

Greater Pleasant Branch Baptist Church

Connect Learn Grow

Wednesday Bible Study- Theme: Pathways to Spirituality

Review of the Book of James-Chapter 4-May 19,2021

Prepared by: Pastor Artee Williams and Minister Andrew Balenton

I. Central Focus

You were created to become like Christ-Romans 8: 29-30-Message Translation

II. Big Idea

God wants believers to obey his divine will for their lives.

III. Overview

Jesus Christ is the model example for what it means to obey the will of God. The following Scripture passages detail that obedience: John 4:34, John 5:30, John 6:38, Luke 22:42, Philipians 2: 5-12 and Hebrews 5:8-9.

In chapter 4, James outlines the negative impact of self-centered living which results in the disobedience of believers and leads to fights, quarrels, enmity with God, compromise with Satan, backbiting, boasting, and habitual sin.

James poses a solution to these problems with a call for submission to God, resistance of the devil, spiritual mourning (sorrow), and humility before God.

James teaches that those who obey God's will can triumph over Satan and honor God. James also teaches that the benefits of obedience far out weigh the negative consequences of disobedience.

There are at least five(5) sections in this chapter, major highlights are as follows:

A. Self-centered living - the negative impact on prayer- James 4: 1-3

1. In verses 1-2 James addresses the issue of selfishness and self-gratification and concludes that these characteristics lead to wars and fightings, conflicts and strife. James teaches that selfishness and self-gratification are the products of lust and lead to wars and fightings.

2. War indicates an ongoing state of hostility. Fightings point to specific conflicts.

3. The wars and fightings that James describes were matters of internal personal conflict and conflict between believers.

4. James makes it very clear that selfishness and self-gratification will never provide the satisfaction a person is seeking.

5. Some of the believers to whom James addresses his concerns wanted their prayers answered but for their own pleasure, not for God's glory.

6. God is under no obligation to answer selfish prayers.

B. Self-centered living- displeases God- James 4: 4-6

1. James declares in verse 4 that some of the believers were guilty of spiritual adultery.

2. Some of the believers had made a deliberate choice to become friends with the world. James teaches that friendship with the world is an act of rebellion against God.

3. The world James refers to is a world system of values which control society with a godless agenda.

4. James maintained that friendship with the world and with God are incompatible.

5. James declared in verse 6 that proud believers can turn their hearts away from God to the world or a god of the world.

6. The humble believer as opposed to the proud believer understands and practices total dependence on God.

7. God will resist the proud by opposing the life and practices of those who fail to follow him.

C. Self-centered living-requires repentance-James 4:7-10

1. In these verses James provides a remedy for selfishness and worldliness.

2. James utilizes action words to describe the remedy: submit, resist, draw nigh, cleanse, purify, be afflicted, mourn, weep and humble yourselves.

3. What James teaches in verses 7-10 is an imperative command for selfish and worldly believers to repent and demonstrate the repentance that is consistent with the actions he describes (mentioned in #2 above).

4. Without explaining each of the actions found in these verses , the essence of what James is teaching is that the Christian life is not about self-promotion and self-gratification but a meaningful, deep and personal relationship with God.

D. Self-centered living-produces abusive language and judgment-James 4: 11-12

1. In this section of the chapter James addresses how a worldly minded believer can be guilty of using abusive language toward a fellow believer.

2. James commands these believers to immediately stop this evil practice because speaking evil of another believer is sin.

3. James also commands these offending believers to stop judging fellow believers. The kind of judging James refers to is harsh condemnation and fault-finding. James demands that this practice be stopped immediately.

4. James warns these offending believers that there is only one lawgiver and judge and that is God. For James the believer who judges harshly has no authority to enforce the result of his judgment.

5. God the only lawgiver and judge is able both to save and destroy. God has not authorized any person to assume that role, ITV is reserved for himself alone.

6. Only God can truly identify and discipline those who break his laws.

E. Self-centered living-produces disobedience to God's will-James 4: 13-17

1. In this section of the chapter , James addresses believers who had faith in God, however, they did not consider God's will for their daily lives.

2. James warned about the arrogant attitude that assumes tomorrow is always certain without consideration for God's will.

3. James warns these believers that life is uncertain and that our plans must include the will of God.

4. James teaches that it is ok to plan for the future, however, believers must plan while deliberately seeking ht will of God.

5. In verse 16-17 James calls for humble dependence on God rather than prideful independence.

6. James concludes with a warning to believers, it is a sin to know what is right and fail to do it.

IV. Questions

1. According to verse 1 what does James mean by “ they battle within you?” Also who usually wins the battle ?
2. Dose the teaching of verse 2 mean we can ask God for everything ?
3. Have you asked God for something and did not receive it ? Were your motives the reason the request was not granted ?
4. Why were some of the believers James addressed considered spiritual adulterers?
5. According to verse 5 is there anything you put before God or trust more than you do God ?
6. What is the biblical process for avoiding the struggles James describes in verses 6-10 ?
7. What is the essence of what James teaches in verse 11-13 ?
8. Do individual believers have grounds for boasting, what does James 4: 13-16 teach regarding this matter ?
9. What is the greater sin, the sin of omission or commission?
10. How will you apply the teaching of this chapter to your heart and life ?