

Jun 7 at 9:34 AM

Facilitator

1. Open with Prayer

2. Welcome any newcomers

3. Read James 4:5-12 and give a five-minute review of the sermon using Peppy's sermon notes.

Facilitator: Please don't feel you have to cover every question. Try to keep your discussion to an hour and a half at the most.

CONNECT Group study questions, James 4:5-12

June 8, 2014

Title: How to Resolve Conflict in Your Life

It's only natural—all this bickering, fighting and conflict. Why should we be any different? We are what we are. Aren't we? Addressing the bickerers, fighters and conflicters (I made that word up) in the church he pastored in Jerusalem, James called them "You adulterous people!" Fast forward more than 2,000 years and that's what he's calling the bickerers, fighters and conflicters at Crossroads Community Church. Enemies of God, he says. Not one to sugar-coat—this guy James. And being God's enemy can get more than a little uncomfortable. Yes, it's only natural, but that's just the point. It's the old sin nature in us—our natural man—that is at the root of all our bickering, fighting and conflict.

As Peppy unpacks verses 5-12 of James 4, we discover the cure. It's GRACE! Grace means gift—no strings, unconditional, lavishly given to anyone who accepts it by faith. It can feel humbling, accepting a lavish gift, but that's also just the point. "God ... gives grace to the humble," James says. Grace flips the switch from enemy of God to God's trophy—"He will exalt you," James says, hold you high and show you off to the world.

Question: Verse 5 says God "yearns jealously over the spirit He has made to dwell in us." How does God's jealousy differ from our jealousy? How can His jealousy be good and ours evil?

Facilitator: It helps to understand that the "spirit He has made to dwell in us" belongs to Him. When we are jealous, it's for something that is not ours.

Question: Share with the group a time when you were in the midst of dire circumstances with nowhere to turn, but to accept a gift. How did you feel? Grateful? Humbled? Perhaps it made you feel like a weakling, unable to take care of yourself.

Question: Verse 7 says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble," and then James follows with a number of things we have to do. Why was it impossible to resist the devil (verse 7), draw near to God, cleanse our hands, purify our hearts (verse 8), be wretched and mourn and weep over our sin (verse 9) when we were proud and before we submitted to God?

Question: How would you describe the grace God gives to the humble? Is it like the crown jewels to be displayed in a glass case for all to see and admire, or is it like a marvelous tool that equips us to do the otherwise impossible righteous works God has for us?

Question: One impossible work God has for us is resolving the conflict we have with a brother or sister in Christ. But it's like the unstoppable force colliding with the unmovable object, you say. How can grace stop you when the object still won't move? Or move you when the force won't stop?