

Louder Than Words #8
The Struggle is Real

Word

Scripture Reference

James 4:1-10

Discussion Questions

1. What kind of struggle do you find difficult to deal with?
2. Everyone goes through struggles in their life. Sometimes those struggles are of the mundane—non-critical yet unwelcome situations, and sometimes they are a real struggles that alter our life. One struggle that is very real and affects people of every social and economic level and ethnicity is the struggle between love for the world and love for God. The Bible tells us that one cannot serve two masters. How you deal with this struggle speaks louder than words to an unbelieving world about your authentic faith in Jesus Christ. Read James 4:1-10. James addresses the issue of this real struggle between the world and Christ by giving two realities that Christians face:
 - a. *Reality #1: We pursue pleasure (v. 1-3).* According to James, where do wars and fights come from? What is pleasure? How far would people go in order to find satisfaction for their pleasure? Where does pursuing pleasure lead (v. 2-3)? Why does God not answer everything you pray for?
 - b. *Reality #2: Friendship with the world means you are an enemy of God (v. 4-6).* James was addressing believers, and he calls those Christians who pursue the world adulterers and adulteresses— those who cheat on and/or leave the one they are called to love. Discuss why a person who prioritizes worldly success cannot be a friend of God? How does God feel when you choose to be a friend of the world instead of Him (v. 5-6)? When is jealousy is right and acceptable? What does God do to His children whom He longs to love and are devoted to Him (v. 6)?
3. God's grace is sufficient enough to remind you that you can win over the struggle against pleasure and that you can choose to do what is right. The pleasure of this world cannot give you back what you invested in it, but what you put in the Lord will be given back to you. God gives us more grace even when we do not deserve it. James gives us in verses 7-10 four ways to fight the draw of worldly pleasure:
 - a. *Submit to God by resisting the Devil (v. 7).* As a follower of Christ, the first thing you need to do is to submit to God, which means you prioritize Him above all others. Resisting the Devil means to refuse to do the things he wants you to do that are not consistent or in agreement with the Word of God. What are the usual ways the Devil tempts you to go against the Word

of God? Share how you have been victorious in submitting to God by resisting the devil.

- b. *Draw near to God for purification of life (v. 8).* To draw near to God means to come closer to Him in intimacy and fellowship. Share how you draw close to God to the point that nothing else matters to you in this world. How do you start the process of drawing near to a Holy God, according to verse 8? How do you purify yourself in order to come before the Lord?
- c. *Take life seriously (v. 9).* James tells us that in order to fight off the draws of the world, one should take life seriously. Do you live your life only from pleasure to pleasure? Does it mean that Christians cannot enjoy life? What does it mean to live your life for God's glory?
- d. *Humble yourself before the Lord (v. 10).* The world seeks to entice you through self-glorification, but humbling yourself means putting yourself in the hands of the Lord and allowing Him to work His will into your life. Discuss how the world entices even Christians to seek self-gratification. When you approach Him with humility, how does He respond?

Walk

May this hymn be the anthem of your Christian walk:

*Who is on the Lord's side? Who will serve the King?
Who will be His helpers, other lives to bring?
Who will leave the world's side? Who will face the foe?
Who is on the Lord's side? Who for Him will go?
By Thy call of mercy, by Thy grace divine,
We are on the Lord's side—Savior, we are Thine!*

Worship & Prayer

Heavenly Father, I acknowledge that I struggle between love for the world and love for You. The lure of the world for pleasure is sometimes strong and overwhelming. But thank You that You have provided ways for me to overcome the world so that my love for you will prevail. And by your grace, I can resist the devil and submit to you instead. Thank you for the privilege that I have in you to draw closer to You in intimacy and fellowship. Help me to take life seriously so that I can live a life for your glory. Give me the strength Lord to humble myself before You and to allow You to work out your will in my life. Thank you for the victory I have in you over this real struggle. In Jesus' name. Amen