

JAMES MANDATE & MISSION

New City Church: Study Guide

Week 7 – July 29th 2012

Reading: James 4:1-12

“Pride kills community.” –Tim Keller

Reflection:

The United States has proven to be one of the most individualistic societies to ever have walked the face of the planet. Our forefathers set the stage for this early in our country's history when, in the Declaration of Independence, they established that men, having been created equal by God, are given “inalienable rights” of “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” While Christian belief would agree with this statement, the message of Jesus transcends these “rights” with statements like, “whoever loses their life will find it,” “to save your life you must lose it,” “the last will be first,” “humble yourself and be exalted.” The message of the gospel says that when Jesus transforms our hearts, we will give up these “rights” in submission to God and therefore will love others more and be concerned with our “rights” much less.

In chapter 4 of the book of James we see how pride (self-focus) is without question, the largest single barrier to true Christian community. In vs. 10 we are called to humble ourselves in order to be exalted by God. To clarify, “humility is not thinking less of yourself – it's thinking of yourself less.” We see then that focusing on our individual “rights” will ultimately not allow us to find happiness at all - but rather giving up our rights to focus on others is what ultimately brings joy to our lives. This, according to scripture, is the essence of true community.

Questions:

1. How would you define pride? In what ways does pride manifest in our lives? Are there times that pride can look like humility?
2. Think through and explain the ways in which pride can kill community.
3. What areas of pride are causing problems for the church in James chapter 4? What does James say about the way they are treating each other?
4. Please unpack the phrase, “Humility is not thinking less of yourself – it's thinking of yourself less.” How does this change (if at all) your view of humility?
5. What are some other scripture verses that line up with the phrase in vs. 10, which says, “Humble yourselves before the Lord and He will exalt you.”
6. Why is this type of humility so important to Christian community? Please give examples of how this should look.
7. According to this passage in James, how are we to go about getting this type of community?