

**'FAITH THAT WORKS'**  
***(Knowing When to 'Unfriend' the World)***  
**James 4:4-17**

**'GraceBook BFFs'**

If you have a **FaceBook** account, how many *friends* do you have? Some people have only a few while others have hundreds or even thousands. From time to time, FB members clean up their friend lists and delete those who are inactive. On occasion it becomes necessary to *unfriend* somebody who is a problem due to inappropriate conversations, pictures or unfriendly misuse of FB to slander or hurt others. Wise Christians will try to admonish wayward *friends* or if necessary, *unfriend* them all together (**Titus 3:9-10**).

Deleting bad influences is absolutely necessary for a friend of Jesus to maintain their Christian *walk* and testimony as well send a message to unhealthy contacts that they are not interested in communication that doesn't please their Lord (**1 Corinthians 10: 31, Colossians 3:17**). After all God, the **BFF** (*Best Friend Forever*) is on top of a believers' list and He needs to be Who determines all who is on it with Him. If we are truly a *friend of God*, our *mutual friends list* will also match His list of friends. According to Jesus, God's list is exclusively for those who love and follow His Son (**John 15:14**).

James may have surprised the readers of his letter when he seems to accuse some of them of having become enemies of God by becoming too friendly with 'the world' (**4:4**). Like many people today, some of the readers probably felt they could be friends with both God and His enemies. Maybe they thought they could be somewhere in the middle – not too friendly or aloof with either. Curiously, although *the world* doesn't mind playing that game, God refuses to play along with carnal believers who want to carry on a secret *affair* with the world while faking fidelity to Him. In fact, in the above verse He calls such two-timing, professing Christians *adulterers and adulteresses* and *enemies of God!*

If God had a FaceBook account it is pretty certain He would *unfriend* believers whose list is cluttered with faces and names whose *likes* don't include the Bible, their church, righteous activities and lots of good Christian acquaintances. **1 Corinthians 15:33** warns Christians: "***Do not be deceived: Evil company corrupts good habits***". **Proverbs 12:26** admonishes: "***The righteous should choose his friends carefully, for the way of the wicked leads them astray.***" And **James 4** now enlightens us that choosing friends that aren't God's friends will get you *unfriended* with Him. You befriend people who tend to share your values, priorities, likes, and dislikes.

So, as you look at your friends, whether they are on a FB list or not, what do you see? Do you see friends of God, or friends of the world that are apathetic or even hostile to the Lord? Maybe you should clean up your friends list and make it more compatible with God's list of people who love and follow Him. One name that should never be allowed on your list of friends is *the world*. The *world system* doesn't want God and will do all it can to pull you down and away from Him to its low level (**Romans 1:28-32**). You may see them as acquaintances, but you should never see them as friends of yours if they aren't friends of your BFF, the Lord Jesus Christ. Maintain an attitude of *any friend of Jesus is a friend of mine but if you don't like Jesus, there's no way you'll like me either*. Keep that friend list current and freshly deleted of the world and its BFFs. The Lord will list you in His '**GraceBook**' of friends if you do (**2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1**).

**'Friend or Foe?'**  
***(Your Friends Show Much About Your Faith)***

*"Do you not know that **friendship with the world is enmity with God?** Whoever wants to be **a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.** Or do you not think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit Who dwells in us yearns jealously"? But He gives more grace. Therefore, He says:*

**God resists the proud; but gives grace to the humble.**"     **4:4-6**

### **Humility to the Lord**

“Therefore, **submit to God**. **Resist the devil** and he will flee from you. **Draw near to God** and He will draw near to you. **Cleanse your hands**, you sinners; and **purify your hearts**, you double-minded. **Lament and mourn and weep!** Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. **Humble yourselves** in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.” 4:7-10

- Discuss this self-imposed plan for achieving *humility*. Why is this procedure necessary?
- Compare this list with the list of characteristics of true repentance in 2 Corinthians 7:10-11.
- Why do we usually have to *go down* to *go up* in our relationship with the Lord?
- How does this process of *humiliation* help build our faith?

### **Humility with Others**

“**Do not speak evil of one another**, brethren, He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you’re not a doer of the law but a judge. There is one Lawgiver Who is able to save and to destroy. **Who are you to judge another?**” 4:11-12

- What is a sure sign that someone has not yet acquired humility? What does their slanderous, critical, judgmental mouth prove about them?
- How does judging (condemning) others also condemn *the law* and usurp Christ’s authority?
- If we are not to be a judge or a prosecutor, what is our job in the courtroom of life?
- When we become vigilantes or a spiritual lynch mob, what does it say about our faith?

### **Humility as a Lifestyle**

“Come now, you who say, “**Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit**”; whereas **you do not know what will happen tomorrow**. **For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away**. Instead you ought to say, “**If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that**.” But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. **Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin**.” 4:13-17

- People who have it all planned out seem to have a lot of faith. What’s wrong with the plan of verse 13? List the prideful things wrong with that plan:
- How does remembering the brevity of life help us stay humble and faithful?
- How should a Christian plan in faith with a humble attitude?
- If God is not included in the plan what does James say God thinks of the idea?
- Some people tend to procrastinate as suggested in verse 17. What about people who brag about big plans and intentions but never get around to actually doing anything?