

James 4

James lists all of the things that spring from bitter jealousy and selfish ambitions.

4 What causes **quarrels** and what causes **fight**s among you? Is it not this, that your **passions** are at war within you? ²You **desire** and do not have, so you murder. You **covet** and cannot obtain, so you **fight** and **quarrel**. You do not have, because you do not ask. ³You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.

- Strife and conflict are rooted in selfish ambitions and jealousy. Wanting from selfish motives is not rewarded by God.
- Look at this in light of earlier texts:
 - Temptation (Ch1): Our desires spring forth to sin
 - Put away Filthiness (Ch1): Be doers of the word, not unrighteous
 - Partiality (Ch2): We envy others that have what we want (coveting)
 - Faith is known by works (Ch2): Quarrels and fights show where your faith lies
 - Tongue (Ch3): Fights, quarrels and passions emerge from the tongue
 - Wisdom (Ch3): Worldly wisdom leads to worldly passions. Godly wisdom leads to peace
- Jesus said Ask and you will receive, seek and you will find, knock and it will be opened. (Matt. 7:7). This doesn't mean we get whatever we want. It has to align with God's purposes and will.

⁴You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. ⁵Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"? ⁶But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "*God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.*" ⁷Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

- James offers the solution to the quarrels and fights. Don't try to be friends with the world and forsake submission to God. The more we try to be at peace with the world, the more worldly lusts will consume our thinking.
- Humility: Comes from the literal picture of bowing down. Making oneself lower than he is. In this context, we are making ourselves lower than we think we are.
- Pride is something that God hates.

¹¹Do not speak evil against one another, brothers. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against 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 only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?

- Judging your neighbor, speaking evil of a brother. What does speak evil of the law mean?

¹³Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit" — ¹⁴yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. ¹⁵Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that." ¹⁶As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. ¹⁷So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.

James 4

- Why is boasting wrong?
 - We don't have the authority to make claims about the future
 - God is the source of all things, not us
 - God lumps boasting, pride and lying into one category: evil
 - *Psalm 5:4 For you are not a God who delights in wickedness; evil may not dwell with you. 5 The boastful shall not stand before your eyes; you hate all evildoers. 6 You destroy those who speak lies; the Lord abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man.*
 - Paul speaks of boasting *2 Cor 10:13 But we will not boast beyond limits, but will boast only with regard to the area of influence God assigned to us, to reach even to you. 14 For we are not overextending ourselves, as though we did not reach you. For we were the first to come all the way to you with the gospel of Christ. 15 We do not boast beyond limit in the labors of others. But our hope is that as your faith increases, our area of influence among you may be greatly enlarged, 16 so that we may preach the gospel in lands beyond you, without boasting of work already done in another's area of influence. 17 "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord." 18 For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.*
 - Boast only in what God has done through you, keeping the right perspective that you only have what you have because of Him.

Chapter 4 leads directly to Chapter 5 in warning the rich. Laying up treasure in heaven is wrong. It is rooted in pride, arrogance, worldly passions and lusts. Reference to Jesus' parable in Luke 12.

Ch 5 Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. 2 Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. 3 Your gold and silver have corroded, and their corrosion will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure in the last days. 4 Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. 5 You have lived on the earth in luxury and in self-indulgence. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. 6 You have condemned and murdered the righteous person. He does not resist you.

- Parable of the rich fool Luke 12 is a warning against the same thing James is pointing out. *16: "The land of a rich man produced plentifully, 17 and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?' 18 And he said, 'I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry." ' 20 But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' 21 So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.*
- People are willing to sin to get wealth. Stealing wages, defrauding people, using power and influence to gain worldly status.
- This is opposed to the life of a Christian. We rely on God, love God more than the world and our neighbor as ourselves.