



## INTRODUCTION

James draws the battle lines and decisively asks “which side are you on”. Are you a friend of the world which makes you the enemy of God? Or are you a friend of God making you an enemy of the world? Whose friend are you? He will help us discern what friendship with the world looks like, and then he will teach us how to develop our friendship with God.

### DISCERNING FRIENDSHIP WITH THE WORLD (4:1-5)

There are certain attitudes and actions that place us in the enemy camp against God. James reveals some characteristics of worldliness that prove helpful in discerning if we are the “friend of the world”.

#### A. Sensual \_\_\_\_\_ (4:1) – “lusts”

Application: A “friend of the world” is one who lives a hedonistic life. They are pleasure seekers not God seekers. How do I know if I am a “friend of the world”? Ask yourself the question, “Am I more interested in bringing pleasure to self or glory to God?” The ultimate choice in life lies between pleasing oneself and pleasing God. Ken Collier has phrased it, “Just two choices on the shelf, pleasing God or pleasing self”.

#### B. Selfish \_\_\_\_\_ (4:2-3) – “ask amiss”

Application: James 1:6 tells us that effective prayer must be in faith, without doubting. Now James explains the need for proper motives in offering petitions to God. “All prayer requires a submission of one’s desires to the will of God” (Pettit). Prayers motivated solely by selfishness and personal pleasures are inappropriate prayers. It is possible to ask for good things for a bad reason. We must pray according to God’s will not our own.

#### C. Sinful \_\_\_\_\_ (4:4) – “friend of world”

Application: Where are your affections set? Do you long for the pleasures, prestige, popularity, and power of the world? Have you “set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth” (Col. 3:2)? Friendship with the world

is spiritual adultery and a deliberate choice to become the enemy of God. Recognize that you cannot be the “friend of the world” and remain a friend of God.

#### D. Stubborn \_\_\_\_\_ (4:6) – “resist the proud”

Application: The antithesis of pride is humility. The proud person falsely believes he can live independently of God. The humble person knows that he is dependent on God for everything. Only those who wave the white flag of surrender and prostrate themselves in utter dependence on the Lord receive grace. Humility opens the way for God’s grace to flow into our lives and it is the key to developing our relationship with God.

### DEVELOPING FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD (4:6-10)

Worldliness is the love God hates, but humility is virtue that unlocks the door to the pathway of victory and vitality in our spiritual walk. These ten imperatives are not unrelated commands, but interconnected biblical steps toward developing friendship with God.

#### A. \_\_\_\_\_ to God (4:7) – “submit”

#### B. \_\_\_\_\_ against Satan (4:7) – “resist”

#### C. \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord (4:8) – “draw nigh”

#### D. \_\_\_\_\_ your life (4:8) – “cleanse, purify”

#### E. \_\_\_\_\_ over sin (4:9) – “be afflicted, mourn, weep”

#### F. \_\_\_\_\_ your unworthiness (4:10) – “humble yourself”

## CONCLUSION

Whose friend are you? A “friend of the world” or a friend of God. Are you guilty of spiritual adultery? God wants his people to be humble, Satan wants us to be proud. God wants us to depend on His grace, Satan wants us to depend on self. “Self-confidence and self-satisfaction argue self-ignorance. The only healthy Christian is the humble, broken-hearted Christian” (J.I. Packer). Unconditional surrender to God is the only way to complete victory. We must draw near to God by cleansing our hands and purifying our hearts. We must humble ourselves before God by confessing our sin, weeping over them, and turning from them. The grace of God flows into your life through humility.



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