

Small Group/Sermon Notes for James Part 4: Not Polluted

Remember, small groups are primarily for growing closer relationships with other believers. We can learn wonderful things in this environment but keep relationships first.

- Make sure everyone knows each other's names. Have everyone share a little about themselves and how life is going right now.
- **James Part 4: Not Polluted**
- Read the section: **James 1:22-27**.
- James has a big problem with hypocrites.
 - Today, the other side of James 1:27, good on the outside but bad in the inside!
 - Ever known someone "good" who was polluted?
 - "Keep yourself from" means pollution comes to us. We don't need to go to it for problems to happen, but we must defend ourselves from the onslaught.
- 4 Ways people can become "polluted" by the world that we must resist.
 - By "the world" here James means the evil sinful things of the world.
- 1) Polluted by Classic Sinfulness. **James 1:13-15**.
 - This could apply to anything sinful, but fits things like lying, cheating, adultery, stealing, etc.
 - Long progression: desire – sin – death. Could take many years to get full grown!
 - The earlier you deal with things on this progression the better.
 - This progression is the wide path of **Matthew 7:13-14**.
 - The big deception here: I can avoid the "death" part! Have you ever thought that?
 - 2nd level: I can get off the path before the "death" part. Have you ever thought that?
 - Don't be fooled. **Galatians 6:7-8**.
 - Keep yourself from this by dealing with the desire first. Get you some Godly desires!
- 2) Bitter Envy and Selfish Ambition. **James 3:13-18**.
 - When not dealt with, garden variety pride becomes the worldly pollution of bitter envy and selfish ambition.
 - This is more subtle than porn addiction, but look again at **James 3:16!**
 - But aren't we supposed to be great!! Have God sized dreams???
 - YES! Jesus never rebuked his disciples for wanting to be great! (did you know that?)
 - However, he did redefine greatness: **Luke 22:24-26**. What is greatness in his eyes?
 - How can you tell if you have gone from Godly ambition to selfish ambition?
 - Test yourself against **James 3:17**. Be great like that rather than upset that you aren't getting the opportunities you deserve.
 - Also, if you are thinking of what you want rather than what they need, you are off.
 - Keep yourself from this by conquering pride and walking in true humility.
- 3) Strife in the Church. **James 4:1-10**.
 - When bitter envy and selfish ambition infiltrate the Body of Christ. Very bad.
 - This is a destructive cancer, a malignant pollution. Have you seen this?
 - A friend of the world is a friend of: strife, offense, jealousy, competition, pride, etc.
 - God doesn't like the "church" being divided. **1 Corinthians 3:16-17**. What is the temple?
 - Puts **James 4:9** in perspective.
 - Keep yourself from this by putting **James 4:10** into practice!
- 4) Judging Others and Forsaking Mercy. **James 2:12-13**.
 - Don't let **Matthew 24:12** be true for you even though the world is messed up.
 - That is a miserable way to be polluted by the world.
 - Remember who you are. Should you throw the first stone? **Romans 2:1-4**.
 - I'm glad mercy triumphs over judgment!
 - Keep yourself from being polluted by rejoicing in the mercy of God and sharing that mercy with others!
- Pray for each other before you finish up!