

Sermon Study Guide

Pastor: Dr. Henry Schorr

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Sermon: James: Inside / Out: Humility – the Path to Peace

IN Opportunities to connect and pray as a group

1. If this is your group's first time meeting in the New Year, have each person share a significant event from their Christmas Season.
2. Pastor Henry referred to James (author of the book) as being 'blunt.' Who in your life has been one to 'not mince words' when speaking to you? Did you listen? Was their approach helpful?

UP Time that is devoted to the Word of God

1. Take time if necessary to review some of the James studies
<http://www.cschurch.ca/sermons/inside-out/>

**Read titles next column.

2. James addresses his readers as 'my brothers and sisters.' (Examples: 1:2, 16, 19; 2:1, 5;3:1, 10)
Why did he speak to them with this term? How did they respond when he dealt with them in this way? How have you responded to his teaching?
3. Contrast his terms 'brothers and sisters' with what he calls them in 4:4, 8.
Why did James change his tone when he used these descriptors?
How does James address his readers in 4:11? Why the change?
4. What reason does James give for the caustic relationships, the fights and quarrels which are a part of our daily lives at work, families, friendships and churches? What does the phrase 'desires that battle within you' mean?
Why does this cause the fights and quarrels?
5. Pastor Henry points out that there is a 'cost' to this kind of lifestyle. What are the costs? Who pays? (4:3-5)
6. How do James 4:4-10 identify the 'cure'? Make a list of the verbs that James uses. What does each mean? How would this play out in your life?
Which one(s) would be most difficult for you?

OUT Seek to be the Community of God's people in your community

1. Look at your relationships which have resulted in conflict. What has been your role? What costs are involved? How has this affected your relationship with God? What changes do you need to make?
2. Main thing for me is: _____
3. How can your group pray for you?

UP – IN – OUT reflect a balanced life including a focus on our personal relationship with the Father (UP), staying connected to the Body (IN), and reaching our world (OUT).

THE WORD (NIV)

James 4:1-10

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? ²You 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. ³When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

⁴You 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. ⁵Or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us? ⁶But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says:

"God opposes the proud
but shows favor to the humble."

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

**When You Meet the Real Jesus	James 1:1
When You Face Trials	1:1-12
When You Face Temptation	1:13-18
When You Face God's Truth	1:19-22
When You Face God's Truth (#2)	1:22-27
What? Me Discriminate?	2:1-13
True Faith	2:14-26
The Power of the Tongue	3:1-12
True Wisdom	3:13-18

Sermon Study Summary

In chapter 4 of his letter, James identifies the causes, cost and cure for conflicts in our world, workplace, community, church, marriage and family. He asks, “What CAUSES fights and quarrels among you?” In other words, why are there conflicts in our relationships? His answer is blunt: don’t they come from desires that battle within you? (v1, 2) ‘Desires’ comes from the same Greek word as ‘hedonism’ meaning to have a strong desire to satisfy myself, to be at the centre of the universe; it’s about me—me—me. My life is defined by selfishness, selfish ambition and what I need or want from others. Bring two people together, each set on their own way, and there is tension and conflict. You get angry, covet, quarrel, fight and even kill because you cannot get what you want to have. (v2)

So you don’t think you’re responsible for what’s wrong in our world? Then the next time you are angry or envious, ask yourself “Am I upset because someone didn’t admire/serve/please/respect me?” If you have to say ‘Yes’ then you are like everyone else. Yet God never intended the world to revolve around us. Life isn’t about us, it’s about God. Until He is the centre of our lives, we will never be free from the selfishness, emptiness and competition of our culture. The ‘battle’ is about whom am I going to trust? Who or what is the source of my significance, value and fulfillment in life?

There are COSTS when we put ourselves rather than God at the centre of the universe. (v2b-6)

1. Our prayers will be unanswered. God promised to meet all our legitimate needs if we ask Him. But when we put ourselves and our happiness first, we won’t ask Him because we trust ourselves. The quality of our prayer life reflects this; we don’t pray much unless we try to manipulate God to give us what we desire—to support us and our counterfeit gods. (v3) James calls this ‘spiritual adultery.’ Becoming a Christ-follower means entering into an intimate, loving relationship with God. He wants a vibrant friendship with us so He is jealous when we choose to be our own god, a friend of the world and give our highest affection to a counterfeit idol. That is a spiritual affair—having an adulterous heart. (v4, 5)

2. We put ourselves in opposition to God when we are arrogant and our passions are for things other than God. In Scripture, nothing evokes His wrath more than stubborn pride but He loves us too much to let us go and to destroy our lives. (v6)

The CURE for conflict in relationships is through a life of humility. (v6b-10) Humility means I do not have an inflated spirit, but believe that God is God and I’m not; that He is all-powerful, all-knowing and all-wise but I am not. Humility means admitting I don’t have it all together—this is hard for most of us to admit and we may not see the ugliness of pride and the beauty of humility until we are old. (v14) There is so much anger and relational conflict in our world because there is too little humility in our hearts; we are far too much in love with ourselves and want our own way.

1. Submit yourself to God. ‘Submit’ is a military term meaning to assemble and come to attention under your commander and his authority. Submitting to God shows I’ve made a mess of things and me being in charge doesn’t work; I can’t win this battle on my own. I surrender to God’s will and ask Him to change me.

2. Resist the devil. This means be alert and prepared to take a stand against an attack. The devil wants to destroy your marriage, your family, your friendships—your very life. He lies, deceives, plays on our pride and tempts us to do what feels good rather than what is good, right and pleasing in God’s sight. Then if we yield to temptation, he accuses us saying there is no hope for redemption. Stop resisting God and resist the devil. Acknowledge that I’ve listened to the lies of this world and the devil but I’m taking a stand and won’t listen to those voices. Then the devil will flee. (v7)

3. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. (v8) A Bible commentator says: picture a husband standing at the door calling his bride who had been having an affair and saying ‘I’m not just asking you to give up your affair but I’m pleading with you to come home. I love you! I want to be close again. Please just come home! Come home!’ Be honest and open with God, take a step of faith toward Him. He will meet you.

4. Genuine repentance. (v8) Feel the pain of your sin that breaks God’s heart, which is so destructive and hurtful. Grieve and mourn; Peter wept bitterly after denying Jesus. Confess it to God; wash and clean up. Stop living according to this world’s values. Stop the sin, turn around and go the other way.

The greatest struggle in life is to humble ourselves before God and others. If we all truly humbled ourselves, there would be little tension or conflict in our relationships. God promises “Humble yourself before the Lord and He will lift you up.” (v10) He will give us the grace we need to do what He wants us to do. (v6) When our trust is in God alone, He gives us value, identity and significance so we are free to put others first. This usually results in healthy, peaceful relationships.