



December 4/5, 2010

James 4

*“Ten Marks of Maturity” Part 4*

Pastor Gary Hamrick

You’ve heard the expression, “Choose your friends wisely.” Why, because your friends can make you or break you. The people you choose to surround yourself with can either be good for you and enrich your life or be bad for you and damage your life. **Proverbs 12:26** says, *“The righteous should choose his friends carefully, for the way of the wicked leads them astray. (NKJV)*

**James 4:4** says, *“...don’t you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.”* James pulls no punches when he writes that you are an *“enemy of God”* and you demonstrate *“hatred toward God”* if you’re a friend of the world.

Friendship with the world just isn’t compatible with God. The world is dark, evil, full of murder, hatred, rape, unspeakable crimes against children, and the list goes on and on. This is the world that Jesus came into so that he could save us, even though, for the time being, we have to live here. God’s position is clear: don’t befriend the world!

In this study we’ll learn more about the subject of friends, as well as learning to have a better understanding of the brevity and uncertainty of life.

### Make The Lord Your Friend And The World Your Acquaintance

1. **James 1:27** – *“Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.”*

2. **1 John 2:15** - *“Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”*
3. **Romans 12:2a** - *“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”*
4. You're not to love the world because the world will not be a good friend to you.
  - a. **1 Corinthians 15:33** - *“Do not be misled: ‘Bad company corrupts good character.’ ”*
  - b. Don't be fooled into believing that you'll be a good influence on others, and that they won't be a bad influence on you.
  - c. The most common relationship that people justify in this way is a dating relationship.
5. What defines friendship and how much can you be involved with the world without becoming its friend? Where's the line?
  - a. People ask, “How far can I go with the girl I'm dating,” and “How much can I drink before I'm actually considered to be drunk?”
  - b. The question to ask is, “How close can I get to Jesus?” Instead of asking the question, “How close can I get to the edge?”
6. We have to live in the world, work in the world and relate to the world, which means we can't sequester ourselves behind the four walls of our church or home and cut ourselves off from ministry.
7. People need Jesus and the primary way we will lead them to Jesus is to show ourselves friendly.
8. We're to be acquainted with the world but not its friend.
  - a. With an acquaintance you have little or no mutual interests, regular contact or emotional investment.
  - b. Friendship is based on relationship, which means there are shared interests, regular time spent together, and an emotional investment.
  - c. In simple language, be friends with Jesus.

Don't Be Presumptuous About Tomorrow: Live Each Day To Its Fullest

9. **James 4:13-15** - *“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.’ 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. Instead, you ought to say, ‘If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that.’ ”*

- a. The Lord isn't saying, "live only in the moment; don't plan for tomorrow or even dream big about tomorrow." What he is saying is, "Don't be presumptuous about tomorrow, especially when your tomorrow is all about your plans and not God's." We don't know about tomorrow because it is so uncertain.
10. We should never forget that we're one breath, one heartbeat, or one freak accident away from eternity.
  11. [Psalm 90:12](#) - *"Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom."*
  12. [Psalm 78:39](#) - *"[Our life is] a passing breeze that does not return."*
  13. [1 Peter 1:24](#) - *"All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall..."*

### Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read [James 4](#) to provide an overview for this study.
3. Read and discuss [1 John 2:15](#) and [Romans 12:2a](#).
  - a. How do you live a balanced life regarding relationships?
  - b. Have you ever been in a relationship that would be characterized as "missionary dating"?
    - i. Were you able to change the other person?
    - ii. In what ways were you changed?
    - iii. Have you ever known of a "success" story?
    - iv. Allow the people in your group to share examples of people they know who're married to someone who isn't a Believer.
      1. What is their home-life like?
      2. How has this affected their children, their relationships with relatives, etc.?
      3. How does the believing spouse handle the conflict?
4. Pastor Gary shared a personal story that illustrated the fact that we will be "shocked" and surprised when we play around in dangerous situations! <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Use this link to access the message on the Teaching Library. Pastor Gary's illustration starts at 18:50. <http://www.cornerstonechapel.net/player/?i=557>

- a. Allow the people in your group to share their experiences when they got too close to the edge.
5. Allow the people in your group to share experiences they've had with relationships that fit into the category of being a friend of the world.
    - a. How was this relationship damaging to you?
    - b. Was there anything worthwhile that came out of this relationship?
    - c. What would you say your level of spiritual maturity was at the time of this relationship?
    - d. Did you recognize that God views friendship with the world as being incompatible with his desire for all Christians?
    - e. Did you think of yourself as an enemy of God?
    - f. Did this experience move you toward being a more spiritually mature Christian?
  6. Pastor Gary said "we're one breath, one heartbeat, or one freak accident away from eternity."
    - a. How do you deal with the fact that life is short and you only have a certain number of days to live on this earth?
    - b. If you were to be honest with yourself, would you say that you're too attached to the things and people of this world?
    - c. Have your feelings changed, as you've grown older?
  7. Someone has said, "Plan as though you're going to live to be 100 years old, and at the same time, plan to live as though today is your last day."
    - a. Does this make sense to you?
    - b. How would you go about living this way in practical terms?
    - c. Read and discuss [Psalm 90:12](#), [Psalm 78:39](#) and [1 Peter 1:24](#).
  8. Close your time with prayer by asking the Holy Spirit to help each person to: seek a deeper and more mature Christian perspective concerning friendship with the world and the brevity of life; determine that they will not allow the world and its philosophy to take a prominent place in their life; that they would merely be an acquaintance of this world; consider ways they can grow closer in relationship with Jesus.

Note: Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV).