

**OPEN THE CONVERSATION**

Take some time to build relationships with the students:

* Ask for each student’s high and low from the week.
* Today’s RBQ (Relationship Building Question): Describe your “Best Day Ever.” If you had 24 hours to do anything, go anywhere, and take along anyone—sky’s the limit—what would your day look like?

**INTRODUCTION**

Let’s be honest—life is full of wants. We want to fit in. We want recognition. We want comfort. But what happens when those “wants” take control of our hearts? In James 4:1–17, we see how our inner desires can pull us away from God and cause conflict with others. The good news is, God offers us a better way—a life marked by humility, peace, and closeness with Him. Today, we’ll explore what it truly means to live a life of humility and submission—and how choosing God’s way over our own can transform every part of our lives.

**What do you think it means to "submit to God"? Does that sound hard, confusing, or freeing to you? Why?**

***READ JAMES 4:1-17***

1. James talks about “fights and quarrels” starting from desires inside us. Can you think of a time when your own wants caused drama between you and someone else? Maybe with a sibling, parent, or friend? What happened?
2. Verse 4 compares being a “friend of the world” with being an “enemy of God.” What does it mean to be a friend of the world? Is it possible to be both a friend of the world and a follower of Jesus? Why or why not?
3. James tells us to “resist the devil” and “draw near to God.” What are some things in your everyday life that make it harder to stay close to God? What’s a practical way you can resist temptation and grow closer to Him this week?
4. In verses 9–10, James talks about grieving our sin and humbling ourselves before the Lord. Who is someone you admire for their humility?What’s something about the way they live that you’d like to copy?
5. Verse 14 says our lives are “like a mist.” What do you think James is trying to teach us with that image? How should that change the way we live or make decisions?

**WRAP UP**

**Put today's lesson into action: How can you apply it to your life? How can you take a step closer to God this week?**

*Ask for any prayer requests, and pray for one another.*

**EXTENDED CUT**

1. **James talks about “fights and quarrels” starting from desires inside us. Can you think of a time when your own wants caused drama between you and someone else? Maybe with a sibling, parent, or friend? What happened?**
James 4:1-3 teaches that “fights and quarrels” among us often stem from desires within us —wanting to be right, to win, to have what someone else has, or to get our own way, etc. When we don’t get what we want, it leads to arguments and division. At the root of it all is a selfishness that places our own will over others and ultimately over God’s will for our life! As believers, we are called to live differently. Philippians 2:3–4 reminds us to “do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility consider others as more important than yourselves.” God calls us to approach others with humility, love, and a willingness to put their needs ahead of our own. This shift requires that we surrender our selfish desires and submit to God, ultimately aligning our hearts with His.
2. **Verse 4 compares being a “friend of the world” with being an “enemy of God.” What does it mean to be a friend of the world? Can you be both a friend of the world and a follower of Jesus? Why or why not?**To be a “friend of the world,” as James 4:4 says, means living according to the world’s values—like pride, selfish ambition, or chasing popularity and pleasure—rather than following God’s ways. It’s choosing what the world approves of instead of what God commands. James makes it clear that friendship with the world puts us in opposition to God. We simply *can’t* live for both. Think of it this way. Imagine trying to use two social media accounts at once—one to impress your friends and another to honor your faith. You are constantly switching between the two, editing what you say or how you act depending on the audience. Over time, it would become exhausting, confusing, and too much to keep up with! 1 John 2:15 says, “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” We can’t live divided lives—it just doesn’t work trying to please the world and God at the same time. We can’t be fully devoted to Jesus while still trying to fit into a world that rejects Him. We must choose to be either a friend of the world, or a friend of God by submitting our life to him.
3. **James tells us to “resist the devil” and “draw near to God.” What are some things in your everyday life that make it harder to stay close to God? What’s a practical way you can resist those temptations and grow closer to Him this week?**James 4:7-8 gives a powerful invitation and challenge: “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.” In everyday life, things like distractions from social media, peer pressure, busyness, or even negative thought patterns can make it harder to stay close to God. These aren’t just harmless inconveniences—they can slowly pull our hearts away from Him. Resisting the devil means actively rejecting the lies and temptations that try to replace God’s truth! The good news is, God equips us to stand strong. Ephesians 6:11-18 describes the Armor of God—tools He gives us to resist the enemy and remain faithful, including the “belt of truth.” One of the most practical ways we can resist temptation and grow closer to God is by creating intentional moments with Him, to remind ourselves of what is true. This might look like starting your day with prayer, limiting distractions, or spending time in Scripture. Or maybe the practical step you need to take involves setting a boundary -- like putting a limit on the time you spend on your phone, unfollowing accounts that lead to comparison, or choosing friends who help you grow in your faith.As James promises, when we draw near to God, He will draw near to us. It’s not about being perfect—it’s about choosing Him daily and letting Him shape the way you live.
4. **In verses 9–10, James talks about grieving our sin and humbling ourselves before the Lord. Who is someone you admire for their humility? What’s something about the way they live that you’d like to copy?**When someone is truly humble, you can usually see it in the way they treat others—with kindness, patience, and a willingness to listen. They don’t have to be the center of attention, and they’re quick to admit when they’re wrong. Humble people don’t pretend to have it all together—they rely on God and give Him credit instead of trying to impress others. James tells us in verse 10 to, “Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will exalt you.” Humility ultimately requires trusting in the Lord and his ability to provide exactly what we need, which can certainly be scary sometimes! It means giving up control and admitting our need for and dependance on God. But the gift of humility is that it draws us closer to the Lord. It creates space for Him to work in our hearts, change our attitudes, and shape us into who He wants us to be. The key to humility is not in thinking less of ourselves—but about thinking of ourselves *less* and trusting God more.
5. **Verse 14 says our lives are “like a mist.” What do you think James is trying to teach us with that image? How should that change the way we live or make decisions?**In James 4:14, when it says our lives are “like a mist,” it’s showing us just how short and fragile life really is. Just like mist fades away quickly in the morning sun, our time on earth is brief and uncertain. James isn’t trying to scare us—he’s trying to help us live with the right perspective. When we realize we don’t have unlimited time, it should shift the way we live and make decisions. Instead of living like we’re in control or chasing things that won’t last, we’re called to live with purpose and depend on God daily. Proverbs 27:1 reminds us, “Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring.” Recognizing the shortness of life helps us focus on what really matters—seeking God’s will (James 4:15), loving others well, and using our time to live for things that last. We can fill up our days with lots of things and we often do. But are they the right things? Are they our plans or God’s plans? Building up our kingdom or his? That’s the mindset James wants to pass on to us.