

JAMES

CHAPTER FOUR

JAMES CHAPTER 4

- 1. The Problem of Lust**
- 2. Friendship With the World**
- 3. Humble Yourselves – Submit, Resist, Draw Near, Cleanse, Weep ...**
- 4. Do Not Speak Evil of One Another**
- 5. Recognize God's Sovereignty and the Uncertainty of Life**

THE SOURCE OF CONFLICT

“Where do wars and fights come from among you?” James 4:1-2

- Chapter 3 ends with instructions about behavior that will minimize strife:
 - It is peaceable, gentle, and ready to yield (v17)
 - Those peacemakers who behave this way will sow seeds of peace that produce a crop of righteousness (v18).
- Chapter 4 starts with a description of the kind of character that results in the very opposite of peace – wars, fighting, and murder (v1-2).
 - Some strongly desire (or lust) for pleasures
 - This lust sets up a raging war within them (Jam 1:13-15; Rom 7:23). But the outcome for them is likely to be an overwhelming defeat by the enemy – by Satan.
 - They are obsessed with obtaining pleasures by whatever means possible – hook, crook, or even prayer!

THE PROBLEM OF LUST

“Where do wars and fights come from among you?” James 4:1-2

DEFINITION

- Lust is an emotion or feeling of intense desire in the body. The lust can take any form such as the lust for knowledge, the lust for sex or the lust for power. It can take such mundane forms as the lust for food as distinct from the need for food. Lust is a powerful psychological force producing intense wanting for an object, or the circumstance fulfilling the emotion.
- To have a longing, craving or eager desire for forbidden things

USAGE

- This English word is used 11 times in the NKJV New Testament – always with a bad connotation
- It is used to refer to a strong desire for evil or forbidden things (1Cor 10:6).
- Often, but not always, it is used to refer to sexual desire (e.g., Matt 5:28).
- Sometimes the thing being lusted for may not be evil in and of itself. The intense desire becomes sin because of the worldliness and selfishness that is at its root. A desire for pleasure (Jam 4:1, 3) – for example, a good meal – is not necessarily wrong but it certainly can become sinful.

THE PROBLEM OF LUST

“Where do wars and fights come from among you?” James 4:1-2



Lust is all about self and the satisfaction of its pleasures. Its demands drowns out consideration of the needs of others and of the will of God. This is true whether the object of the lust is inherently wrong or not. It is in contrast with contentment.

THE PROBLEM OF LUST

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EVE

- “So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.” (Gen 3:6).

DAVID

- “Then it happened one evening that David arose from his bed and walked on the roof of the king’s house. And from the roof he saw a woman bathing, and the woman was very beautiful to behold.” (2Sam 11:2).

AHAB

- “So Ahab went into his house sullen and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him; for he had said, “I will not give you the inheritance of my fathers.” And he lay down on his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no food” (1Kings 21:4).

ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA

- Acts 1:1-11

THE SOURCE OF CONFLICT

“Where do wars and fights come from among you?” James 4:1-2

- Lust causes war between nations
- Lust causes strife between people; even Christians (1Cor 3:3)
- Lust causes war within the hearts of Christians (Jam 1:14; Rom 7:13-24)



I want what I want when I want it and I will have it!

THE PROBLEM OF LUST

“Where do wars and fights come from among you?” James 4:1-2

PAUL – “Now the mixed multitude who were among them [Israel] yielded to **intense craving**; so the children of Israel also wept again and said: “Who will give us meat to eat?”” (Nu 11:4). Paul remembered such past failures and warned, “Now these things became our examples, to the intent that **we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted**” (1Co 10:6). Instead, he instructed his readers, “**Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh**” (Gal 5:16) [and do not walk] “in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God” (1Th 4:5). He further described these lustful ones by saying “**whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame--who set their mind on earthly things**” (Phil 3:19).

PETER – “His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may **be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust...**” (2Pe 1:3-5).

JOHN – For all that is in the world -- **the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever**” (1Jo 2:16-17).

DEFECTIVE PRAYERS

James 4:2-4



What a Friend we have in Jesus,
all our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
everything to God in prayer!
O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry
everything to God in prayer.

(From "What a Friend We Have in Jesus," Joseph M. Scriven)

- **"...you do not have because you do not ask."** (And whatever we ask we receive from Him..."- 1Jo 3:22)
- **"You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures."**
 - Praying for needs is not wrong (Matt 6:11)
 - Praying for riches for personal consumption is condemned (Luke 12:13-20; Eph 4:28).

FRIENDSHIP WITH THE WORLD

James 4:4

JAMES WROTE

- "Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"? (Jam 4:4-5).

RELATED PASSAGES

- "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1Jo 2:15).
- "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon" (Matt 6:24).

FRIENDSHIP WITH THE WORLD

James 4:4

WHAT IS "THE WORLD?" – The world (Grk: kosmos) is the whole circle of earthly goods, endowments riches, advantages, pleasures, etc., which although hollow and frail and fleeting, stir desire, seduce from God and are obstacles to the cause of Christ.

- Some things in the world are inherently wrong (1Co 5:10)
- Others may serve a legitimate purpose but can also become a stumbling block
 - “No one engaged in warfare **entangles himself with the affairs of this life**, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier” (2Ti 2:4).
 - “Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us **lay aside every weight**, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us” (Heb 12:1).
 - “Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and **the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches** choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful” (Matt 12:22).
- The filth of the world – that which is inherently evil – is probably under consideration in this context (Jam 1:27). But we also have to be careful about the entanglement of supposedly ‘innocent’ things of the world.

THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

The church is the bride of Christ.

Therefore, Christians are to remain pure and true to Him.

But there is another who seeks to seduce them away from Him and into spiritual adultery.

That interloper is ‘the world.’

No ‘open marriage’ is permitted. God is a jealous God. We must choose ... Those who choose the world lose their relationship with Christ.

“Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God?” (Jam 4:4).

“HUMBLE YOURSELVES”

Jam 4:6-10 (Parallel Passage 2Peter 5:5-9)

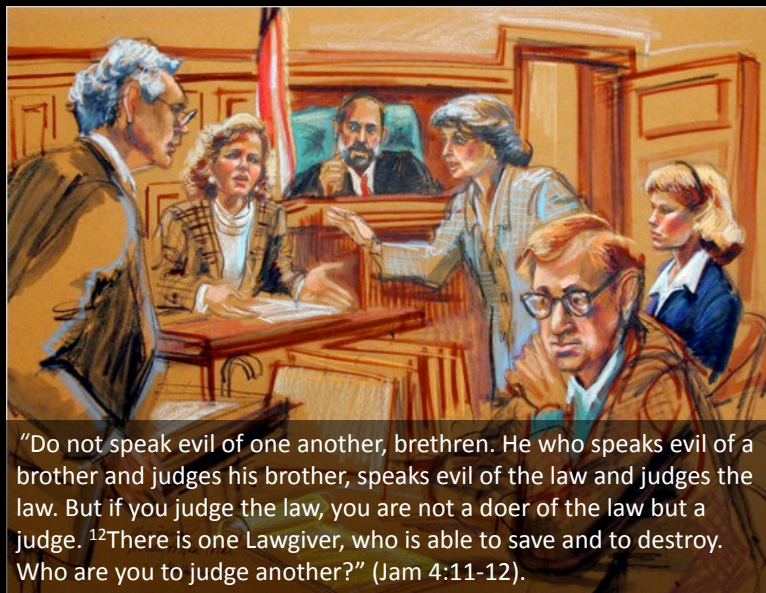
When rebuked by the Lord there are two possible responses

1. Proudly and rebelliously reject His correction and continue as before
2. Humbly submit to His will with true repentance and a renewed determination to serve Him faithfully
3. God will resist the first and bless the second (v6)

Therefore...

1. Submit to God
2. Resist the devil – and he will flee from you (1Pet 5:8-9)
3. Draw near to God (Heb 10:22; Matt 15:8)
4. Cleanse yourself – your hands and your heart (2Cor 6:14-7:1)
5. Be sorrowful (Matt 5:4)
6. Humble yourself before God – and He will lift you up (1Pet 5:5-6)
7. Do not speak evil of one another (Matt 7:1-5; Luke 6:37; Rom 14:10-13)

DO NOT SPEAK EVIL OF ONE ANOTHER



“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 are not a doer of the law but a judge. ¹²There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another?” (Jam 4:11-12).

DO NOT SPEAK EVIL OF ONE ANOTHER

“Who are you to judge another’s servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand... ¹⁰But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. ¹¹For it is written: “As I live, says the LORD, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God.” ¹²So then each of us shall give account of himself to God. ¹³Therefore let us not judge one another anymore...” (Rom 14:4, 10-13).

“Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!” (Jam 5:9).

“Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. ²But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things. ³And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God?” (Rom 2:1-3; Also Luke 6:37).

DO NOT SPEAK EVIL OF ONE ANOTHER

WHEN IS IT ACCEPTABLE TO

- To “speak evil of one another?”
- To speak negative and critical words regarding one another?
- To engage in a discourse about one another’s weaknesses and flaws?

WHEN CAN WE IGNORE THESE COMMANDS FROM 1 COR 13?

- Love “thinks no evil”
- Love “does not rejoice in iniquity by rejoices in the truth”
- Love bears, believes, hopes, and endures all things

WHEN DO COMMANDMENTS ABOUT OUR SPEECH LIKE THIS ONE NOT APPLY?

- “Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers” (Eph 4:29).

Gossip about a brother may be entertaining and criticism may make us feel superior but remember James 4:11-12!

ACKNOWLEDGE GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY

"If the Lord wills ..." (James 4:13-17)

"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"; ¹⁴whereas 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. ¹⁵Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that." ¹⁶But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil" (Jam 4:13-16).

THE PROBLEM IS NOT:

- Commerce nor financial success (Prov 31:10-31; Ecc 2:24; Eph 4:28)
- Simply verbalizing our future plans

INSTEAD IT IS:

- Failing to consider the fleeting nature of our lives
- Failing to recognize our dependence on God
- An inflated and arrogant assessment of our ability to control our own destiny based on our strength, wisdom, etc. (Consider 2Cor 1:8-11)

The intent is not to command a repetitive formulaic means of speaking but to foster a godly frame of mind – one that rejects arrogant self-reliance and instead reflects a humble dependence on the Lord.

*"Therefore, to him who knows to do good
and does not do it, to him it is sin."*

James 4:17

With regard to arrogant boasting (v16)

With regard to any other of God's commandments

Knowing is good, but not good enough (Rom 2:17-23)

Good intentions alone fall short (2Cor 8:10-11)

Hesitation and procrastination are condemned