

## **Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.**

**Sunday June 23, 2019. "James: A Practical Guide for Life. Life"**

### **I. Intro.**

Welcome to the weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work thru from the message this past Sunday. Whether you were able to attend the worship service or not, this devotional is free-standing and you can still use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk. Take as long as you need to dive into this material and feel free to share it.

### **II. Theme and recap.**

We're in the fourth Sunday of our series in James. A letter written to churches all over the eastern Roman empire to help them deal with the issues of the day. And just generally great advice about how to be better at life. The purpose was to help **grow a completeness in it's readers**, and to help **bring the Kingdom of Heaven Jesus said he came to establish.**

So far we've covered how suffering and pain can mold and grow this well formed maturity within us, how the world subverts the order of caring for others, and we are to be like Jesus and intentionally move to the margins and care for "the least of these", and to watch how we use our words. Not so much cursing and gossip, which is how the church often misses the importance of relationships, but we are not to use words that dehumanize or damage the dignity of others.

James is a straight forward letter, that doesn't pull any punches in the issues it addresses. And this Sunday was no different. After all of those specific teachings, and some we haven't covered, James states that most of these come from deep inner, what he called "*evil motives*" that drive our behavior and decisions.

### **III Scripture.**

So before we dive into the material, read chapter 4, again it will just take a few minutes, and then we'll talk about this inner life. You may want to read a couple of different translations because of the different ways some of the words were used to describe what's going on inside of us.

As usual.

**What jumped out to you about this passage?**

**What specific things do you believe this passage was saying about where our actions and behaviors come from?**

Where does all the strife, conflict, fighting, hatred, prejudice, judgmentalness, racism, injustice, come from? James seems to say; "*Evil desires at war within you*". "*Your judgments are guided by evil motives*".

Kal said Sunday there are two primary inner places our behavior and decisions come from. First, from our appetites or drives. Second, from our desires and cravings. And this is how it was broken down.

## **1. APPETITES/DRIVES.**

An appetite or drive is a God-given natural drive within us that keeps us alive. It's that inner force powered by biological/psychological needs. Foundational physical, emotional, mental, spiritual needs. Basic needs like; food, sex, water, air, shelter. And then higher order needs like; safety, security, belonging, meaning, purpose, love, etc. They're built into our operating system. Our body is full of natural appetites, normal God-given drives, that if not controlled and we're not aware of them, can overpower, a weak mind and underdeveloped will. And our bodies can become toxic, (bad habits, laziness, lack of self-awareness), because we become enslaved to just feeding its natural drives, rather than being aware of what those basic needs and drives are.

## **2. DESIRES/CRAVINGS.**

And if we aren't aware of our appetites, drives, those basic needs planted within us, when we unconsciously feed them we grow these powerful urges called; desires and cravings. Desire/cravings are an emotionally powered want or wish for something to happen. **Appetites/drives are needs, desires/cravings are wants.**

So if your life is continually lived unaware, (not knowing what's going on deep within you), and unrestrained, (since you don't know you're not trying to manage them), trying to satisfy the increasing appetite of your body, then pretty soon your physical, (basic & higher), needs are what will drive your will and your mind. And you will be so consumed about yours, your own, and what you deserve, or have earned, that you will grow this lack of caring about others.

Deep down inside of each of us we have appetites, drives, desires, cravings, that subconsciously influence, and direct our thoughts, beliefs, values, and actions. We have to be aware of those rivers of inner appetites and drives and how we're controlled by them.

**Think about a time you let an appetite, drive get out of control and you began to have to feed a desire or craving. What was it like?**

**How did you have to regain control?**

Kal then shared that the passage taught a very practical approach to strengthening our inner world. This is found in verses 7-10 of chapter 4.

The practices mentioned by James help us grow a stronger, richer inner life were.

**1. Practice humility.** Most quarrels and fights are born out of pride. I earned this, I deserve this, I have to protect mine from others. Humility helps us grow the ability to avoid these.

**2. Stay away, resist, those areas that you're weak.** If you can't control certain areas of your behavior, then avoid those situations. Or keep the cookies and chips out of the house.

**3. Come close to God.** Develop practices to just 'be' with God. Sense his presence every moment.

**4. Develop an intentional process of taking care of your inner life.** A regular ritual of rooting out weak areas, where you can be tempted and constantly keeping it clean.

## **IV Challenge.**

Peace starts with these above practices. **Where could you give some extra attention to each?**