

LIFE APPLICATION

THEME: WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH – LOVE NOT THE WORLD

PASSAGE: JAMES 4 1-17

LAUNCH

Think about a trivial row that you had with someone recently. Can you see how that might have been motivated by selfish desire on your part?

DISCOVERY & UNDERSTANDING

CHALLENGE (1-6)

What sort of rows can occur in the church?

Why does James use such strong language to describe them? Why can in church fighting be so bitter?

As far as James is concerned, all church conflict is motivated by base passions. Why does he say this? Do you agree? What sort of 'base passions' are at work & why do we fail to spot them in ourselves?

James uses the very strong word 'adulteresses' to describe the way in which we as Christians can compromise with the world. What message is he trying to convey by using this term?

Tom Wright suggests that 'the world' is 'the pattern of life, the underlying implicit story, the things people long for, expect and dream of'. What aspect of the world provides the biggest pull for you personally? What might you need to do to keep this temptation at bay? (The group may need a short time to reflect on this one)

GOOD ADVICE (6-7)

In verses 1-6 of chapter 4, James is quite tough in challenging wrong behaviour. In verse 7 he becomes softer & gives out some excellent advice

Vs 7 says if we resist the devil, he will run away. How does he attack & in what areas? How should we resist?

There's a nice contrast between the resist and run of our encounters with Satan and the mutual drawing near of our encounters with God. What are some of the best ways in which you draw near to God?

In what ways should we helpfully mourn wrong behaviour in our lives? What are some of the unhelpful ways we can mourn wrong behaviour?

OTHER ISSUES 11-17

In verse 11, slander is linked to judging others. In what sort of areas do you find yourself commonly judging others? Eg infringement of minor regulations, perceived laziness, inconsistency. Why is it that we can be harsh judges in some areas but not others? What can cause this?

Why is it inappropriate for us to judge others as Christians? What other scriptures might back this argument up?

What are the benefits of buying into James's advice about planning in 13 – 17.

APPLICATION

Pray for unity in our church & the church as a whole

Pray for one another to be resolved to resist worldly attitudes