

THE BOOK OF JAMES

FATHWORKS



James 4:1-12

Submitting to God

'What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? 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. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

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. Or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us? But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says:

*"God opposes the proud
but shows favor to the humble."*

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

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. 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 4:1-12, NIV

Friends with the World or God

Within James' message, is the constant battle between choosing God or choosing the things of the world. It is the direct representation of our faith lived out in a specific context. By instinct, we crave to do things our way and by our own means. Yet, God is willing and able to provide beyond what we are able to need. At a point, we will have to choose whether we will be friends with God or friends with the world. The two are mutually exclusive as they value very different things.

What does it mean to be friends with the world? How does this typically express itself?

What is the motivation behind the things in the first paragraph?

Why is friendship with the world and friendship with God incompatible with each other?

Submitting to God

For everything the world has to offer, the gifts of God are far beyond anything we are able to obtain on our own. Submission to God is not based in this idea that I get things, but rather instead that God provides what we need, even if we are against it in our flesh. The provision is spiritual; casting out demons and purifying the heart, emotional; with mourning turn to laughter, and physical; with the presence of God drawing near. We willingly give up our friendship with the world in order to

How does someone submit to an authority?

What are benefits that James brings up in submitting to God?

Why does it feel like we have to go backwards before we go forwards when we submit ourselves to God?

What happens when we resist submitting to God?

What are the areas that we have the most difficulty in submitting to God?

Why is trusting God difficult with the things we want? How does submission to God reveal our faith to the world around us?