

Lesson 7
PRIDE VERSUS HUMILITY

"But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: 'God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.'" (James 4:6)

Proverbs 16:18 (NLT) reads, "Pride goes before destruction, and haughtiness before a fall." "Those who listen to instruction will prosper; those who trust the LORD will be joyful." (Jeremiah 17:7 NLT)

Read James 4:1-10: The Consequences of Pride and the Benefits of Humility

In this passage, James teaches us the principle of humility and how this godly attribute is the secret to God's grace—especially in trials and temptations. James also teaches that God resists the proud.

1. Where do wars and fights come from? (verse 1).

When we don't get what we want, we fight in order to have it. War comes when we covet and envy what others have or when we want our own way (pride), instead of thinking what would be best for others (humility).

James 4:2-3 says, "You have not because you do not ask" or "you ask amiss." In other words, the things we desire (pride) should actually be a matter of prayer. Allow God to make the decision whether or not to satisfy that desire, or to replace or deny it (humility).

2. James talks about friendship with the world in verse 4. If you are a friend of the world, what are you to God?

3. First John 2:15-16 explains what it means to be a friend of the world. Write it here.

Worldliness begins in the heart and is characterized by three attitudes: (1) lust of the flesh—gratifying physical desires; (2) lust of the eyes—coveting and accumulating things, materialism, and (3) pride of life—obsession with one's status or importance.

James 4:5, in essence, says that the Spirit that is in us is jealous concerning our love. God doesn't want us to have any other love that would take away our love for Him.

One Step to Freedom
Chapter 4: Obedience to God's Word

4. Consider James 4:6. Whom does God resist? To whom does God give grace?

5. When you are tempted, what does James 4:7-8 say?

6. If a person is still enticed by the world, yet drawn to God, he is double-minded. According to verses 8-10, what would someone like that need to do to repent?

Read James 4:11-12: How to Be Humble

7. In verses 11-12, James tells us not to speak evil of another or to judge them. Explain how this could be prideful?

James 4:12 says, "There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy." Paul said, "Who are you to judge another man's servant? Before his own master he either stands or falls" (Romans 14:4). It is God who will either accept or reject what you are doing. So to be a judge of another's servant is wrong. Judge not. Don't speak evil of another, because if you speak evil, you are judging your brother.

Read James 4:13-17. James is talking about people who are setting out their plan for life, not taking into consideration God's will. This kind of pride can lead to our downfall.

8. What should be our attitude toward the things we do? (verse 15)

9. According to verse 16, what is boasting?

Boasting is a type of pride that is rude and has empty assurance. It trusts in its own power and resources and shamefully despises and violates God's laws and others' needs. Boasting is an empty presumption that trusts in the stability of earthly things.

God wants us to look to Him for guidance in everything. (James 4:15) As we do this, we will see that He is the One doing great things in our lives—not ourselves. We need to humble ourselves before God, laying aside our pride and worldly desires with willing and obedient hearts. Having a humble heart, God will give us grace when it comes to trials and temptations.