WHAT DO YOU DESIRE?

In a world where it’s easier to blame everyone and everything else, James begins chapter 4 by dismantling that mindset entirely: Where do all of the issues come from? You. Worldly problems being solved in a worldly way will never be fixed. But the issue is never the fruit; it’s the root.

James could have described his listeners a few different ways, but he chooses to use the label of someone who is unfaithful to their spouse, often in a very intimate and personal way. It is spiritual adultery to seek the affections of the world while claiming intimacy with God. Friendship with the world cannot be held in tandem with closeness with God; it is not, “should not,” but cannot. Where someone is investing, pouring their desires, and focusing betrays where their loyalties lie, even if their words say something different.

One does not even need to be successful in the world to turn one’s back on God. James says, “Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God” (James 4:4; emphasis supplied). It is possible to look like a God follower on the outside and yet desire something else entirely on the inside. The self-diagnosis questions, then, are: What do you really want? Where are your desires leaning? And where are you encouraging them to go?
Write out James 4:1–10 from the Bible translation of your choice. If you’re pressed for time, write out James 4:4–7. You may also rewrite the passage in your own words, or outline or mind-map the chapter.
Go back to your scribed text and study the passage.

**Circle** repeated words/ phrases/ideas

**Underline** words/phrases that are important and have meaning to you

Draw **Arrows** to connect words/ phrases to other associated or related words/phrases

What special insights do your marks seem overall to point to?

Memorize your favorite verse in James 4:1–10. Write it out multiple times to help with memorization.

What’s the point of asking God for things in prayer if the point of prayer is not to change Him? Does that mean we shouldn’t ask for things? Why or why not?

Read more at www.inversebible.org/jam08-3
After looking at your scribed and annotated text, what special insights do your marks seem to point to overall?

What questions emerge after studying this passage? What parts are difficult?

What other principles and conclusions do you find?

How does personal humility (or lack thereof) affect our relationship with God?

Read more at www.inversebible.org/jam08-4
What relationship do the following verses have with the primary passage?

Matthew 7:7
1 John 2:17
1 John 5:14, 15
Romans 5:15
1 Peter 5:8
Proverbs 3:34

What other verses come to mind in connection with James 4:1–10?

Review your memorized verse from James 4:1–10.
Meditate on James 4:1–10 again and look for where Jesus is.

What is He saying to you through these texts?

How have you experienced Jesus yearning for you recently?

How do you see Jesus differently or see Him again?

Prayer: How do you respond to seeing Jesus in this way?
Review the memory verse. How does it apply to your life this week?

After this week's study of the passage, what are personal applications you are convicted of in your life?

What are practical applications you must make in your school, family, workplace, and church?

Read more inSight from the Spirit of Prophecy at www.inversebible.org/jam08-7
Share insights from this week’s memory verse and Bible study as well as any discoveries, observations, and questions with your Sabbath School class (or Bible study group). Consider these discussion questions with the rest of the group.

How have you experienced “wars and fights” as a result of desires for pleasures?

What does it practically mean and look like to desire friendship with the world?

How does the world tell you to accomplish and/or gain things? Give some concrete examples. How does God’s Word compare with those instructions? Be specific.

How can you pray for things that you want in a biblical way?

Think of a time that mourning was good for you. Describe that experience and what you can learn from it.

How does knowing that God “yearns jealously” for you affect your life?

How can we want to be friends with God instead of the world and not just look like it?