

## James 4:1-3

28 June 2020

ICE BREAKER: What is something you would really like to have, but yet cannot get?

### LARGE GROUP QUESTIONS:

(Read verse 1) **Why is there evil in the world?** ‘What causes fights and quarrels?’ Outside of the Bible, every religion, philosophy and worldview believes the source of evil is **society’s structures and organizations**. Here, evil comes from the government, corporations, the police, or ‘the system’.

Only the Bible declares **the source of all evil** is not outside of us, but **within us**. ‘They come **from your desires** that battle **within you**.’ What is wrong with the world? Why are there wars? Who is to blame? You are. I am. As Jeremiah 17:9 states, ‘**The heart is deceitful** above all things and beyond cure.’

1. Why do you think every other religion and worldview reject the Bible’s teaching that the **source of evil** is the **human heart**?

(Read verses 1-2 & James 1:17) The **Bad News** for humanity is this: In and of himself, no person can do any good. The question then arises. **Why is there good in the world?** Where does it come from, if every person’s heart is by nature, by birth, bent to sin and evil. The answer—**grace**.

Grace is **God’s favor empowering us to receive or do any good**. Grace is God’s **gift** that cannot be earned. Since every ‘good is from above, coming down from the Father’ and gifted to us every day, no person can take any ultimate credit for any good he or she does.

2. How can understanding **God’s grace** in our sinfulness **protect us from pride and self-righteousness** when we do good deeds?

(Read verse 2) Notice what happens when ‘**you desire**’ something or someone, ‘**but you do not ask God**’. Such a pursuit, no matter how you rationalize it, will always be self-powered and self-motivated. When your pursuit inevitably confronts an obstacle or opposition, you and I will ‘kill’ and ‘covet’. We will ‘quarrel and fight’.

When we desire or pursue anything without reference to God, from whom every ‘good is from’, we will eventually **reap the opposite of good** in our lives.

3. Describe **something** important you **wanted** or **pursued without** really **asking God**. How did it go?

(Read verses 2-3) **Prayer is holy**. To speak to God and have Him hear you requires you to be brutally honest about your desires and intentions. We can lie to others. We can fool others. However, God sees right through us.

If our prayers are selfish, if they are to glorify ourselves, and make much of ourselves rather than to bless others, glorify and make much of God, you can be certain of this answer from God. ‘You are on your own for that.’

4. Recall a **prayer** God answered for you. What were the **reasons** do you think **God answered you**?

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### PRAYER GROUP TIME

*(Make a list of people whom those in your group plan to witness Christ to this week.)*

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