

People of Godly Behavior

Key Verse: “Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.”
—James 4:8

Selected Scripture:
James 4

SOMETIMES STRIFE EXISTS

among God’s people. Often it is caused by an inability to be satisfied. There can be cravings for material possessions, pleasures, or even unfulfilled longings for recognition by others.—James 4:1,2

We should love the Creator far above any individual or object. Covetousness is a form of idolatry which should not be erected in our hearts, thereby exhibiting unfaithfulness to what the Bible teaches. With so many worldly attractions portrayed in the media to bombard our senses, if we are not careful, these intrusions will reduce the time we have for focusing upon spiritual matters.—vss. 3,4

“Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.” (vss.5,6) In our fallen human condition, we must contend with fleshly inclinations but are assured of Divine assistance to help us overcome such tendencies if we manifest faith and humility.

Our Key Verse emphasizes the need for prayer, meditation upon his message and lowliness of mind in order to receive God's grace. It also shows the importance that our deeds and motives be pure and with singleness of purpose toward God.

It is through the study of God's Word that one's sinful behavior can be recognized and an understanding that full acceptance of the sacrifice of Jesus as a basis for forgiveness for one's undone condition must precede becoming sons of God. "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."—John 14:6

The Apostle James draws to our attention a few other matters that illustrate inappropriate Christian conduct. To speak evil against a brother is a reprehensible form of behavior that violates the spirit of love. Additionally, those who commit this act are usurping God's authority as they dare to judge others.—James 4:11,12

Boastfulness in stating in advance what we would do without God's approval is improper. We cannot speak with assurance concerning what the future holds for any of us and therefore we should seek the Heavenly Father's direction concerning our desires and plans. "Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil."—vss. 13-16

A final but important exhortation is not only for believers to abstain from committing evil against others, but also to realize that the failure to do good to others as we have opportunity is sin. What a high standard of righteousness is expected for all who profess they are truly followers of Christ.—vs. 17 ■