

Early Christian Letters - James 4

From the Eucharistic Prayer for Reconciliation



It is truly right and just that we should give you thanks and praise, O God, almighty Father,

for all you do in this world, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

For though the human race is divided by dissension and discord,

yet we know that by testing us you change our hearts to prepare them for reconciliation.

Even more, by your Spirit you move human hearts that enemies may speak to each other again,

adversaries may join hands,

and peoples seek to meet together.

By the working of your power it comes about, O Lord, that hatred is overcome by love,

revenge gives way to forgiveness, and discord is changed to mutual respect.

Therefore, as we give you ceaseless thanks with the choirs of heaven,

we cry out to your majesty on earth, and without end we acclaim (together):

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts, Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

James 4 (NIV) Submit Yourselves to God

¹ What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you?

² 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. ³ When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

⁴ 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. ⁵ Or do you think Scripture says without reason that He jealously longs for the spirit He has caused to dwell in us?

⁶ But He gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says:

"God opposes the proud, but shows favour to the humble."

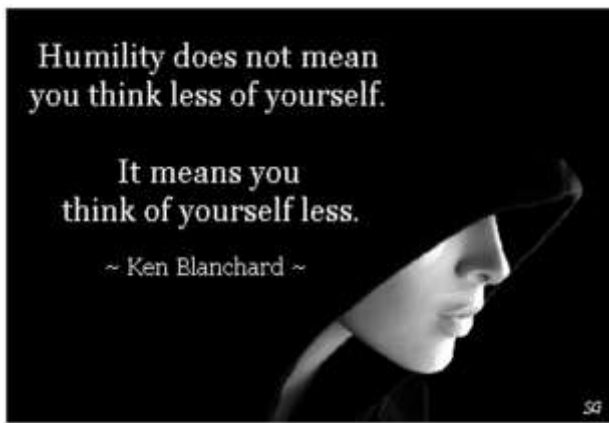
Discuss:

Covetousness, killing, quarrelling and fighting.

Which is the odd one out and why?

Grace poured out...

Favour shown to the humble...



Humility Cures Worldliness

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

¹¹ 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. ¹² 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?

Discussion:

- What do you see as so attractive about humility?
- Double-minded – The Dualistic mind, right and wrong. Displaying strong dogmatic opinions.
- Jesus showed us the Third Way.

Boasting About Tomorrow

¹³ Now listen, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.” ¹⁴ Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. ¹⁵ Instead, you ought to say, “If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that.” ¹⁶ As it is, you boast in your arrogant schemes. All such boasting is evil. ¹⁷ If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn’t do it, it is sin for them.

Discussion:

- Arrogant schemes, can you give examples?
- The sin of not doing what we should...
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The Cloud of Unknowing

God, the master of time, never gives the future. He gives only the present, moment by moment.

Psalm 32:7-10 (NIV)

⁷ You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.

⁸ I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you.

⁹ Do not be like the horse or the mule, which have no understanding but must be controlled by bit and bridle or they will not come to you.

¹⁰ Many are the woes of the wicked, but the Lord's unfailing love surrounds the one who trusts in him.

The Grace

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,

and the love of God,

and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit

be with us all,

now and evermore.

Amen.

