

DEEPER BIBLE STUDY

HEART WORK

GRACE, HUMILITY, & GETTING ALONG | JAMES 4 | PASTOR ADAM AZIZ

DAY 1 — WHAT'S REALLY DRIVING ME?

READ: James 4:1-3

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

Most of us are really good at fixing the FRUIT but not the ROOT. We see the fight in our marriage... we see the tension at work... we see the friction with that family member... and we go straight to figuring out who's wrong and how to win. But James says the war OUT THERE actually started IN HERE. Underneath most conflict is a craving — something I want that I'm not getting. And until I deal with the war inside, I'll keep losing the wars outside. Today's heart work is simple: Stop blaming. Start examining.

JOURNAL PROMPTS

- What conflict, frustration, or tension am I currently carrying? (Be specific.)
- If I'm honest... what desire underneath is fueling that conflict? (control, respect, attention, security, comfort, being right?)
- Have I actually brought this desire to God in prayer... or have I just complained about it?

PRAYER PROMPT

Father, expose the desires inside me that are fueling the wars outside me. Show me what I'm really chasing. I don't want to keep blaming people for what's actually rooted in my own heart. Search me. Surface what needs to change. In Jesus' name, amen.

DAY 2 — WHO AM I MARRIED TO?

READ: James 4:4 & 1 John 2:15-17

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

James doesn't soften this one. He calls it adultery. Not physical — spiritual. Because when we said "yes" to Jesus, we entered into covenant. He's the Husband. We're the Bride. And every time we go chasing what the world is selling, we're cheating on the One who gave His life for us. Friendship with the world isn't having unsaved friends. It's adopting the world's values, chasing the world's definition of success, loving what God hates, and wanting culture's approval more than Heaven's. It's when the world's voice gets louder than God's voice in your life.

JOURNAL PROMPTS

- Where in my life is the world's voice getting louder than God's? (social media? entertainment? friend group? culture? career?)
- What is one value I've adopted from the culture that doesn't actually line up with the Word of God?
- Whose approval am I working hardest to get — God's, or the world's? How can I tell?

PRAYER PROMPT

Jesus, You bought me with Your blood. I don't want to share my heart with the very world You came to rescue me from. Forgive me for the places I've flirted with culture instead of clinging to You. Make me faithful. Realign my loves. Be the loudest voice in my life. Amen.

DAY 3 — MORE GRACE

READ: James 4:5-6 & 2 Corinthians 12:9

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

After two days of God surfacing things in our heart, today is the breath of fresh air we needed. HE GIVES GRACE GENEROUSLY. God isn't standing over you with a clipboard tallying your failures. He's the Father with arms wide open... ready to give MORE grace to the heart that bows. But notice the catch: He gives grace to the HUMBLE. Pride is the only thing that blocks the grace flow. Pride says, "I've got this." Humility says, "I need You." If you're feeling the weight of conviction this week... don't run from God. Run TO Him. There's more grace where you're headed than there is sin behind you.

JOURNAL PROMPTS

- Where in my life have I been operating in pride — trying to handle things in my own strength?
- Is there an area where I've been hiding from God instead of running to Him? Why?
- What would it look like to receive God's grace today instead of trying to earn or perform my way back to Him?

PRAYER PROMPT

Father, thank You that You give grace generously. I bow today. I lay down the pride, the self-sufficiency, the performance. I receive Your grace — not because I deserve it, but because You give it freely. Let Your grace meet me right where I am and lead me where I need to go. Amen.

DAY 4 — SUBMIT, RESIST, DRAW NEAR

READ: James 4:7-8

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

Three movements. In this exact order. HUMBLE yourself. RESIST the devil. DRAW NEAR to God. Notice what comes first — SUBMISSION. We can't resist the devil while we're still cooperating with him. We can't fight the enemy while we're shaking hands with him on the back porch. Submission to God is what gives us authority over the enemy. And then the promise: "Come close to God, and God will come close to you." Not maybe. Not sometimes. He WILL. The God of the universe responds to a heart that's actually moving toward Him. So... are you actually moving toward Him? Or just talking about it?

JOURNAL PROMPTS

- What is one specific area where I need to SUBMIT to God today — to stop fighting Him and finally surrender?
- What does the enemy keep tempting me with... and what would real RESISTANCE look like? (Not just praying about it — actually doing something.)
- If I'm honest, am I actually drawing near to God this season — or just going through the motions? What needs to change?

PRAYER PROMPT

Lord, I submit. I'm done fighting You on this. I resist the lies and temptations of the enemy in Jesus' name — and I trust Your promise that he WILL flee. I'm drawing near to You today. Come close to me. Speak to me. Change me from the inside out. Amen.

DAY 5 — WASH & PURIFY

READ: James 4:8-10 & 2 Corinthians 7:10 (NLT)

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

This is heavy... but necessary. James calls us to wash our HANDS (our actions) and purify our HEARTS (our motives). Most of us are decent at cleaning the outside while leaving the inside untouched. But God wants BOTH. Then he says something that doesn't fit our "good vibes only" culture: GRIEVE your sin. We've gotten so casual about sin that we meme it and joke about it. James says, "No. Mourn it." Why? Because grief over sin is a sign of LIFE. A dead conscience doesn't grieve. A hardened heart doesn't grieve. But a heart still soft to the Spirit feels the weight of what grieves God. And here's the promise: HUMBLE YOURSELVES AND HE WILL LIFT YOU UP. The path UP in God's kingdom is always DOWN through humility.

JOURNAL PROMPTS

- What ACTIONS in my life need washing? (What am I doing that I know God has been asking me to stop?)
- What HEART issues need purifying? (motives, thoughts, what I dwell on, what I secretly want?)
- Have I gotten too comfortable with any sin in my life? When was the last time I actually GRIEVED something I've done?

PRAYER PROMPT

Father, wash my hands and purify my heart. I'm sorry for the places I've grown casual about what grieves You. Soften me again. Give me the gift of godly sorrow that leads to real repentance — not shame, but transformation. I humble myself before You, and I trust You to lift me up in Your time. Amen.

DAY 6 — STEP DOWN FROM THE JUDGE'S SEAT

READ: James 4:11-12 & Matthew 7:1-5

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

Humble people don't tear other people down. It's that simple... and that hard. Because if we're honest, most of us have a daily rhythm of low-key (or sometimes loud) judgment of other people — their

parenting, their marriage, their walk with God, their choices, their posts, their politics. James says: there's only ONE Judge... and you're not Him. We don't see hearts. We don't know full stories. We can't read motives. We're not even without sin ourselves. Discernment? Yes. Accountability? Yes. Speaking truth in love? Absolutely. But sitting in God's seat and sentencing people? Never.

JOURNAL PROMPTS

- Who in my life have I been silently (or loudly) judging lately? Why?
- Is there gossip, slander, or critical conversation I've been part of — maybe even disguised as “prayer requests” or “venting”?
- How can I begin speaking LIFE over the people I've been speaking critically about?

PRAYER PROMPT

Lord, forgive me for taking a seat that was never mine. I lay down the gavel. I'm not the Judge — You are. Help me speak life instead of criticism, truth instead of slander, blessing instead of cursing. Where I've hurt someone with my words, lead me to make it right. Amen.

DAY 7 — LIFE IS A MIST

Read: James 4:13-17

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

James closes the chapter with a punch. First: your life is a MIST. Vapor. Fog. Here a little while, then gone. We talk like tomorrow is owed to us — “when I retire,” “next year,” “once the kids are grown” — but tomorrow is not promised. Live with eternity in mind. Second: planning life without God is BOASTING. It's sitting in His seat and writing the script as if He doesn't exist. Submit your plans. Hold them with open hands. And finally... the closing line that's been ringing in my spirit all week: “It is sin to know what you ought to do and then not do it.” Most of us think of sin as the WRONG things we do. James reminds us... sin is also the RIGHT things we DON'T do. The forgiveness we won't extend. The apology we keep delaying. The conversation we keep avoiding. The obedience we keep negotiating. Obedience delayed is disobedience.

JOURNAL PROMPTS

- If my life ended sooner than I expect... what would I regret leaving undone?
- What plans am I holding too tightly — plans I've made WITHOUT submitting them to God?
- What is the ONE thing the Holy Spirit has been telling me to do that I keep putting off? (Be honest.)
- Looking back over this week of Heart Work... what is the BIGGEST thing God has shown me about myself?

PRAYER PROMPT

Father, I lay my plans, my calendar, my future at Your feet. My life is a mist — help me steward it well. Show me what You've been telling me to do that I've been avoiding... and give me the courage to do it TODAY. No more delays. No more excuses. I want a life that says yes to You — in big things & small. Amen.