

COMMENTARY

James Chapter 4:

vs. 1-12

James begins into statement on the need for us to submit ourselves to God. He begins by showing that many of our problems are based over material objects and that it is our greed and love for the world that gets us into trouble. God is more than willing and able to answer our prayers, but if we're just asking to satisfy our greed then He will not answer it. This type of attitude shows that our priorities and love is toward the world and not what is best for the Kingdom of God. Placing our greed and lust before God results in our becoming His enemies and our despising the one who loves us so.

God will oppose the proud but those who will humble themselves to His care He will show grace. We submit to God by resisting Satan and drawing near to God. He promises us that when we draw near to Him, He also will draw near to us. This is such an exciting promise!! James tell the Hebrew Christians to wash their hands. Under the old covenant they were used to various ceremonial washings which would cleanse them and make them acceptable to God. James is using this to show them that they need to prepare themselves for service to God. He goes on to tell them to grieve, mourn and wail. All this sadness is in reference to their attitude of repentance now that they realize the enormity of their sin in the sight of God.

James speaks concerning our conduct towards one another. He tells us not to slander. In so doing we speak against God's law and become a judge of it. By trying to become a judge we set ourselves above the law and we are not worthy of such a position. Only God is capable of being a Judge and Lawgiver. Who are we to try to take His place?

vs. 13-17

James speaks about planning for tomorrow. He speaks in regard to those who feel that they are in complete control and have no one to answer to. He shows that our life is but a brief period that can end at any time. Instead, we should have the attitude that God is in control and we will do things only as He gives us the strength and ability rather than depending on ourselves. Many times we do not learn this lesson until God has taken our dependence on self away from us through sickness and disease.

James concludes with a phrase that adds a new dimension to sin. It is referred to as the sins of omission. These are sins where we fail to serve God and do what is right. It is not necessary for us to do something wrong, just fail to do what we should.



## COMMENTARY

### James Chapter 5:

vs. 1-6            This last chapter begins with a warning to the rich who take advantage and abuse the poor of this world. James states that they will be punished by God for what they have done. In that day, their wealth will mean nothing and will pass away. He lists there offences to their fellow-man and also to God by their self-indulgence and putting wealth before the Almighty.

vs. 7-12           To those who are suffering now, James encourages them to be patient. He gives examples of how people have been patient and how the wait has been well worth it. He tells them not to grumble between themselves but to be ready for Jesus may return at any time.

                    He reminds us that our word should be enough to answer any question and that we should not need to try to support the validity by swearing by various items. Christians should be known for speaking the truth and that alone should be obvious to all.

vs. 13-20           James shows us that no matter what our frame of mind is, there is an appropriate response. Concerning sickness we see the benefit of prayer. The anointing of oil was a common medical remedy in those days; kind of like aspirin is today. This gives us guidelines for today. We see that the prayers of the elders which are offered in faith and the use of that medication or treatment will be used by God to restore the sick person to health. We see that God also offers forgiveness of sins to those who are sick.

                    James also instructs us to confess our sins to one another and to pray for each other. The sins that we should confess are those which affect others and we should confess them to those that we have sinned against or affected by our sin.

                    Concerning prayer, James states that a righteous mans prayers will accomplish much. He then points to Elijah [I Kings 17:1 - 18:46] who prayed and what God accomplished through his prayer. Not only did the heavens withhold their rain but a whole nation was turned back to the Lord from the idols they had been serving.

                    In the same way, James shows that we also, with the help of God, can be used to turn people back to God and sins will be forgiven by God.

## STUDY GUIDE

James Chapter 4:

1. What does James say causes fights and quarrels among us?
2. Why do we not have, according to James?
3. Why do we not receive when we ask?
4. What is friendship with the world and what do we become when we are a friend of the world?
5. Who does God oppose and who does He give grace to?
6. To whom should we submit and whom should we resist?
7. What happens when we resist the Devil?
8. What happens when we draw near to God?
9. What do we need to do for the Lord to lift us up?
10. What are we not to do to one another?
11. In verse 17, who does James say, sins?

BONUS:

1. What do verses 2 and 3 teach us about our prayer life?
2. Describe what friendship of the world is? How are Christians friends of the world today?
3. What do verses 6-8 mean to you personally? Why?
4. How are we to view the future?
5. How does verse 17 apply to us today? How would you rate Christians fulfillment of this on a scale of 1-10? Why?



## STUDY GUIDE

James Chapter 5:

1. Why should the rich weep and wail?
2. What will happen to their possessions?
3. How have the rich lived?
4. What are we to be patient until?
5. Who do we consider blessed?
6. What should those in trouble do?
7. What should the happy do?
8. What should the sick do?
9. Whose prayer is powerful and effective?
10. What will a person do if someone wanders from the truth?
11. What will a sinner who has been turned from the error of his way be saved from and have covered over?

BONUS:

1. What do verses 1-6 say to Americans today? Do we need to hear this?
2. Explain verses 15 and 16. Does this hold true today?
3. Why is the account of Elijah thrown in?
4. How does verse 20 relate to Hebrews' message that one can reach an impossible point of no return? (see Heb. 6:4-6)