

GOD



LIFE

LIFE GOD'S WAY, ACCORDING TO
+ JAMES +

4



YES, NO & MAYBE

1. The people sitting near me are more selfish than I am.
2. Most of the arguments I'm involved in are not my fault.
3. I feel like I'm fighting a lot of battles inside myself lately.
4. Almost all the time, God gives me what I pray for.
5. I know how to make the devil run away from me, and I scare him off frequently.



DIG DEEPER

● **READ James 4:1-10 (NIV)**

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? 2 You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. 3 When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

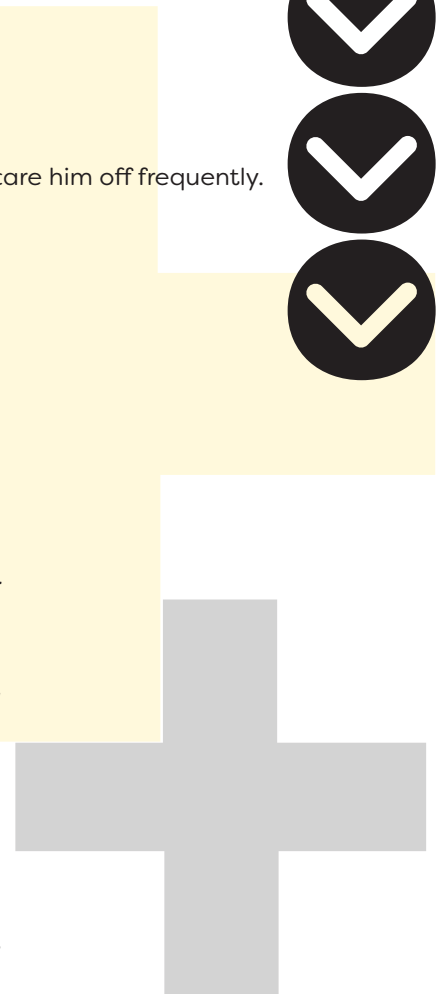
4 You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. 5 Or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us? 6 But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble."

7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

+ 1 fights and quarrels among you - The people were going to church for the wrong reason—not to help the church and advance it, but to advance themselves. Each wanted to be known as somebody. Each was seeking his or her own good instead of the good of brothers and sisters in Christ. This lust for prominence led them to 'murder' one another. No, things had not deteriorated to the point that they were actually drawing their swords in worship and hacking one another to death! But that lust had led them to hate one another, and hatred is inward murder.

+ 1 desires that battle within you - The word "desires" in the Greek is *hedone*, from which we derive the English word hedonism, the belief that pleasure is the chief good in life. James again uses a military metaphor "battle/at war" to describe the conflict. The verb is in the present tense and so may be rendered as "are constantly fighting" or "are always fighting."

+ 2 so you kill - Some of the new believers in these congregations were former Zealots, violent



NOTES

DIG DEEPER...CONTINUED

political activists. Because of this, many prominent scholars believe some may have actually become violent in the churches.

- Have you ever found yourself caught in the midst of a quarrel or battle in church? In your opinion, was it over something big or small?

+ 3 you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. - The verb *spend* can have a neutral meaning, but in Luke 15:14 it is used of the prodigal son wasting and squandering all he had. This obviously is the meaning intended here, as the gift is spent to satisfy personal desires. Because these people wanted the wrong things, they could not ask God for the right things. And because they were not asking God for the right things, they were not receiving anything from God

- What does this say about God and what kinds of prayers He will answer?

+ 4 You adulterous people - The way he addresses his readers is quite strong and surprising. The term of address is a feminine vocative, literally “adulteresses,” meaning people unfaithful to their marriage vows. The ‘world’ is James’s term for life that is lived as if this present world were all that there is. It is life that is lived without regard to God. It is life that is lived according to the values, desires and aspirations of this temporal realm. What is worldliness? It is thinking like the world, talking like the world, acting like the world

- Why do you think it is so difficult to be faithful and loyal to our relationship with God?

+ 5 he jealously longs for the spirit - The clause is understood in the good sense of “God is zealously devoted to ...” or “God truly cares about ...,” indicating God’s extreme care and great love for the human spirit to the point of wanting to claim absolute possession. The background of this thinking is found in passages like Exo 20:5 (also Exo 34:14; Deut 4:24), where the Lord is said to be “a jealous God” who tolerates no rivals—God demands undivided loyalty from his people. What James appears to say here, then, is that Christians are indwelt by God’s Spirit, and that the Spirit longs for the undivided loyalty and the love of God’s people. The unstated application of this is that it would be inconceivable for Christians to continue to live in accordance with their own sinful desires and passions.

- What does it say about God that He gets jealous?

+ 6 but he gives us more grace - Compared to our actions in verse 4, the contrast is that God’s grace is greater and stronger than our human tendency to sin. God treats us with even greater kindness than the world does.

- What does this offering of grace from God say about Him?

+ 7 resist the devil - The word devil (the Greek means “slanderer”) is used in the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew word from which comes the word “Satan” the adversary, slanderer, and accuser. The two words are used as identical in Rev 20:2. The devil is the source of temptation and evil, and his job is to separate people from God. The command is followed by a promise. The consequence of standing up to the devil is that he will flee from you. The devil can be resisted (Eph 6:13; 1 Pet 5:8-9). What James says here is this: If you fully accept the authority of God and are obedient to him, you can overcome the devil’s power; then he will “turn and run”, or “run away from you.”

- Why is it so difficult for us to resist the devil, and why is it also difficult for us to draw near to God?



THE BIBLE LAB
www.TheBibleLab.com

MY PRAYER...

1. How am I drawing nearer to God?
2. What do I consistently ask God for in my prayers, and how can I keep my motives pure?
3. What new aspect of God’s character does He want me to know?