

**The Letter of James 4:1 - 10**

Christian Standard Bible (CSB)

1 <sup>14</sup> But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your  
 2 heart, don't boast and deny the truth. <sup>15</sup> Such wisdom does  
 3 not come down from above but is earthly, unspiritual,  
 4 demonic. <sup>16</sup> For where there is envy and selfish ambition,  
 5 there is disorder and every evil practice. <sup>17</sup> But the wisdom  
 6 from above is first pure, then peace-loving, gentle,  
 7 compliant, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering,  
 8 without pretense. <sup>18</sup> And the fruit of righteousness is sown  
 9 in peace by those who cultivate peace.

10 <sup>4:1</sup> What is the source of wars and fights among you?  
 11 Don't they come from your passions that wage war within  
 12 you? <sup>2</sup> You desire and do not have. You murder and covet  
 13 and cannot obtain. You fight and wage war. You do not  
 14 have because you do not ask. <sup>3</sup> You ask and don't receive  
 15 because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may  
 16 spend it on your pleasures.

17 <sup>4</sup> You adulterous people! Don't you know that friendship  
 18 with the world is hostility toward God? So whoever wants  
 19 to be the friend of the world becomes the enemy of God.  
 20 <sup>5</sup> Or do you think it's without reason that the Scripture  
 21 says: The spirit he made to dwell in us envies intensely?

22 <sup>6</sup> But he gives greater grace. Therefore he says:

23 God resists the proud,  
 24 but gives grace to the humble.

25 <sup>7</sup> Therefore, submit to God. Resist the devil, and he will  
 26 flee from you. <sup>8</sup> Draw near to God, and he will draw near  
 27 to you. Cleanse your hands, sinners, and purify your  
 28 hearts, you double-minded. <sup>9</sup> Be miserable and mourn and  
 29 weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your  
 30 joy to gloom. <sup>10</sup> Humble yourselves before the Lord, and  
 31 he will exalt you.

**Read the passage through completely  
before looking at these questions.**

**Observation (What does it say?):**

Consider the observation questions on the back of this page. What do you notice in this passage?

- Underline anything James says is definitely true of his audience (**indicative** verbs for the grammatically inclined).
- Circle any commands or instructions James gives (**imperative** verbs).
- Draw a box around possible responses from God to those behaviors.
- What else do you observe in this passage?

**Interpretation (What does it mean?):**

After observing the passage:

- How would you describe the "tone" or "atmosphere" of this passage? How does it compare with the tone of the first three chapters of this letter?
- What conclusions (v. 4-5) does James make from the behavior he describes (v. 1-3)?
- How might this passage relate to what James has said before?
- What questions come to mind as you read?

**Application (What does it mean for me?):**

- What parts of this passage that you underlined fit your current life situation?
- How would any of the parts that you circled look if you obeyed those imperatives?
- How might this passage affect your understanding of who God is and what He is doing?
- What would be different (attitudes, behavior) if God used this passage to change you?

**For additional thought and discussion:**

- What do you think James means in v. 5? What Scripture verse might James have referred to?
- Compare verse 6 with Proverbs 3:34  
*He mocks those who mock,  
but gives grace to the humble.*

For more suggested methods of study: <http://www.goodnotsafe.com/methodical-bible-study/>

For examples of inductive studies: <http://www.goodnotsafe.com/inductive-bible-study-examples-2/>

## Inductive Bible Study

(A few general ideas)

### **Observation** (What does it say?)

What facts do you **observe** about the passage that help bring out the writer's thought process?

- Who are the people involved?
- What action takes place?
- What type of literature is it (poetry, history, didactic, etc.)?
- What details are included or left out?
- Are any unusual words used?
- Is there symbolic language?
- What is the grammar of the passage (pronouns, prepositions, verb tenses)?
- Are words or ideas repeated?
- Any comparisons or contrasts?
- Any cause and effect?
- Are there indications of purpose ("in order that...")?
- Are there conclusions ("Therefore...")?
- Are there explanations?
- Does the passage logically break into sections?
- How would you summarize the passage?
- What would be a good "headline" for the passage?

### **Interpretation** (What does it mean?)

What questions come to mind about the facts that would help you **interpret** the meaning?

- How would the original readers have understood the passage?
- What is the main emphasis?
- Why does the writer use repetition, or contrast, or unusual words?
- What does the grammar or structure of the passage reveal about the writer's thought pattern?
- Is there a logical sequence in the passage?
- How are different ideas in the passage connected?
- Are there any new ideas or concepts presented?
- Are there difficulties in the passage?

### **Application** (What does it mean for me?)

What is the impact on your life? What **application** does the Holy Spirit want to show you?

- Is there a command to obey?
- Is there a promise to be thankful for?
- Is there an attribute of God to worship?
- Is there an example to follow?

**Read nothing into the Scriptures,  
but draw everything from them,  
and suffer nothing to remain  
hidden that is really in them.  
J.A. Bengel (1687-1752)**

For a much more detailed description of the methodology, see

Robert A. Traina, *Methodical Bible Study*. Wilmore, Kentucky: Asbury Theological Seminary, 1952.

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