

James

Junior High Bible Study Guide

Week 4, Day 3

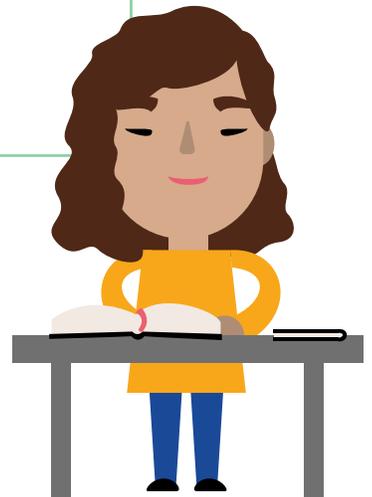
A Powerful Enemy

Before you begin...

- Do you have your notebook and pen?
- Do you have your Bible?
- Pray and ask God to help you understand His Word and to help you be a hearer of the Word AND a doer!



Question: What do you think is the reason you get into fights with your siblings? If you're a perfect angel at home, then what causes the arguments with that BFF of yours?



Sin is a powerful enemy that can only be beaten with God's help.

Sin is a powerful thing. It is an awful force. Nothing can flip your world upside down faster than sin.

Sin is a powerful enemy. Sin is at the heart of all our problems. You can know this is true just by reading through the Bible. There are so many stories of people doing great and incredible things for God, yet they all dealt with sin. We see it over and over and over...

Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon, Paul, and Peter... just to name a few.

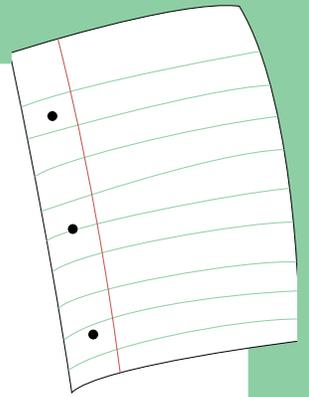
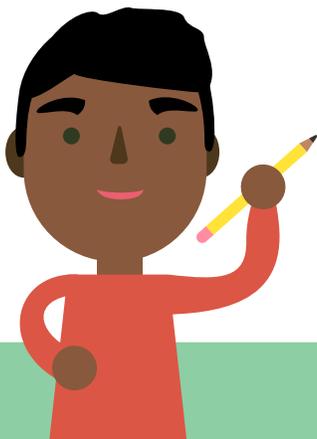
Sin is something that all of us are dealing with. It is a powerful and destructive force that can take over in a hurry. It's like an infection, and one that spreads quickly. Things can get out of control fast. It's the same with sin.

I bet you've heard this saying before:
Sin will take you farther than you ever wanted to go.
It will keep you longer than you ever wanted to stay.
Sin will cost you more than you ever wanted to pay.

Maybe you can identify with that today? Maybe you are in a situation that feels like that?
You have gone farther than you wanted in sin.
You have stayed longer than you intended to.
You are paying way more than you thought possible.

Today and tomorrow, James will help us think right about sin. Today, we will look at the first half of our big idea.

Big idea: Sin is a powerful enemy that can only be beaten with God's help.



James 4:1-5

v.1 quarrels and fights: conflicts between people. These get escalated to “wars” when they are ongoing.

v.4 enmity: opposed, against, hostile towards someone or something. Think: enemy.

¹ What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?

² You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask.

³ You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.

⁴ You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

⁵ Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, “He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us”?

v.3 you ask wrongly: asking in an evil manner. Even when you do ask God, you have wicked motivations. You only care about you and what you want.

v.5 yearns jealously: the unbeliever’s spirit is bent on doing evil. You have a spirit that desires wickedness (the opposite of God’s way of doing things).

Weekly Word Challenge

This week’s verse is a little more challenging. A few more words are gone. See if you can fill in the blanks without looking.

Memory Verse: James 4:8

_____ near to _____, and _____ will _____ near to _____. _____ your hands you sinners, and _____ your hearts, you double-minded.

Now write the entire verse again in your notebook.



I Have No Idea...

Today's word is **passions** (v. 1).

What do you think this is about? Take a guess and then look it up in a JMAC Study Bible. Write a sentence explaining it in your own words.



Observations from a Youth Pastor

James taught us last time that those who truly display God's wisdom will be peacemakers. You could look at James 3:18 if you need a refresher. Those who have genuinely had their heart changed by God to understand and live how He expects will live in peace with one-another.

Our section today begins with a question that you may hear a lot: (insert mom or dad voice) "Why are you two fighting!?"

James asks the same question:

What causes fights and quarrels among you?

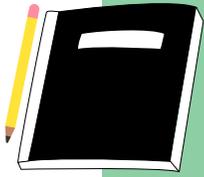
The answer is sin.

James was writing to a church that was going through a lot.

- Some were being oppressed.
- Some were being ignored.
- Some were living in blatant sin and saying that it was OK.
- Others were saying this is really wrong and needs to stop.

The language they used towards each other was not good; they were destroying each other inside this church with their strongest weapons they had → **their words**.

I'm guessing a lot of people were overwhelmed by the sin all around them. I'm sure they felt like they were losing the battle with sin personally and with one another, and they had no idea what to do.



Notebook Time (Don't forget to write your answers down!)

What do you do when you feel overwhelmed by sin (your own, or the sin of others around you)?

In verses 1–6, we will see just how far sin can take us. We will see just how deep sin can go.

1. Sin leads us to fight with others.

James is asking if these believers knew why there were quarrels and conflicts among them. These believers in the church were fighting with other believers. They weren't fighting with their co-workers, or neighbors (well, maybe if they went to church together), but with other Christians.

They were fighting with people with whom they had one of the greatest bonds possible. They were fighting with their brothers and sisters in Christ.

And 'quarreling and fighting' are terms of warfare.

Interesting when you put them together. Quarreling speaks of war. This is serious. A huge battle with even bigger consequences. And the word fighting, or your Bible may use the word conflict...listen to this, it's a type of fighting WITHOUT weapons.

That's a strange picture of war isn't it?

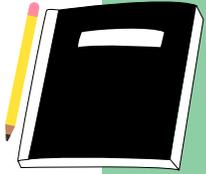
Can you picture two armies running towards each other on the battlefield. Screaming and preparing for an epic battle? They are running full steam at each other. These two armies about to collide in battle, BUT...they don't have weapons?!

What kind of battle is this? What kind of war is this?

It's a battle that's as serious as war, but one that is fought with **words** instead of **swords**.

How quickly sin leads us to fight with others. It happens so fast doesn't it? Things can be going so well, and within seconds, an explosion! Before we know it, we are in a war of words.

Has that ever happened to you?



Notebook Time (Don't forget to write your answers down!)

1. Have you been in a war of words lately?
2. Do you remember why you were fighting?
3. Was it worth it?

Read verses 1–3 again.

Sin leads you to fight with others. Also...

2. Sin leads you to fight with yourself.

Sin wants you to let your pleasures take control of your life, rather than God. It's the reason you fight with others around you. It's the reason you have fights with yourself.

You have desires and passions within you. What are these about? These are words that remind us that if we think something is going to make us happy or bring some sense of joy, then we do it no matter the cost.

As a Christian we desire to do what pleases God. We want to do the right thing.

BUT

Sin makes us fight with ourselves, and we're tempted to do what pleases us instead of God.

It lies to us and says:

- You deserve to feel good about you! Go ahead and tear others down to make yourself feel better.
- You don't deserve to be in trouble...lie to get what you want. Cheat to get those grades.
- You deserve to be happy. Your parents don't really know what they're talking about. Do things your way!



Notebook Time (Don't forget to write your answers down!)

Read Romans 7:14–25. Describe Paul's struggle with sin in your own words.

You fight with yourself in wanting what you don't have (but in a wrong way). You are jealous and you can't get the things you want, so you fight, quarrel, and murder.

Murder seems a little bit odd, doesn't it?

In Matthew 5:21, Jesus helps us understand that anger and hatred are the same thing as murder. Hatred is a serious sin!

You can't get what you want, so you fight. You hate. You get so ANGRY!

Sin is leading you to fight with yourself.

Verse 2 says you don't have because you don't ask. You fight with yourself, refusing to ask God for help, even though you know He can help. Maybe you aren't asking for forgiveness? Maybe you aren't asking for help with the sin you keep going back to? Maybe you aren't asking for help to grow in your relationship with Him?

You're fighting with yourself, so you don't do the thing you should. Sin convinces you that you don't need God.

Tomorrow we will look at how our sin causes us to fight with God and even though sin is a powerful enemy, it is NO MATCH FOR GOD'S GRACE!



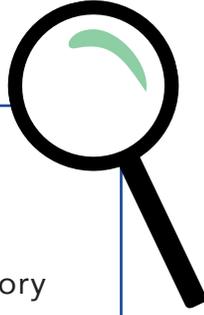
Notebook Time (Don't forget to write your answers down!)

Sometimes our desires lead us to sin. How can you fight against them? Where does the power to resist come from? (Look at Galatians 5:16 for a hint.)



What did you learn?

Sin is a powerful enemy. It's the source of our fighting. Because of your sin, you fight with others, and you fight with yourself.



Diggin' Deeper

Read John 15:1–6. In what category would you place the people who constantly give into their sin? Think about your own life—what do you love? What are you loyal to?



Put It into Practice!

Have you been fighting lately? Maybe with others or even yourself? What can you start doing today to be a peacemaker?



Pray

Today is a good day to write out your prayer. You may want to begin by asking for forgiveness for the way you've been using your words.

- Read Psalm 51:1–4. Ask God to forgive your sins and help you realize how costly your sin actually is.
 - If you're saved, let God know how thankful you are for your salvation.
 - If you have not trusted in Christ for salvation, ask Jesus to give you faith to believe and for the help to turn from sin.
- Ask for help to stop fighting with others and with yourself. Ask for help to desire the right things and for sin to be less tempting.
- Ask God for wisdom to understand how to live His way.