

READ

James 4:1-12

CONSIDER

From the beginning of chapter 4, it is not hard to imagine what kind of community James' recipients was like: a people marked with bickering, infighting and worldly indulgent behaviors and described as "adulterous people ...friend of the world... enemy of God." (4:1-4)

Quickly, James identified the root problem of all these evils by quoting the Old Testament: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." (4:6) It is human arrogance usurping the lordship of God that robs away peace and ruptures all relationships.

In his practical and terse style of wisdom to heal the situation, James gives some 10 imperatives beginning from "Submit yourselves, then to God..." (4:7) to "Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up." (4:10) Sandwiched in between are the wise instructions to "managing self" than "managing others": "Resist the devil... Come near to God... Wash your hands and purify your hearts... Grieve, mourn and wail...Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom."

Incisively he rounds up the lesson by putting proper relationship with God and with one another first so that lasting genuine peace prevail. Stop slander or judge one another. Do not put ourselves on the judgement seat as "the Judge" because "There is only one Lawgiver and judge, the one who is able to save and to destroy — who are you to judge your neighbour?" (4:12)

The word of Christ drives home: "Do not judge, or you will be judged...first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye." (Matt7:1-5)

Deacon Thomas Choy

P R A Y

Dear Lord:

Grant me the mind of Christ who humbled himself, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped. Teach me what it means to be self-emptying, self-denial and all submissive to your lordship. May your holiness, love and peace transcend every relationship of mine. Amen!

D I V I N G D E E P E R

Do I frequently feel being challenged by others though I don't openly argue with others or get into conflict easily?

Does any of the following statement apply to me more or less:

1. I attend church regularly but honestly speaking I enjoy way more other non-church related activities where I feel more belonged.
2. I do not comment on others in conversation but somehow I tend to perceive easily other's weaknesses than strengths.
3. I have much more to teach others than to learn from them.

What does it mean to me: God is enthroned in all my relationships? How do I demonstrate that?