



NO LIMITS
WITH PASTOR DELMAN



S E R M O N G U I D E

Stop Cheating On God

James 4:1-8

INTRODUCTION

NOTES

Spiritual infidelity is rooted in the idea that God is a God of exclusivity. He is not spiritually polyamorous. He does not allow us to love other idols or gods other than Him. He wants our time, our attention, and our devotion. The moment we got saved, we entered into an exclusive monogamous relationship with God; a God who is going to be faithful to us, and wants us to be faithful to Him in return. We are to no longer seek our will, we're to seek His will. We no longer prioritize our wants, our ways, and our wishes, we prioritize His. Unfortunately, we often fail as we try to live this out and instead end up "cheating on God." So today, we're going to look at how we can be more faithful to Jesus and flee from any temptations of spiritual infidelity that come our way.

KEY POINTS

1. Address The Conflict Within Yourself

Oftentimes, we don't realize we're being seduced by the world and being unfaithful to God until it's too late. Hebrews 2:1 says, *"Therefore we must pay greater attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away."* We get away from God slowly. It's gradual. It's subtle. We start off on fire for God, but over time, the cares of the world set in, disappointments happen, and the enemy begins to offer us things that lead us to put Jesus on the back burner. And before you know it, you're cheating on God.

The issue isn't that you don't love God. It's just that the world is your mistress. And so, what James does in today's key passage is that he teases out and helps us to understand what happens when we make the world our mistress. And you know this is the case when there is a war that is raging within.

He says in verse 1, *"Those conflicts and disputes among you, where do they come from? Do they not come from your cravings that are at war within you?"* The Greek word, translated "cravings" is the word "hedones." It's where we get the English word "hedonism." It refers to one's appetites and lusts, one's passions and pleasures. James says there are people in the church who are cheating on God because they are in an inner battle, an inner conflict, or an inner war with certain dysfunctional, disjointed, and disorderly urges that are controlling their lives.

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As I said before, I don't get the sense that they don't love God, but they wrestle with bringing into subjection the lust of the eyes and the desires of the flesh. James calls it a war, a fight, or a struggle within, and this battle within causes them to put God on the back burner. This is the inner conflict we must address if we're going to stop cheating on God.

2. Address The Conflict Among Yourselves

James goes on to describe a range of things that result from the inner conflict that people have within themselves. The point he makes in verses 2-3 is that what going on in them is now affecting what going on around them. Because they haven't managed the struggles in their flesh, their mind, and their hearts, they are making poor choices, engaging in unhealthy behaviors, and dealing with toxic people.

If you don't take care of the relationship with yourself, it will impact your relationships with others. When you are dysregulated within yourself, when you are not walking in the will and plan of God for your life, it will cause you to lash out at people around you. If you have low self-esteem and don't think much of yourself, it will cause you to try and bring those around you down. James is pointing out that hurt people end up hurting other people. Those who are broken end up creating brokenness for others. Therefore we have to address the conflict within us so that we can address the conflict around us.

3. Accept God's Grace

The good news of the text is that there's grace for the one who has cheated on God. If you have ever lied, cheated, stolen, hurt, abused yourself, transgressed, fallen, or sinned, you can come back to God. James tells them here that there are four things they can do to restore and reconcile their relationship with God. They're listed in verses 7-8, *"Submit yourselves therefore 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."*

God says it doesn't matter what you have done, you can come back. All you've got to do is submit to God, resist the enemy, return spiritually to where you were, cleanse your hands, and purify your heart. You may have drifted from God, but the good news is that God is willing to take you back.

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Has there ever been a time when you've cheated on God? What was the outcome of that situation?
2. When was a time your unaddressed inner conflict led to conflict in your relationships?
3. Which of the four steps James gives in verses 7-8 do you want to start implementing this week in your walk with Jesus?
