

Study Guide for the Week of May 11, 2008

This study guide is designed to help you to become more familiar with the Bible. Study these passages on your own, with a friend, or with a group. If you or someone you know needs a Bible, please take one from under a chair in the Worship Center. They are there for you to take home and use! Sermon manuscripts are available at www.spwired.com.

Monday, May 12 – Through this series we're going to memorize one verse each week. Memorization helps put God's word in our minds and hearts. **Memorize James 4:10. "Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up" (James 4:10, TNIV).** Read James 4:1-3. James is asking a very basic, very direct question of those who call themselves followers of Jesus. The question is, "Will your aim in life be to submit to God's will or gratify your own desires for the pleasures of this world?" What does he say is the result of seeking only to gratify pleasure? How have you seen this result in the lives of others? In your own life?

Tuesday, May 13 – Go over the memorization passage for the week. **Read James 4:4-7.** When James speaks of adultery in this passage he means spiritual adultery, not physical. God's people commit spiritual adultery when they follow after things of this world rather than things of God. Why would this anger God so much? When James speaks about the problem of befriending the world, he is not calling God's creation, or God's people bad. He is saying that following the path of mere worldly pleasure is a dangerous and deadly journey. He's saying that we cannot serve both God, and pleasure. How is this message fitting for our day and age? What is James' warning about the sin of pride? Why are pride and arrogance so contrary to God's heart?

Wednesday, May 14 – Hit the memorization verse again. **Read James 4:8-10.** This is James' call for Jesus' followers to purify themselves. To cleanse your hands means to stop doing evil with our words, in our hearts, in our minds, and in our actions. What of these need cleansing in you? As James talks about being sorrowful, he is not telling us to live joyless lives. He is telling us to take the difficult, and often saddening, path of self-evaluation. This path often leads to sorrow because of our words and actions. But the sorrow of realizing our sins is not the last word. It is followed by the overwhelming joy of God's grace and forgiveness. How does today's passage relate to you? What sorrow might you need to face in order to face the joy of grace and forgiveness? How does all this relate to humility?

Thursday, May 15 – How are you doing on the memorization verse? Is it locked in? **Read James 4:11-12.** Here James is warning against slandering someone--making accusations against someone, when they are not there to defend themselves. This is condemned throughout the Bible. Why is this against the heart of God? We might think that speaking ill against others is a minor thing, but scripture says that it is one of the worst things we could do because it breaks God's royal law that we love others as God has loved us. How do you live this out in your life? Where can you do better?

Friday, May 16 – Hit James 4:10 one more time. **Read James 4:13-17.** This passage focuses attention once again on arrogance and pride. Do you see yourself reflected in these verses? How might we make plans in life in light of God's presence? How would that affect how we talk about those plans? How do we live and speak of life in complete dependence on God, especially when we know how unpredictable life is?