

James 3:10 – 4:4

English Standard Version (ESV)

1 ¹⁰ From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My
 2 brothers, these things ought not to be so. ¹¹ Does a spring
 3 pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt
 4 water? ¹² Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a
 5 grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh
 6 water.

7 ¹³ Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good
 8 conduct let him show his works in the meekness of
 9 wisdom. ¹⁴ But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish
 10 ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the
 11 truth. ¹⁵ This is not the wisdom that comes down from
 12 above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. ¹⁶ For where
 13 jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder
 14 and every vile practice.

15 ¹⁷ But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable,
 16 gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits,
 17 impartial and sincere. ¹⁸ And a harvest of righteousness is
 18 sown in peace by those who make peace.

19 **4** What causes quarrels and what causes fights among
 20 you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within
 21 you? ² You desire and do not have, so you murder. You
 22 covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do
 23 not have, because you do not ask. ³ You ask and do not
 24 receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your
 25 passions. ⁴ You adulterous people! Do you not know that
 26 friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore
 27 whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself
 28 an enemy of God.

Read the passage through completely before looking at these questions.

Observation (What does it say?):

Consider the observation questions on the back of this page. What do you notice in this passage?

- Mark positive words with a check ✓
Mark negative words with an X
- Do you see any pattern of positives and negatives?
- Connect repeated or related words.
- Circle any words or ideas you recognize from earlier in the letter.
- What else do you observe in this passage?

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

After observing the passage:

- What is the difference between “desire” and “covet” (4:2).
- Why would someone “not ask” (v. 4:2c) for something they desired?
- What is “friendship with the world”?
- How do the qualities of wisdom (vv. 13, 17, 18) challenge “friendship with the world”?
- How does this passage fit with the beginning of James’s letter (see the back page)?

Application (What does it mean for me?):

- What part of this passage would be the most challenging for you to apply?
- What would be different (attitudes, behavior) if God used this passage to change you?

For additional thought and discussion:

James 1

² Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³ for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴ And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. ⁵ If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. ⁶ But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸ he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

For more suggested methods of study: <http://www.goodnotsafe.com/methodical-bible-study/>

For examples of inductive studies: <http://www.goodnotsafe.com/inductive-bible-study-examples-2/>

Inductive Bible Study

(A few general ideas)

Observation
(What does it say?)

What facts do you **observe** about the passage that help bring out the writer's thought process?

- Who are the people involved?
- What action takes place?
- What type of literature is it (poetry, history, didactic, etc.)?
- What details are included or left out?
- Are any unusual words used?
- Is there symbolic language?
- What is the grammar of the passage (pronouns, prepositions, verb tenses)?
- Are words or ideas repeated?
- Any comparisons or contrasts?
- Any cause and effect?
- Are there indications of purpose ("in order that...")?
- Are there conclusions ("Therefore...")?
- Are there explanations?
- Does the passage logically break into sections?
- How would you summarize the passage?
- What would be a good "headline" for the passage?

Interpretation
(What does it mean?)

What questions come to mind about the facts that would help you **interpret** the meaning?

- How would the original readers have understood the passage?
- What is the main emphasis?
- Why does the writer use repetition, or contrast, or unusual words?
- What does the grammar or structure of the passage reveal about the writer's thought pattern?
- Is there a logical sequence in the passage?
- How are different ideas in the passage connected?
- Are there any new ideas or concepts presented?
- Are there difficulties in the passage?

Application
(What does it mean for me?)

What is the impact on your life? What **application** does the Holy Spirit want to show you?

- Is there a command to obey?
- Is there a promise to be thankful for?
- Is there an attribute of God to worship?
- Is there an example to follow?

Read nothing into the Scriptures, but draw everything from them, and suffer nothing to remain hidden that is really in them.
J.A. Bengel (1687-1752)

For a much more detailed description of the methodology, see Robert A. Traina, *Methodical Bible Study*. Wilmore, Kentucky: Asbury Theological Seminary, 1952.