if you curse someone, you are in danger of the fires of hell."

13

James 4:1 - 12

1 John 2:15

"Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you."

15

James 4:1 - 12

Philippians 2:4

"Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too."

17

James 4:1 - 12

Matthew 16:4

"Only an evil, adulterous generation would demand a miraculous sign, but the only sign I will give them is the sign of the prophet Jonah." Then Jesus left them and went away.

14

James 4:1 - 12

Proverbs 3:34

"He mocks proud mockers but gives grace to the humble."

16

James 4:1 - 12

Stulac suggests three ways in which Christians are often too quick to criticize: "judging the motives behind others' words or actions in church business, judging how others spend money and judging how others are rearing their children."

--- Stulac, George M. James. IVP New Testament Commentary. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1993.

18

James 4:1 - 12

Discussion Questions:

1. ***What does it mean to be a “friend of the world” in vs. 4? Why does James think this is bad?***
2. ***How do we “humble ourselves before God” (vs. 7)? What does this entail?***
3. ***What do you learn about prayer in vs. 2 – 3?***

Thank You

4:1 WHAT IS CAUSING THE QUARRELS
AND FIGHTS AMONG YOU?

DON'T THEY COME FROM THE EVIL DESIRES
AT WAR WITHIN YOU?

2. YOU WANT WHAT YOU DON'T HAVE,
SO YOU SCHEME AND KILL TO GET IT.
YOU ARE JEALOUS OF WHAT OTHERS HAVE,
BUT YOU CAN'T GET IT,
SO YOU FIGHT AND MAKE WAR
TO TAKE IT AWAY FROM THEM.

YET.

YOU DON'T HAVE WHAT YOU WANT
BECAUSE YOU DON'T ASK FOR IT.

3 AND

EVEN WHEN YOU ASK,
YOU DON'T GET IT
BECAUSE YOUR MOTIVES ARE ALL WRONG —
— YOU WANT ONLY WHAT WILL GIVE YOU PLEASURE.

4:4 YOU ADULTERS!

DON'T YOU REALIZE
THAT FRIENDSHIP WITH THE WORLD
MAKES YOU AN ENEMY OF GOD?

I SAY IT AGAIN:

IF YOU WANT TO BE A FRIEND OF THE WORLD,
YOU MAKE YOURSELF AN ENEMY OF GOD.

5 WHAT DO YOU THINK THE SCRIPTURES MEAN WHEN THEY SAY
"THAT THE SPIRIT GOD HAS PLACED WITHIN US
IS FILLED WITH ENVY?"

6 BUT

HE GIVES US EVEN MORE GRACE
TO STAND AGAINST SUCH EVIL DESIRES.

AS THE SCRIPTURES SAY,

"GOD OPPOSES THE PROUD
BUT FAVORS THE HUMBLE."

4:7 So

HUMBLE YOURSELVES BEFORE GOD.
RESIST THE DEVIL

AND HE WILL FLEE FROM YOU.

8 COME CLOSE TO GOD

AND HE WILL COME CLOSE TO YOU.

WASH YOUR HANDS, YOU SINNERS;
PURIFY YOUR HEARTS,

FOR YOUR LOYALTY IS DIVIDED

BETWEEN GOD AND THE WORLD.

9 LET THERE BE TEARS FOR WHAT YOU HAVE DONE.

LET THERE BE SORROW AND DEEP GRIEF.

LET THERE BE SADNESS INSTEAD OF LAUGHTER,

AND GLOOM INSTEAD OF JOY.

10. HUMBLE YOURSELVES BEFORE THE LORD,

AND HE WILL LIFT YOU UP IN HONOR.

4:11 DON'T SPEAK EVIL AGAINST EACH OTHER, DEAR BROTHERS.

IF YOU CRITICIZE AND JUDGE EACH OTHER,
THEN YOU ARE CRITICIZING AND JUDGING ~~GOD'S~~ LAW.

BUT

YOUR JOB IS TO OBEY THE LAW

NOT TO JUDGE WHETHER IT APPLIES TO YOU.

12. GOD ALONE, WHO GAVE THE LAW,
IS THE JUDGE.

HE ALONE HAS THE POWER TO SAVE
OR TO DESTROY.

SO,

WHAT RIGHT DO YOU HAVE
TO JUDGE YOUR NEIGHBOR?