

The Book of James

Chapter Four Workbook

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This Bible Study Workbook is designed to facilitate your study of Chapter Four of the Book of James. Upon completion of the study, it is recommended that you discuss your answers and insights with other Bible Students who also completed the workbook. Further information is available at www.free-online-bible-study.com

Workbook – James Chapter 4

James Chapter 4 (King James Version)

1 From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? 2 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. 3 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts. 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. 5 Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?

6 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith,

God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. 9 Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. 10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

11 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. 12 There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?

13 Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: 14 Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. 15 For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. 16 But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil.

17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

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DAY ONE

1. James asks the question “*what’s causing the fights and quarrels among you*”?

One commentator speculated that the context may have been those fights and troublemaking among the Jews that eventually led to rebellion against Roman authority. He then speculates that it was more likely fights among families and Jewish sects. He provides an analysis that James was warning the Christian converts not to become affected by the Jewish culture of that time that was predisposed to strife.¹ Another commentator cites evidence of the Jews in Egypt, Syria and other places the epistle would be read were killing those who were not Jewish because they would not convert to Judaism.²

Perhaps a survey of the Greek words used here will help us to understand the context. The Greek words for wars and fightings in the King James or fights and quarrels in the NIV are *polemos* and *mache* respectively. *Polemos* means the chronic state or campaign of a war while *mache* means the separate conflicts or battles in a war.³ The Greek word for members is *melos* which means a “limb” such as an arm or leg.⁴ New Testament Christians are likened to the members of the body collectively; that is, the body itself as the seat of the desires and passions. (See Romans 6:13,19; Romans 7:5,23; and Colossians 3:5)⁵

So putting this all together, we see that the probable context of the “wars” and “fightings” James speaks of are those that were occurring between and amongst the members or Christians of the early church. These Christians were members of one body who were fighting and quarreling among themselves. This was occurring thousands of years ago, but still occurs even today in the Christian church.

Why can’t we stop quarrelling and fighting amongst ourselves? Why does it still continue? Will it ever stop? When?

¹ Albert Barnes' Notes on the Bible
² Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible
³ Word Pictures in the New Testament
⁴ Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries
⁵ Albert Barnes' Notes on the Bible

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DAY TWO

1. How do these ideas already provided in the first three chapters of James help the reader avoid quarreling and fighting?

James 1:19-20

James 2:8-9

James 3:8

James 3:16-18

2. In the King James version James tells us in verse one that the wars and fighting among the believers come from their lust. He then uses the word lust as a verb in verse two and again in verse five. In verse three he says that they do not receive the things they ask for because they ask wrongly and because they would consume the things they ask for upon their lusts.

In verse one the Greek word for lust is *hedone* and means sensual pleasure, and by implication, desire. It is same word used in verse 3, but in verses 2 and 5 a different Greek word is used which denotes an intense craving or coveting for something. This same Greek word occurs in the first chapter of James where we read about lust in verses 14 and 15:

14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. 15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

James 1:14-15 KJV

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What is the result of lusting or lust in the following verses?

VERSE	RESULTS OF LUST
CH 1 VS 14	
CH 1 VS 15	
CH 4 VS 1	
CH 4 VS 2	
CH 4 VS 3	
CH 4 VS 5	

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DAY THREE

1. Lust and the results of lust is the theme or main idea of verses 1 through 5. What is the theme of verses 6 through 10?

2. How does the theme of lust in verses 1 through 5 relate to the theme or main idea of verses 6 through 10?

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DAY FOUR

1. List the commands and our results if we follow these commands from verses 7 through 10.

Vs	Command	Results from Following the Commands
7		
8		
9-10		

2. James says in verse 3 that we don't get what we want because we ask amiss and would spend it on our pleasures. Is it wrong for us to enjoy pleasure in this life on earth?

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DAY FIVE

1. James tells us not to slander one another in verse 11 and that when we judge our brothers or sisters we are judging the law. He says this is wrong for us to slander and judge one another.

What do the following verses help us understand about this Biblical truth?

- **James 4:12** - _____
- **Matthew 7:1-2** - _____
- **Romans 2:1** - _____
- **Romans 14:10-12** - _____
- **I Corinthians 4:3-5** - _____

2. As Christians are we never to judge actions or behavior of others? Can we judge others and yet not sin? What about the judges in our civil and criminal court systems and Christians on jury duty; do they sin when carrying out these duties?

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DAY SIX

**1. What exactly is the evil James speaks of in verses 13 through 16?
Why is this evil?**

2. Is James saying in verse 17 that we can sin by not doing something?
