

# Things To Avoid (James 4:1-10)

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## Scripture Text:

1. What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members?
2. You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask.
3. You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.
4. You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.
5. Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: “ He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us”?
6. But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, “God is opposed to the proud , but gives grace to the humble .”
7. Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.
8. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.
9. Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom.
10. Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.  
(James 4:1-10 NASB1995)

## Outline:

- I. Avoid Quarreling and Conflicts (v.1-3)
- II. Avoid Unfaithfulness (vv.4-5)
- III. Avoid Pride (v.6-7)
- IV. Avoid Double-Mindedness (v.8-10)

## Worksheet:

- I. Avoid Quarreling and Conflicts (v.1-3)
  - a. What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? (v.1)
    - i. James gives his readers yet another question. This question is a question that He gives the answer to in the very next verse, but he wants his

readers to first ponder the question. **What** is the source of quarrels and conflicts? “ \_\_\_\_\_ ”

ii. **What** is the significance of the phrase “*your pleasures*”? **What** does this infer? *[discussion]* \_\_\_\_\_

iii. “Pleasures” - *hedone* – desires, lusts, sensual delight.

iv. **What** do these pleasures wage war against? \_\_\_\_\_

v. **What** members? *[discussion]* \_\_\_\_\_

vi. “Members” - *melos* - a member, limb: a member of the human body; of bodies given up to criminal intercourse, because they are as it were members belonging to the harlot's body.

vii. The KJV referred to this type of pleasure, desire or lust as “*concupiscence*” – strong sexual desire; lust.

1. Mortify therefore your **members** which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil **concupiscence**, and covetousness, which is idolatry: (Colossians 3:5 KJV)

2. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess **his vessel** in sanctification and honor; Not in the lust of **concupiscence**, even as the Gentiles which know not God: (1 Thessalonians 4:3-5 KJV)

viii. **What** is the result of this war that rages in the members of a believer if they don't give themselves over completely to the leading, guiding and control of the Holy Spirit? **What** happens to the combatants in a war? **What** does that look like from a spiritual perspective? *[discussion]*

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b. You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. (v.2)

i. **What** can happen if a person's lusts are not satisfied over time according to this verse?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

- ii. Does a person's lusts every get satisfied, or is there a natural tendency to want more and more no matter how much one indulges in the pleasures of sin? *[discussion]* \_\_\_\_\_
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- iii. **What** is the alternative for the believer? *[discussion]* \_\_\_\_\_
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1. By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward. (Hebrews 11:24-26 NASB1995)
  2. Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory. Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience, and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them. (Colossians 3:1-7 NASB1995)
  3. For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; and that no man transgress and defraud his brother in the matter because the Lord is the avenger in all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned you. For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification. So, he who rejects this is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you. (1 Thessalonians 4:3-8 NASB1995)
- iv. **What** is sighted as the reason why people don't have, according to this verse? \_\_\_\_\_
- c. You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures. (v.3)
- i. **Why** do people who have asked for something, not receive what they have asked for according to this verse? \_\_\_\_\_
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- ii. **What** are some examples of these "wrong motives"?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

iii. Is this asking making reference to prayer only? \_\_\_\_\_ **Why** or **Why** not?

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iv. **How** can a believer receive what they have asked for in prayer?

*[discussion]* \_\_\_\_\_

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v. **How** can a believer know what God's will is? \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

vi. If a person's pleasures are the source of conflicts and quarrels (v.1), should that person ask for anything that is going to perpetuate and exacerbate the problem of war being waged in their members?

*[discussion]* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

II. Avoid Unfaithfulness (vv.4-5)

a. You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. (v.4)

i. **Who** is being referred to as an "adulteress" and **why**? *[discussion]*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

ii. **Who** or **what** institutions of the world system are being referred to in this verse? *[list]*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

iii. Notice the strong language that connects the concepts of "adultery" with "idolatry". How are they related? *[discussion]* \_\_\_\_\_

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1. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no

spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. (Ephesians 5:25-27 NASB1995)

2. For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin. (2 Corinthians 11:2 NASB1995)

3. Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready." It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. (Revelation 19:7-8 NASB1995)

iv. In **what** way does James accuse these people, whose "pleasures wage war in their members", who "fight and quarrel" and "ask with wrong motives"? *[discussion]* \_\_\_\_\_  
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v. **What** is meant by "friendship with the world"? *[discussion]* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

vi. **What** is "friendship with the world" as it related to God? Can this "friendship" be reconciled in the life of a believer? *[discussion]* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

vii. **When** a person is a \_\_\_\_\_ of the world, that is \_\_\_\_\_ towards God, they make themselves an \_\_\_\_\_ of God as well.

viii. **What** is the significance of the phrase, "**wishes** to be a friend of the world" in terms of a person's desire? *[discussion]* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

b. Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: " He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us"? (v.5)

i. God, like a husband whose wife is unfaithful to him is "jealous", but God's jealousy has to do with His desire for the Holy Spirit to dwell in us after making it possible for Him (the Holy Spirit) to do so.

ii. Some interpret this word "Spirit" as "spirit", which would make reference to the human spirit that God breathed into man (the immaterial part of man that survives the death of the body and is eternal) and His desire is that the inner man have intimate, eternal fellowship with Him. This can only happen when a person is faithful to God demonstrating genuine, saving faith!

iii. Does the phrase, "the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us" suggest that the Holy Spirit was "made" by God? \_\_\_\_\_ If not, then what does it mean? *[discussion]* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- iv. “He has made to dwell” - *katoikeo* - to dwell, settle; metaph. divine powers, influences, etc., are said to dwell in his soul, to pervade, prompt, govern it; to dwell in, inhabit. God is said to dwell in the temple, i.e. to be always present for worshippers.
  - 1. For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God. (Deuteronomy 4:24 NASB1995)
  - 2. —for you shall not worship any other god, for the Lord , whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God— (Exodus 34:14 NASB1995)
  - 3. for the Lord your God in the midst of you is a jealous God; otherwise the anger of the Lord your God will be kindled against you, and He will wipe you off the face of the earth. (Deuteronomy 6:15 NASB1995)
  - 4. You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, and on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, (Deuteronomy 5:9 NASB1995)
  - 5. They made Him jealous with strange gods; With abominations they provoked Him to anger. (Deuteronomy 32:16 NASB1995)
  - 6. A jealous and avenging God is the Lord ; The Lord is avenging and wrathful. The Lord takes vengeance on His adversaries, And He reserves wrath for His enemies. (Nahum 1:2 NASB1995)

III. Avoid Pride (v.6-7)

- a. But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, “God is opposed to the proud , but gives grace to the humble .” (v.6)
  - i. **Why** does God give “a greater grace”? *[discussion]* \_\_\_\_\_  
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  - ii. As a review, **What** is “grace” and “a greater grace” by extension? *[discussion]* \_\_\_\_\_  
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  - iii. **What** can be expected by those who fail to avoid pride? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
  - iv. **What** results when “grace” runs out? \_\_\_\_\_
  - v. **What** is afforded to those who are humble? “greater \_\_\_\_\_.”
- b. Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. (v.7)
  - i. If a person is to “submit to God” he/she cannot at the same time “submit” to the devil. Instead believers are command and admonished to “resist” the devil.
  - ii. “Submit” - *hypotasso* - This word was a Greek military term meaning "to arrange [troop divisions] in a military fashion under the command of a leader".

iii. What does submission to God look like in the life of a believer using this imagery? *[discussion]* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

iv. Just as “God resists the proud” causing a disunity and a distance between Him and the proud, so also do believers who “resist the devil” causing a disunity and a distance between them and Satan.

v. Simply put, how does a believer cause the devil to flee from them?  
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\_\_\_\_\_

vi. **Application:** What are the practical methods demonstrated by Jesus while he was being tempted in the wilderness by Satan, that ultimately allowed Him to prevail and can do the same for the believer?

1. He used the \_\_\_\_\_ of God.

2. He \_\_\_\_\_ the devil each time He was tested.

3. He acted in \_\_\_\_\_ to the word of God.

#### IV. Avoid Double-Mindedness (v.8-10)

a. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. (v.8)

i. In this verse we see the converse of the preceding verse. As a believer \_\_\_\_\_ the devil and the devil \_\_\_\_\_ from the believer, the believer is to draw \_\_\_\_\_ to God and then God will draw \_\_\_\_\_ to the believer.

ii. Though “resisting” the devil and “drawing near” to God are important steps in the process, what is the ultimate goal for the believer?

*[discussion]* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

iii. In order for a person to have intimate fellowship with God, he/she must have \_\_\_\_\_ hands and \_\_\_\_\_ hearts.

iv. The unclean hands of sinners represents what in a person’s life?

*[discussion]* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

v. The impure hearts of the double-minded represents what in a person’s life? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

b. Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom. (v.9)

i. What kind of person would behave like this when confronted with the reality of their own sin? \_\_\_\_\_

ii. **Misery** represents the *state* of the person, **mourning** represents the *inner sorrow* of the person, and **weeping** represents the *outward manifestation* of the person’s state of being when confronted with their own sin.

- iii. When confronted with and personally realizing the reality of one's own sin, \_\_\_\_\_ turns to \_\_\_\_\_ and a person's \_\_\_\_\_ turns to \_\_\_\_\_.
- iv. What does this suggest about a person who truly understands the grace, mercy and forgiveness of God? *[discussion]* \_\_\_\_\_
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1. For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; You are not pleased with burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise. (Psalms 51:16-17 NASB1995)
  2. For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death. (2 Corinthians 7:10 NASB1995)
- v. **Application:** We live in a world where people are not sorry for, nor do they mourn over their own personal sin. They seem to not even be aware of the magnitude of their sin. Quite the contrary, they seem to laugh and revel in their own sin and the sins of others.
1. And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them. (Romans 1:28-32 NASB1995)
  2. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. (Romans 1:18-19 NASB1995)
- c. Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you. (v.10)
- i. "The way up, is the way down."
  - ii. "It is better to be humble, than to be humbled, by God."
    1. But the brother of humble circumstances is to glory in his high position; and the rich man is to glory in his humiliation, because like flowering grass he will pass away. (James 1:9-10 NASB1995)
    2. Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. (1 Peter 5:6-7 NASB1995)