

# LIVING HD



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## WEEK 6

26–30 July 2021

## WEEK 6 – SUBMIT YOURSELF TO GOD

### James 4: 1-12

<sup>1</sup>What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? <sup>2</sup>You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. <sup>3</sup>When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

<sup>4</sup>You adulterous people don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. <sup>5</sup>Or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us? <sup>6</sup>But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble."

<sup>7</sup>Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. <sup>8</sup>Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. <sup>9</sup>Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. <sup>10</sup>Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

<sup>11</sup>Brothers and sisters, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against a brother or sister or judges them speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it. <sup>12</sup>There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you—who are you to judge your neighbour?

## MONDAY – The dangers of envy and jealousy



**James 4: 1-3** *What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.*

James, concerned about the dissension amongst the members of the congregation, encourages them to do introspection to find the root cause of the problem. "Don't they come from your desires that battle within you?" (NIV), he asks. "You lust (*envy*) for what you don't have and are willing to kill to get it. You want what isn't yours and will risk violence to get your hands on it." (MSG)

How often have we not heard someone say "Oh, you make me jealous. I wish I could have that." Or "I really envy you". Is there a difference between being 'jealous' and 'envious' of someone? If you are '*envious*' you have a feeling of longing for something that someone has. Whereas if you are '*jealous*' you wish that what the other person has, really was yours. You covet their possessions or status. In Genesis 4: 1-16 we read how Cain killed his brother Abel

because he was jealous of his brother and couldn't get what he wanted.

So why don't we just ask God for what we want? After all the Bible tells us that if we ask we shall receive, right? (Matthew 7: 7). James sends us a clear message in verses 2 – 3: *You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, ...."*

"If you have a grateful attitude, you're going to be less focused on what others have and less likely to be unhappy because of envy." Richard H. Smith



**PRAYER:** Give me a grateful heart, O Lord. AMEN

Change my heart O God – Maranatha Music

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=llSmG-eJTU>

## TUESDAY – Which wolf do you feed?



**Romans 12: 21** (ESV): *Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

I would like to share an old indigenous American Cherokee story with you ~

One evening an old Cherokee told his grandson about a battle that goes on inside people. He said, "My son, the battle is between two wolves inside us all. One is Evil – It is anger, envy, jealousy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego. The other is Good - It is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith."

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather. "Which wolf wins?" The old Cherokee simply replied, "The one you feed."

Each one of us is uniquely created in the image of God. **Psalms 139: 14** (NIV): *I praise You because I*

*am fearfully and wonderfully made."*

*'Envy is a symptom of lack of appreciation of our own uniqueness and self-worth. Each of us has something to give that no one else has.'* – Elizabeth O'Connor.

We live in a very competitive world which encourages us to be more, strive for more - often to the detriment of others around us and in the long run to our own detriment.

*'Envy is the art of counting the other fellow's blessings instead of our own.'* – Harold Coffin

**Reflection:** Do we fill our day with striving to be like someone else; or have what they have? Or do we look around us and count our blessings?



**Prayer:** "lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."  
AMEN

Good good father - Chris Tomlin

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CqybalesbuA>

## WEDNESDAY – Humble yourself



**James 12: 7-10** *Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and He will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up.*

James tells us to submit or humble ourselves before God. In Luke Chapter 10, Martha opens her home to Jesus. She did what most of us would do when someone of importance comes to visit. She busied herself preparing a special meal for her guest. She was not at all amused with her sister, Mary, who sat at Jesus' feet and didn't help her with all the chores.

How do you respond to James telling us we must humble ourselves before God? Do you try

to do more? Be more? Give more? Mary knew the truth that there is nothing that we can do to make God love us more than He already does.

When you humble yourself you are saying "God, I cannot do this on my own, I need Your help. I am dependent on You."

God will give you wisdom and guide your steps to make a difference in the lives of others. He will direct your path.

*"What counts in life is not the fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead."*

Nelson Mandela



**PRAYER:** Dear Lord, may I display less of me and more of YOU to this world. AMEN

## THURSDAY: Give thanks



On Tuesday we read about the battle within ourselves between good and evil.

**Romans 12: 21**

We have already to a large extent looked at the elements of evil as the old Cherokee told his grandson - anger, envy, jealousy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego.

The good within ourselves is - joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith.

Yesterday we read how James tells us to humble ourselves before God. There are at least 28 Bible verses that tell us to 'humble ourselves'. **Ephesians 4: 2** tells us to "*Be completely humble and gentle, be patient, bearing with one another in love.*"

*Humility is not thinking less of yourself, it's thinking of yourself less.* -C. S. Lewis

The Covid19 pandemic that we are currently experiencing is a very challenging time for us all. I would like to challenge you to think of ways of coming alongside one another in love.

Some ways you may consider would be to -

- *Spend 'time'* with others. During the pandemic, find creative ways to do this. Maybe a call or message?
- Listen to others. One of the biggest gifts you can give someone is your time and to listen.
- *Be grateful* for what you have. Start a 'gratitude journal'.
- *Give thanks.* Each day is a gift.



**Prayer:** Dear Lord, were we not born for a time like this? AMEN

Don Moen – Give thanks with a grateful heart

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=blbsIHDgceY>

## FRIDAY: To judge or not to judge



**James 4: 11 & 12** *Brothers and sisters, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against a brother or sister or judges them speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it. There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you—who are you to judge your neighbour?*

At a Youth Alpha Course, the facilitator gave each group slips of paper and asked them to write down as many sins as they could think of in a given time. When they had finished, he asked them to sort out the “sins” they had written down into the different “categories of sin”. They set

about their task with much discussion taking place. After a while one of the groups pushed all the pieces into a pile in the middle and concluded that sin is sin.

There are no big sins or small sins and we are not qualified to pass judgement.



**PRAYER:** Let us pray together the Prayer of St Francis -

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace;  
where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light;  
and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master,  
Grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;  
to be understood, as to understand;  
to be loved, as to love;  
for it is in giving that we receive,  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life. AMEN.