



Pastor Chris Pedro
James 4:1-10

General:

- Think of a recent “reality check” moment in your life—a time when what you hoped for didn’t match what actually happened. How did you respond emotionally and spiritually?
- Why do you think unmet expectations often reveal so much about what we value or trust most?
- James writes to people facing disappointment and hardship. How does knowing that his audience was also struggling change the way you hear his message?
- James contrasts heavenly wisdom from above with earthly wisdom from below. When you think about your own life, which kind of wisdom tends to guide your decisions when things get stressful?
- Earthly wisdom often hides behind good intentions. What’s an area in your life where your actions might look wise on the outside but are driven by comparison, control, or comfort underneath?
- Think about a moment when you got caught up in conflict. If James were to ask you, “What’s causing this war within you?” what might he be pointing to?
- Think back to the burger illustration. If God were to peel back the wrapper of your heart, what would He find? (Contentment and trust? Comparison, resentment, or striving?)
- James says, “But He gives more grace.” Why is that phrase so central to this passage, and maybe to the gospel itself?

Take Home 1: Our Reality Checks should lead us back to true, Biblical prayer (Jas. 4:2b-3)

- When life doesn't go your way, what usually comes out first—prayer, control, frustration, or withdrawal? Why?
- James warns that even prayer can become self-focused. When you think about your prayer life, what are your prayers most often centered on — comfort, control, or closeness with God?
- Pastor Chris listed several “Instead of / How about” prayer examples. Which of these stood out to you or challenged you most? Why?
- What would change if prayer became more about formation than fixing?
- When was the last time you told God what you really wanted? When was the last time you told Him you wanted Him even more?

Take Home 2: Our Reality Checks should lead us to examine where our hearts are divided (Jas. 4:4)

- How does it make you feel to know that God jealously longs for your affection and devotion?
- If disappointment reveals the cracks in devotion, where might God be using a current reality check to draw you closer to Him?
- What practical step could you take this week to let your love for God outgrow your love for the world?

Take Home 3: Our Reality Checks should lead us to depend fully on God's greater grace (Jas. 4:6a)

- Which of James's six imperatives (submit, resist, draw near, cleanse/purify, mourn/weep, humble) stands out as most needed in your current season? Why?
- How can you intentionally respond to God's grace this week? (In prayer? Humility? How you love others?)
- What would it look like to really believe that His grace is enough, even if nothing in your circumstances changed?