



### 3.27.11/James 4:1-5 Obeying God

#### Opening Activity

Ask the children what they think of the last argument they were in (maybe it was with a friend or a family member). If appropriate, have them explain the argument and how it made them feel.

#### Read James 4:1-5

What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"?

#### Discussion

Explain to them that what James is teaching us with this passage is that our hearts have sinful wants. When we argue just to get our way and want things to fill our sinful desires, then it becomes clear that we love the world more than we love God. These sinful wants cause us to argue with others and just try to get our way. James reminds us that God is jealous for our hearts. We usually think that being jealous is a bad thing, but it's not a bad thing for God to be jealous for us. This is because God is our Creator, and we belong to Him, and He has every right to have all of our love and affection, so when we love the world more than Him, this upsets God. His jealousy is not a bad thing at all, though. Instead, it's a BEAUTIFUL thing, because it means He will pursue us, love us, fight for us, and even save us from the very thing that causes us to argue and have selfish prayers. As a result, he sent Jesus to die in our place and to come back to life and give us HIS perfect heart instead of our broken hearts.

#### Question 1

What does James mean when he says "You do not have, because you do not ask? You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions."

*God gives us the most amazing gift. . . we get to pray to Him, to ask the God who created everything and holds everything in place, for His Spirit to rule our lives. God is encouraging us to spend time with Him because He loves us and loves to meet our needs. Sometimes when we pray, we ask God for things that are not good for us, and God often tells us no when this happens – it's not because He doesn't love us. . . it's because He DOES love us. When we ask for something just to make ourselves happy, it's not really good for us or anyone else, and sometimes God will say no.*

#### Question 2

What do you think James means when he says "Therefore whoever wished to be a friend of the world makes himself and enemy of God?"

*The "world" means "those things that are against God," so if we love and want those things, then we're not really loving God and are actually AGAINST Him. If our hearts love God we must reject the evil of the world. We must seek the wisdom of God to oppose the world's sin.*

#### Question 3

What are things of this world that we may want but will not bring us closer to a relationship with God?

*Material things, money, friends, always wanting to have our way, etc. Allow the children to answer as well.*

**Passage Activity**

Give each child a piece of red construction paper. Have them cut out a heart shape. Have them think of things they can draw on the heart to help them seek God's wisdom. These things include prayer, obedience, being humble, fellowship, reading the Bible, etc.

**Wrap Up**

Pray with the children encouraging them to confess their sins and be forgiven. You may want to read 1 John 1:9 as you do this. Remind them that if they believe that Jesus is Lord and can say that God raised Him from the dead, their sin has been beaten. Close in prayer with a confession time (individually or as a group, depending on everyone's comfort level). Acknowledge that on our own we will always fall short of God's standard of perfection. Thank God for His plan of redemption, and for His mercy that saves us from the judgment that we all deserve. If someone in the group would like to know more about what it means to believe that Jesus is Lord and that He came back to life to save us, encourage them to ask their parents to tell them more about this!