

A Sober Audit

PASTOR MIKE YODER • JAMES 4:1–12

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you?

James 4:1

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.

James 4:2

When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

James 4:3

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.

James 4:4

*Or do you think Scripture says without reason that He
jealously longs for the Spirit He has caused to dwell in us?*

James 4:5

But He gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: “God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.”

James 4:6

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

James 4:7

Come near to God and He will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

James 4:8

Grieve, mourn, and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom.

James 4:9

Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up.

James 4:10

Brothers and sisters, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against a brother or sister or judges them speaks against the Law and judges it. When you judge the Law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it.

James 4:11

There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and destroy. But you — who are you to judge your neighbor?

James 4:12

The Damning Charges (4:1–3)

Some battles need to be fought. But even then they must be fought without sacrificing Christian principles and virtues.

Douglas Moo

Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul.

1 Peter 2:11

The ultimate choice in life lies between pleasing oneself
and pleasing God.

D. Edmund Hiebert



The best cure for hedonism is an attempt to practice it.

John MacMurray

Take delight in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart.

Psalm 37:4

*You make known to me the path of life; You will fill me with joy
in Your presence, with eternal pleasures at Your right hand.*

Psalm 16:11

The Wrong Motivations (4:4,5)



What the heart desires the mind justifies and the will chooses.

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them.

1 John 2:15

“If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated Me first.”

John 15:18

“If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.”

John 15:19

The Holy Spirit, imparted to us by God at conversion, yearns enviously for our total loyalty and devotion to Him. [He] justly claims our undivided love. He can brook no rival for our affection.

D. Edmund Hiebert

The Stunning Verdict (4:6)

In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, “God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.”

1 Peter 5:5

When the world competes for our love for God, resulting in our divided loyalty, God does not immediately cast us off but continues to give “more grace.”

D. Edmund Hiebert

There is always, for the believer, greater grace. This is without doubt one of the most comforting texts in all of Scripture.

R. Kent Hughes

*Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence,
so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our
time of need.*

Hebrews 4:16

The Proper Response (4:7–10)

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power.

Ephesians 6:10

Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

Ephesians 6:11

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Ephesians 6:12

Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

Ephesians 6:13

You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.

1 John 4:4

As long as a man's will is submissive to the control and guidance of the Holy Spirit, he can stand victorious against all the seductive arts of the devil. As a defeated foe, Satan now has no power over the Christian except the power of seduction. But he is a persistent foe.

D. Edmund Hiebert

We are not to wait passively for this to somehow happen. We are not to wait for someone else to humble us, nor should we wait for the vicissitudes of life to do it. Rather, self-humbling is *our* Christian duty. We must take inventory of our sinfulness and weakness, then bow in total submission to God, yielding our total being, our dreams, our future, our *everything* to Him.

R. Kent Hughes

The Unthinkable Presumption (4:11,12)

James asserts that criticism of a fellow believer contradicts the demand that we love our neighbors. Therefore, we fail to keep the Law when we slander and stand in judgment over one another.

Douglas Moo

For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people.

Titus 2:11

It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age,

Titus 2:12

while we wait for the blessed hope — the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ,

Titus 2:13

who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are His very own, eager to do what is good.

Titus 2:14

**Only the grace of God causes us
to respond in humble obedience.**