

- We often feel as if God wants nothing to do with us when we have fallen into behaviours which we know are displeasing to him. How does the promise in verse 8 counter that belief? What does it tell us about God's attitude toward us even when we have fallen into sin?
- 'Come near to God and he will come near to you.' Rick Warren says that 'the conflict in your life is in direct proportion to the time you're spending with God.' Discuss.



CARING & SERVING. You may or may not feel comfortable to share with the group any situations of conflict you find yourself in, or any people with whom you find relationships difficult. If anyone does feel comfortable to share, pray for that person. Pray for one another in any other difficulties you may be encountering at present.



If you yourself aren't caught up in a situation of conflict, Jesus calls us all to be 'peacemakers.' Ask yourself, "how does Jesus want to use me to touch and bring healing to situations of conflict this week?" That may be in terms of helping healing in relationships between people, or it may be in terms of encouraging healing in people's relationship with God.



WORSHIPPING. James 4v6 tells us that "He [God] gives us more grace." James says these words in the context of talking about how sinful we are as people, how double-minded we often are. Yet he says, 'God gives us more grace.' 'Grace' in the Bible is not only God giving us the forgiveness and life with Him which we don't deserve, 'grace' also refers to God's power to change when we can't do things on our own. In other words, James says here that God is tirelessly on our side. His patience is never exhausted, His generosity knows no limit, His initiative never stops, His resources are never limited. Spend some time praising God for His inexhaustible grace.



ENGAGING. Please continue to pray for our Alpha course. Various points for prayer will hopefully have been passed to the group from the Alpha team.

Midweek ministry @ Ballyloughan

worshipping, growing, caring, serving, engaging

James: A down-to-earth faith
8 - *How to avoid arguments* (4:1-10)
Guide for Small Groups 6th February

Hi everyone! As you know, unfortunately last Wednesday's teaching night had to be cancelled due to me being unwell. I had planned to teach last Wednesday on James 4: 1-12 under the heading, 'The Heart of the Matter.' Rather than launching you into some questions without any kind of background, what I've done for tonight is given each group a copy of some DVD teaching material by Rick Warren (author of the Purpose Driven Life) on the book of James. He teaches this passage under the heading, 'How to avoid arguments.' Watch the teaching DVD and then do what follow-up material you have time to do.

I. The cause of all arguments is _____.

"What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you?" James 4:1

Three basic desires that cause arguments:

(i) The desire _____ (Possessions)

"You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want." James 4:2

(ii) The desire _____ (Pleasure)

"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

(iii) The desire _____ (Pride or Power)

"pride leads to arguments; be humble, take advice, and become wise." Prov. 13:10 (LB)

II. The cure for arguments is _____.

“But he gives more grace. That is why the Scripture says: ‘God opposes the proud but gives grace 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...Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.” James 4: 6-8, 10

Steps to defusing conflict

§ _____

“Submit yourselves, then, to God.” James 4:7a

§ _____

“Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” James 4:7b

“In order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.” 2 Corinthians 2:11

§ _____

“Come near to God and he will come near to you.” James 4:8a

“He will keep in perfect peace all those who trust in him, whose thoughts turn often to the Lord.” Isaiah 26:3 (LB)

§ _____

“Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts....” James 4:8b

Follow-on Material

Please do not feel that you have to stick rigidly to this material!

GROWING based on James 4: 1-10



- From your observations, what types of issues give rise to quarrels?
- James writes v1 that quarrels come from ‘desires’ that battle within us. What kinds of ‘desires’ do you think James has in mind? What does he mean when he says our ‘desires battle within us’? Can you give examples of this battle?
- What does this passage teach us about prayer and what ought to be taking place when we pray? What do you think is the connection between what James says about prayer and what he says about fights and quarrels?
- James uses very strong language in verse 4, describing stumbling Christians as ‘adulterous people’, and talks about ‘friendship with the world’ and ‘hatred towards God.’ How do you think this verse is connected to what has come before?
- What does it mean to ‘submit yourself to God’ and why is this James’ first command to this group of stumbling Christians?
- What does it mean to ‘resist the devil’? What would ‘resisting the devil’ look like in terms of practical and specific actions? How have you found the promise ‘he will flee from you’ to be true in your own experience?