

Join us in being on mission with God!

**OUR VISION**

To continually mature and grow as a united body of Jesus-imitators who live out God's greatest commandment to "Love" by exalting God and serving one another, and His greatest commission to "Go" by reaching into and shaping our local, regional, and global communities.

## "War of the Worlds"

*James 4:1-12*

### Getting Started

*After an introductory time, discuss the following questions in your group or class.*

Q: Why do most wars or fights between people start?

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### Thinking about the "wars" in our lives

1. The question of verse one assumes there is conflict between people. What kind of fights and quarrels can arise within the Body of Christ?

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2. In the phrase "the battle within you," the word "you" is plural. James is not talking about an inner conflict, but a group conflict. List some of the kinds of conflicting desires that people can "battle" over.

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3. In verse 2 James describes four kinds of actions people in church can take when they don't obtain what they desire. Name the four destructive things we tend to do.

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4. The word *kill* is used metaphorically. It appears in ancient literature where Herodias writes, "This woman will be the death of me yet!" What kind of things do we "kill" when we don't get our way?

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**James 4:1-12**

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? <sup>2</sup>You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. <sup>3</sup>When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. <sup>4</sup>You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. <sup>5</sup>Or do you think Scripture says without reason that the spirit he caused to live in us envies intensely? <sup>6</sup>But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." <sup>7</sup>Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. <sup>8</sup>Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. <sup>9</sup>Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. <sup>10</sup>Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up. <sup>11</sup>Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it. <sup>12</sup>There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you— who are you to judge your neighbor?

5. What does James mean by “you cannot have what you want”? What are some of the things we “want but cannot have”?  
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6. What is the root of all the strife and fighting that goes on to get what we want in this life?  
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7. James insists that these kinds of responses overlook a different approach. What action does the end of verse two describe that we sometimes *don't* do?  
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8. Some would object to James' remark by insisting that they pray, but nothing happens. How does he respond to this objection in verse 3?  
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9. Does God only answer prayer when your motives are absolutely perfect?  
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10. Why do you think James describes disloyalty to God in such a striking way in verse 4?  
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## Wisdom: The Missing Ingredient

11. What would be an example of a way in which we cultivate friendship with the world and become an enemy of God in the process?

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12. Envy is normally a bad character trait. (See verse 5.) How is it good when it is a characteristic of the Spirit?

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13. In what way does the quotation in verse 6 address the issue of responding to conflict in the right way?

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14. James views the devil as the invisible agent in the interpersonal conflicts in the church. List the directions in verses 7-10 that we can take to defeat the deceitful schemes of Satan.

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15. Which of these steps do you think we most frequently overlook? Why?

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16. Sometimes conflict takes the form of nasty words. What does verse 11 remind us we are really doing when we speak critically or demean others in the church?

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Reaching Up and Reaching Out

HARVEST EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

524 River Hills Dr. P.O. Box 291

Phone: 515-733-5360
Web: www.harvestefree.org
E-mail: office@harvestefree.org



17. According to verse 11, what do we stop doing when we concentrate on the misdeeds of others?

Four horizontal lines for writing the answer to question 17.

18. How does verse 12 challenge us to be more cautious about our tendency to excuse ourselves and point the finger at others?

Four horizontal lines for writing the answer to question 18.

19. If you were to summarize some key principles from this text about dealing with conflict in the church, what would they be?

Four horizontal lines for writing the answer to question 19.

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