

GROWTH GUIDE

READ & REVIEW

Today's focus is going to be on looking at the biblical text and understanding what the writer was communicating to his original audience.

Begin by reading James 4:1-12 in its entirety.

Read James 4:1-3

James points out the cause of the conflicts within the church is covetousness and desire (vv. 1-2a). He then charges them for not first asking God to meet their needs; and when they get around to it, they do it selfishly (vv. 2b-3).

How does an individual's pursuit of their own desires affect the church of which they are a part? What are some ways people take matters into their own hands rather than asking God?

Read James 4:4-6

James cautions his readers about entanglement with the world and its consequences for their relationship to God (v. 4). He reminds them of God's jealousy for his people (v. 5), but also that he shows grace to the humble (v. 6).

How does James calling the church “adulteresses” emphasize the seriousness of his charge? How is friendship with the world like spiritual adultery?

Read James 4:7-10

James gives a series of commands in this section: submit (v. 7a), resist (v. 7b), draw near (v. 8a), cleanse (v. 8b), mourn (v. 9), and humble yourselves (v. 10).

Which of these commands do you find most surprising? How does each help us to put an end to friendship with world and spiritual adultery?

Read James 4:11-12

James warns his readers not to slander and use their speech critically. Their desires had led to quarrels which in turn led to slanderous speech and gossip.

How does James discourage his audience from slander? Why are we tempted to slander those with which we have had conflict?