

Step-by-Step: Practical Living from the Book of James

Step of Discernment: Fighting Deformed Desires

James 4:1-12

“Listen to advice and accept instruction, that you may gain wisdom in the future.” **Proverbs 19:20**

Main Idea: Discernment Helps the Christian Fight Deformed Desires

Deformed desires: desires that God is still working out of us

Discernment: the ability to approve what is excellent

Deformed Desires Are Corrected by Godly Discernment:

I. Selfishness, yet discernment leads to proper prayer

“What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.” **James 4:1-3**

II. Pride, yet discernment leads to proper posture

“You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, “He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us”? But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.” **James 4:4-10**

“The only reason we do not weep is that we are so insensitive to the horror of our sin, so ignorant of its consequences, and so careless about the holiness of God.” –John Phillips

III. Judgement, yet discernment leads to proper position

“Do not speak evil against one another, brothers. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?” **James 4:11-12**

“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

Hebrews 4:15-16

“But he gives more grace.” **James 4:6a**

For the Christian: Is there someone in your life you could ask forgiveness for Selfishness, Pride, and/or Judgement?

For the non-believer: As you have considered these three deformed desires, I want you to consider that Christ calls you into His family today. He gives more grace: He gives the GOSPEL!!