



# Just Grow Up!

James - A Manual for Maturity

The Cure for Conflict

Read James 4:1-10 and use it to answer the following questions.

1. According to James 4:1,2, what causes us to fight with each other? Do you think this is always true? Can you think of a time that you had a verbal fight with someone because of these reasons? Do you think this applies even to times when you have a difference of opinion with someone? What is the difference between a fight and a simple disagreement?
2. Verse 2 says that we do not have what we desire because we do not ask God, but then verse 3 goes one step further. According to verse 3, what prayers of ours will God not answer? Were you aware that why you ask for something in prayer is just as important as what you ask for? What would be the correct motive when asking God for something?
3. In verses 4-6, God calls something adultery, what is it? Why do you think God views this as adultery? In 1 John 2:15,16, John defines what it means to love the world, according to John, when are you "loving the world"? Do you think that someone who is a Christian cannot love the world? Back in James, what does it say a person becomes who loves the world? Does this mean they are not a Christian?
4. According to verse 6, what does God give us to enable us to stop being friends with the world? What do you think it means to not only have God's grace for salvation, but also to need it every day to live for Him? If we do not avail ourselves of God's grace to overcome our love of the world, what will God do? Has God ever had to humble you? In what way?
5. According to verses 7-10, what actions must we take in order to stop loving the world and fall in love with God? Why do you think it tells us to "Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom."?
6. When James says in verse 1 that the fights we have come from the desires that battle within us, where do those desires come from? Do you think that the friendship with the world that he talks about in this passage happens when you lose the battle with these desires?

## ANSWERS

1. James says that the fights and wars we have with other people are caused by the sinful desires that we still have as humans. Just because you are a Christian does not mean that you no longer have sinful desires. Galatians 5:16 tells us that we will always have a battle between the Spirit of God within us and our sinful nature. Having a disagreement or difference of opinion with someone fits into this category if the motivating factor within us is a pride in our knowledge or the pride of having to be right. If we are not being motivated by pride, a disagreement does not have to turn into a fight. You can disagree without being prideful, otherwise we could never voice a disagreement with someone.
2. According to verse 3, God will not answer our prayer when we are asking for something simply to satisfy a lust that we have. The word lust literally means an overly strong desire. When we have a strong desire for something and think that having it will satisfy us rather than God, then it becomes a lust. The correct motive for asking God for something would be when what we are asking for is something that we need to live or when it would be within God's will to grant it.
3. In verses 4-6 it says that when we are friends with the world, we are cheating on God, it is spiritual adultery. When we love the things of this world more than God, we are being unfaithful to Him. Jesus said in Matthew 6 that you cannot love God and money at the same time. You will love one and hate the other. According to 1 John 2:15, whenever you are satisfying the sinful cravings of the flesh, when you are being covetous of the things you see in this world, and whenever you are being prideful and wanting the praise of people more than God, then you are loving the world. In a nutshell, any time you allow your sinful nature control you, you are loving the world. So, it is obvious that every Christian at any time that they allow their sinful nature to control them and not the Spirit of God, they are loving the world more than God. Just because a person sins does not mean they are not a Christian, they are just being disobedient. When we are in that state, we do not love the Father, his love is not manifesting itself in us and we are setting ourselves in opposition to Him, we have become enemy to what He wants and stands for. Can a child be an enemy of his father? Absolutely. Is he still a son? Absolutely. If this is not true, then our salvation depends on our good works because Jesus said if we love Him, to obey His commands.
4. It says in this verse that God gives us more of His grace to overcome our sinful desires. Grace is getting something you do not earn or deserve. God gave us everything we need to live a life that is pleasing to Him when we trusted Christ as savior when the Holy Spirit came to live inside of us. We did not deserve this, so we need God's unmerited favor in our lives every single day for the motivation, strength, and ability to serve Him. You cannot serve Him out of the strength of your own will-power, you are not strong enough. This is what it means to live by God's grace every day of your life. If in your pride you try to live in this world by your own strength, you will fail and God will humble you until you acknowledge your need of Him.
5. In these verses it says that we must submit our will to God's will. We must resist the devil and the desires of our sinful nature. The way we do this is by drawing closer to God, by developing our relationship with God, but we must take the initiative. God will never force you to do anything; He is waiting on you to purify your actions and attitudes by being submissive to the word of God. When you are being a friend of the world, it should cause you grief, your attitude should be one of mourning, that you are living in disobedience to God is a serious thing that we should not be flippant about.
6. Those desires come from our sinful nature and is a sign that we are being friends of the world.