

Week 6

8 weeks

TO CHANGE YOUR LIFE >>

'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.'

James 3:13-4:12
&
Luke 6:46-49



MORNING SERMON OUTLINE



How actions make a difference - JAMES 3:13-4:12

> TWO KINDS OF WISDOM (3:13-18)

> THE KIND WE HAVE (4:1-5)

> THE KIND WE NEED (4:6-10)

>> A CLOSER LOOK

(James 3:13-4:12)



NOTE: Throughout the rest of the study, there are several questions for discussion. One or two of the questions allow a more creative approach. Feel free to adapt them as you see fit, but they are some ideas to prompt some more creative thinking! **These are marked by an asterisk *.**

>>Recap from last week

If you haven't yet done so, you may like to recap on last week and consider whether you have managed to make any changes in your life as a result? How did the study affect your life throughout the week?

> TWO KINDS OF WISDOM (3:13-18)

- How does James tell us to demonstrate wisdom? How else might we want to prove how wise we are?
- In 3:14-18, James describes two contrasting types of wisdom – “earthly wisdom” (v14-16) and “wisdom from heaven” (v17-18). What are the characteristics and results of each kind?

<i>Earthly wisdom</i>		<i>Wisdom from Heaven</i>
<i>Not from heaven, earthly, un-spiritual , from the devil (v15)</i>	Source	<i>From heaven (v17)</i>
	Characteristics	
	Result	

> THE WISDOM WE HAVE (4:1-5)

- When you argue or quarrel with other people, what do you normally think is the cause? Where does James say you should look? (4v1-2)
- The end of verse 2 says that you don't have because you don't ask God? Why is it hard to pray about things you really want or care about? Why are we often tempted instead to complain or criticise others in these areas?
- Verse 3 says that even when we do pray, we often do it for the wrong reasons. What evidence is there in your life that he is right? (*Hint: Think about what you did last time you received something unexpected.*)
- What does James mean in verse 4 by “adulterous people”?
- Why does our selfishness and quarrelling matter so much? (look at James 1:18, and John 13:34-35)

> THE WISDOM WE NEED (4:6-10)

- In 4:7-10 James offers a prescription of 10 things we should do. List them.
- But despite laying out a 10-step programme for us, in v6 he tells us that it is God who makes the first move. What does God do, and why is this so important?
- Verse 10 summarises the response that James wants us to make: Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up. In what areas of your life do find it hardest to be humble? Are you prepared to offer them up to God now?

>> ALTERNATIVE PASSAGE**Foundational Change - LUKE 6:46-49**

We put a lot of effort into trying to keep things safe and secure – our savings, our health, our possessions ... but we are sometimes in danger of missing the greatest question: Is our life secure?

> THE GREATEST QUESTION YOU WILL EVER ANSWER: IS YOUR LIFE SECURE?

>TWO HOUSES - ONE THAT STOOD FIRM...

> ...AND ONE THAT COLLAPSES

> HOW WILL YOU BUILD?

>> A CLOSER LOOK pt 2. (Luke 6:46-49)



>>Recap from last week

- If you haven't yet done so, you may like to recap on last week and consider whether you have managed to make any changes in your life as a result? How did the study affect your life throughout the week?

> WHO IS SPEAKING?

In the Old Testament, people were called to listen to God's words and live by them. Now Jesus says people are to listen to him and live by his words.

- What does this tell us about who Jesus is? Look back through the opening chapters of Luke and see what other evidence Jesus gives as to who he is?

* Identify some daily situations that you come across where people are talking and no-one is really listening to them. Why are they not listening? If you are brave you could act them out!

- List the common responses people might give as to who Jesus is. What difference will our understanding of who Jesus is make to how carefully we listen to him?

> THE LIFE THAT IS SECURE (v47-48)

- How would you describe in your own words someone who 'comes to Jesus', 'hears his words' and 'puts them into practice'?

- Can you describe how you 'came to Jesus', how you 'hear his words' today and what difference it is making in your life now to 'put them into practice'? *(It may help to discuss this more openly if you split into smaller groups of 2-3 people.)*

NOTE: The flood that Jesus speaks of is likely to be a reference both to the challenges we face in life and also the ultimate test of God's final judgement.

>THE LIFE THAT HAS NO SECURITY (v46 & 49)

- Jesus is speaking to people who call him 'Lord' but show that this is only a superficial acknowledgement by not obeying his words. Why does it not make any sense to do this? Why do we find it so easy to say 'Jesus is Lord' but not be obedient?
- The two houses that Jesus speaks of may well have looked similar on the outside, but their foundations could not have been more different. What would you say mark different 'life foundations' between you and your friends who do not follow Jesus?
- *It may be helpful to put a large sheet of paper in the middle of the group with an outline of a house. Around the edge list all the things in life that people tend to put their security in. When you have finished ask the question – how secure are these?

>THE SECURE HOPE...

- Read together Ephesians 2:6-7, and thank God for the security that is found in Jesus Christ.

>> MAKING A CHANGE (James 3:13-4:12)

WHAT CHANGES CAN YOU MAKE THIS WEEK?

It's important to act on what you have studied. Can you think of some specific changes that you can make during this week, as a response to what you have been looking at?

- During the week, at any time in which you are tempted to be argumentative or quarrelsome, take time to reflect on the words of James.

'Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.' (James 4:10) This week, think of 2 key areas in your life, in which you know that you haven't 'humbled yourself before the Lord'. Take time during this week, to actively surrender these areas to God. Ask for people to pray for you in this, and to keep you accountable.

>> MAKING A CHANGE (Luke 6:46-49)

> IS YOUR LIFE SECURE?

The most important question we must ever face up to is this: will we be secure when we face the greatest test of God's judgement or will we find that we have been living without a secure foundation?

- As you respond whether as an individual or a group – resolve to come to Jesus, to listen carefully to his word and to put them into practice.
- We will all need to ask for forgiveness for the times we have been disobedient, and to make a decision not to put our trust in things that give no ultimate security. As we do this we can take comfort from the promise James repeats: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." James 4:6