

James 4:1-10 Be Slow to Anger

This you know my beloved brethren. But let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak and *slow to anger*. James 1:19

Chapter 4 begins the third theme of James which deals with anger.

In verses 1-5 we see that the cause of anger is worldliness.

In verses 6-10 we see the cure for anger is humility.

1:19 states, “...*the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of god.*” James now picks up on this theme and points out the source of quarrels and conflicts.

Verse 1

Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members?

Not all pleasure is seen as evil. Note 1 Timothy 6:17 where God supplies us with good things to enjoy. Pleasure is here used to describe their selfish desires mentioned in chapter 3. James is thinking of the inner conflict that Paul describes in Romans 7:15-24 and Galatians 5:16-26

Verse 2

You lust...so you commit murder – Not literal murder but in the sense of 1 John 3:15

You are envious...so you fight and quarrel – The consequences of their inner selfishness was being displayed in the church.

You do not have because you do not ask – They were depending on their self righteousness instead of turning to God to meet their needs.

“People who are at war with themselves because of selfish desires are always unhappy people. They never enjoy life. Instead of being thankful for the blessings they do have, they complain about the blessings they do not have. They cannot get along with other people because they are always envying others for what they have and do. They are always looking for that “magic something” that will change their lives, when the real problem is within their own hearts.” (Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*)

Verse 3

When they did pray it was with wrong motives. Prayer is never for the purpose of meeting selfish needs.

Verse 4

You adulteresses – Not literally but spiritually, as friendship with the world is infidelity to God. James is thinking of the world system and insists, as does John in 1 John 2:15-17, that you can not have allegiance to God and the world at the same time.

Verse 5

Scripture is clear that God is jealous for righteousness in His people (Exodus 20:5, 24:14, Zechariah 8:2). The meaning here is that God’s Spirit within us is jealous for us to pursue holiness. Pursuit of the world grieves and quenches the Spirit (Ephesians 4:30, 1 Thessalonians 5:19).

Verse 6

God never runs out of grace therefore they should position themselves to receive it by heeding Proverbs 3:34.

Verse 7

As strong as Satan is, he is not invincible. If we are committed to God and the authority of His Word and rely on the Spirit who indwells us, we can expect Satan to flee.

Verses 8-9

Draw near to God... - Confession (1 John 1:9) is the first step to restoring our relationship with God but it does not stop there. We must take an honest look at our sin. When we do it is not a laughing matter. A glib and superficial repentance of sins makes the repetition of the same offenses much more likely.

Verse 10

God hates the sin of pride (Proverbs 16:5) and will chasten the proud believer. However, when we humble ourselves we are then in the proper position for God’s blessings.