

# *Within the Word*

## *A Study of James 4*

### **A Note from Kathy**

*In the last chapter, James compared two kinds of wisdom, man's wisdom and God's wisdom, as well as the end to which they lead. This chapter is a warning, or a wake-up call, to two mindsets: worldliness and godliness. Let's be wise and pay close attention to all God wants to say to us in this chapter. Lord, speak to our hearts today as we study your word. We desire to hear from you. Amen.*

### **Observation**

1. The first subject the author addresses is fights and quarrels among believers. According to James 4:1-2, where do these fights and quarrels originate?
2. James states, "you want something but don't get ... you quarrel and fight. You do not have ... when you ask, you do not receive." Look closely again at verses 2-3, what reasons are given?
3. What does he call these people in verse 4? What sinful action is causing this?
4. The second half of verse 4 makes it very clear where the problem begins. In the following quote, circle the word that clarifies the problem: "Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God."
5. Verse 6 is a verse that is often quoted. Define the words below.  
  
proud -  
  
grace -  
  
humble -
6. I love lists. Lists help me plan and achieve my goals. Read closely verses 7-10, do you see a list? Circle the verbs in the text. What are we instructed to do. What is the goal? (It is not stated; you'll need to reason it out.)

7. James warns us against slandering one another. Slander is a serious offense. To slander is to defame, to injure maliciously, uttering a false report about someone - to tarnish or impair the reputation of one by false tales, maliciously told or passed on. When we slander someone, according to verses 11-12, what are we actually doing? Whose position of authority are we stepping into? Read 2 Corinthians 5:10 to find this answer.

**2 Corinthians 5:10**

*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.*

8. Goals can be very helpful, but when we leave God out of our plans, we leave ourselves open to disaster. Combine the warning found in verses 13-16 with Jeremiah 29:11. How should we make plans?

**Jeremiah 29:11**

*For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.*

9. Verse 17 is very clear: those who know what is right and good, and yet do not do it, are committing a sin. The Greek word used here for sin is *Hamartia*, which means to be without a share in, to miss the mark, to err, to be mistaken, to wander from the path of uprightness, to violate the divine law in thought or deed. Often, these are referred to as sins of commission and sins of omission. In the chart below, write a few examples of each.

Sins of commission	Sins of omission

## Application

1. Is it possible for believers to have the kind of discord described in James 4:1-5? If so, what can be done to alleviate this problem? As you write your answer, keep in mind, who is the only person you can truly control?

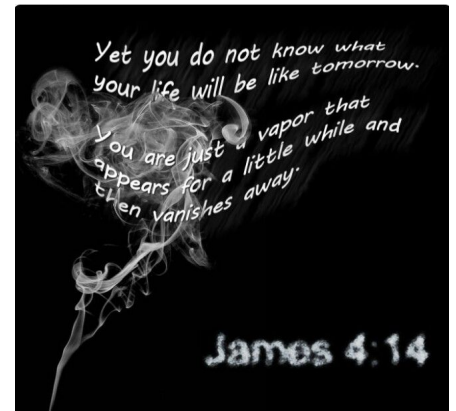
2. Verse 6 states, “God opposes the proud and gives grace to the humble.” What do pride and humility look like in when lived out?

Pride	Humility

3. Verses 7-10 provide us with the pattern for living a life that is pleasing to God, as well as what is instructed in Hebrews 12:14, “pursue peace with all people and holiness.” We truly are no match for Satan. According to these verses, what are we to do to ensure victory?

4. Why is it so easy to slip into an attitude of judgment? Just because I walk around the bench, and sit up on the judge’s seat, does that make me the rightful judge? Would anyone really take a judgment like that seriously? Why do we give so much weight to what others think or say about us? Whose opinion and judgment should we be concerned about?

5. James 4:14 paints a vivid picture of our life, from an eternal perspective. What does James compare our life to in this verse? How should we plan each day, if we truly believe our life is a part of God’s infinite plan?



6. As you studied James 4:17, what specifically did the Lord speak to you? Read John 9:39-41 before writing your answer. Jesus is speaking to the Pharisees, who wanted to debate the sins of a blind man that Jesus had just healed. They are offended by the directness of His words to them. What should their response have been? Greater knowledge of God and His word brings greater responsibility!

#### John 9:39-41

<sup>39</sup>Jesus said, “For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind. <sup>40</sup>Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, “What? Are we blind too?” <sup>41</sup>Jesus said, “If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains.”

7. Read 1 John 3:18-23 and Matthew 22:36-40 to go along with all we have learned during this study. It is God's desire that we know and walk in truth. If we learn to walk in truth, we can have the peace He gives to those who walk in obedience. Write a short prayer below, speaking directly to what you have learned this week. Peace may not be all around us, but God can give us peace within our hearts. It has been said, "God may not choose to calm the storm, but He can calm my heart and let the storm rage on."

**1 John 3:18-23**

*<sup>18</sup>Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth. <sup>19</sup>This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence: <sup>20</sup>If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. <sup>21</sup>Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God <sup>22</sup>and receive from him anything we ask; because we keep his commands and do what pleases him. <sup>23</sup>And this is His command: to believe in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as He commanded us.*

**Matthew 22:36-40**

*<sup>36</sup>Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law? <sup>37</sup>Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. <sup>38</sup>This is the first and greatest commandment. <sup>39</sup>And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. <sup>40</sup>All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."*