

James

Part 7

James 4 NIV

1 What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? **2** You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. **3** When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

- Chapter 4 seems to be a continues theme from Chapter 3 where James says...

James 3:16

“For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.”

- As mentioned last week envy and selfish ambition is obvious in:

The world

In Politics

In Business

But it can also happen among Christian

Even in the Church

- Here James speaks directly to this concern in the early Church.

Vs. 1 “What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you?”

NKJV - “Where do wars and fights come from among you?”

“He does not mean that they war within a man – but that they set men warring against each other.” (Barclay)

Vs. 2

You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God.

Reminds me of the saying:

“You can take the dog out of the fight but you can’t take the fight out of the dog.”

- This tells us that even in the early church, as highly esteemed as they were, there were still areas in them that were unredeemed. They still acted like the world and James is determined to see this come under the Lordship of Jesus.

“The source of fights and quarrels among Christians is always the same. There is some root of carnality, within the believer regarding the lusts of the flesh. No two believers who are both walking in the Spirit of God towards each other can live with fights and quarrels among themselves.” (Guzik)

- James speaks clearly about these things to establish a new understanding...
- There is a new way...
- It’s not in strife, by coveting and envy, but by coming to the Lord...

2b “You do not have because you do not ask God.”

- I heard a quote the other day that went something like this *“If God did not intend to answer our prayers, he would not bid us to come and pray.”*
- What if the one thing needed for provision and breakthrough, transformation and God’s intervention is for believers to simply ask God in prayer.
- **Ask yourself this question:** Why is it that prayer seems difficult. Almost as if something is pushing back against us to prevent us from asking

God. Prayer doesn't require special gifting or faith. The only thing required is that we come to God in prayer asking, seeking and knocking.

"If you may have everything by asking, and nothing without asking, I beg you to see how absolutely vital prayer is, and I beseech you to abound in it... Do you know, brothers, what great things are to be had for the asking? Have you ever thought of it? Does it not stimulate you to pray fervently? All heaven lies before the grasp of the asking man; all the promises of God are rich and inexhaustible, and their fulfillment is to be had by prayer."

(Spurgeon)

Vs. 3

When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

- One thing is true about prayer; it has a way of sorting out the heart. If at first the motive is pointed the wrong way, time with God in prayer will point the heart back the way it should go.
- James says, there are some who ask but do not receive because they ask with wrong motives. I don't believe he's saying that every unanswered or delayed prayer comes from a wrong motive. But it's good to be reminded that our motives are important when we come to God in prayer.

"We must remember that the purpose of prayer is not to persuade a reluctant God to do our bidding. The purpose of prayer is to align our will with His, and in partnership with Him, to ask Him to accomplish His will on this earth." **(Guzik)**

The greatest example of prayer comes from the Lord.

Matthew 6

5 "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. **6** But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your

Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. **7** And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. **8** Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

9 “This, then, is how you should pray:

“Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,

10

your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

11

Give us today our daily bread.

12

And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

13

And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.

Vs. 4-5

4 You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. **5** Or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us?

- James a Jewish man, is speaking to other Jewish believers in a familiar way from (Jeremiah, Ezekiel & Hosea). This kind of rebuke was often used in the Old Testament when the God rebuked the Children of Israel of going astray.

- The term adulterous is a strong analogy. One that carries with it the expression of one person in a marriage covenant wondering off unfaithfully.
- For anyone who has experienced betrayal in a relationship they know what this feels like. They can relate well to God's heart, when he is faithful to his people only to find them unfaithful back.

Vs. 4

...don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.

- There is a sense here in what God is saying; that we cannot love God and love the world at the same time... We cannot be devoted to God and devoted to this world... The two are opposite and opposed... God sees loving the world as betrayal to him...
- If you are a new Christian or you've never read this verse it can come as a shocker. That's ok and part of us understand we really are called to be separate from this world.
- James recognizes that we cannot both be friends of this world system that is rebellious to God, and friends of God at the same time.
- James is not calling believers to be unfriendly to people in this world. The Apostle Paul makes it clear (**1 Cor. 5:9,10**), while we are alive in this world we will associate with people in this world, otherwise we would have to leave this world. Thus the old saying "We are in this world, but not of it."
- But in regard to our spiritual rebirth, new nature and devotion to Christ; we are different.

- Scripture outlines the difference between Christ Nature and the Spirit of the World as opposites and enmity with each other. This is important for every Christian to understand.

The Apostle Paul said in

Romans 8 NIV

5 Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. **6** The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. **7** The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.

John 15:19

If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.

John 17:16 - Jesus praying for the disciples

They are not of the world, even as I am not of it.

Vs. 5

Or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us?

- This phrase is a little hard to grasp. It's either God jealously yearning for our spirit which He put within us, or he jealously longs for the full devotion of the Holy Spirit within us... Either way, he jealously longs for us.
- This is the heart of the faithful person in a marriage relationship. God longs for the same kind of close, whole heart commitment that he gives to us. Here God uses the same language for the Church as he

did with Israel in Exodus 20:5 *"You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God"*.

"He went so far as to speak of them as adulterers and adulteresses; and then adopting a gentler, pleading tone, he says, 'You are grieving the Holy Spirit who has come to dwell within you, who yearns with a jealous envy to possess your entire nature for Himself.'" (Meyer)

- It is fitting that the Church is likened unto a Bride. The groom longs for the bride and the bride ought to long for the groom.
- As the Bride of Christ we should be fully devoted. Hopeful of his coming. Anticipating Him more than anything else in this world. If this world has more of our heart and affection than Christ, something is wrong. We like the 5 wise virgins of Matthew 25 should be waiting and anticipating his coming.

Vs. 6

But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says:

"God opposes the proud
but shows favor to the humble."

"He gives us more grace."

Over the fighting and quarrels

Over the desires that battle within us

Over the asking with wrong selfish motives

Over the unfaithful adulterous heart

- The same Holy Spirit that convicts us of compromise, will also grant us more grace.

Vs. 6b

“God opposes the proud
but shows favor (**gives grace**) to the humble.”

This is the major hinge verses to this difficult part of James.

- When you read through James you might wonder why is he so severe? It's because James knows the severity of God towards the proud. But with humility there is Mercy. Without humility there is opposition from God.
- The word **Opposes** used here doesn't mean avoid, it means “To resist, to range in battle against”. Think of how different that is from **Favor** or **Grace**?
- When Christians walk in pride, God doesn't just avoid them, he sets himself in battle against them. While the opposite is true for those who humble themselves.
- For those who humble themselves, he shows favor and gives grace. The word used here for Favor/Grace means: That which affords joy, pleasure, delight. Good will, loving-kindness.
- In other words those who are proud become the enemy of God and those who humble themselves become his Allies. It's the difference between being an Enemy of God and an Ally with God.

It isn't as if our humility earns the grace of God. Humility merely puts us in a position to receive the gift He freely gives. (Guzik)

Closing:

God resists the proud
But Gives Grace to the Humble

Even as I was writing this message it caused me to check my own heart. Is there anything in me that is unyielded to God. Anything I have failed to surrender to him and say Lord all of me belongs to you.

There is an old saying that goes like this: “If he is not Lord of all, He’s not Lord at all.”

If God resists the proud but gives Grace to the Humble. How should we approach God and one another?