

JAMES

James 4:1-12

Theme: ▶ **Worldly Conflict vs Godly Devotion**

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1 What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?

- James is correcting the leaders, teachers and members of the church who are causing dissension through their passions (lust) for worldly possessions and desires.
- “your passions” refers to our self-centered desires or pleasures.

2 You 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.

- Covetousness leads to war, infighting, and even murder in the church. (1John 3:15)
- Christians should ask God for what they seek rather than fighting with each other. (Matt. 7:7)
- The lack of a prayer life can result in failure to receive many of God’s blessings.

Q: All prayers will not be answered.

- God answers prayers that exalts His will, His ways and His glory.
- When you spend time in prayer, God’s desires become your desires, His will becomes your will. (Matt. 6:33) (Phil. 4:19) (Psalm 37:4)

3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.

- Not all prayers are pleasing to God, only those consistent with his will.
- If we want our prayers to be answered we need to pray for God’s will to be done. (1John 5:14-15)
- Christians are not to pray only to gratify self-centered passions and pleasures.
- Passions that are self-centered are wrong, passions that are God glorifying are right. (John 5:19) (1 Cor. 10:31) (Psalm 16:11)

Q: How are we to pray? (Matt. 6:5-13 **read**) ◀

4 You 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.

- Israel’s unfaithfulness to God was often referred to as “adulterous” in the Old Testament.
- Forgetting God and placing people or things in higher esteem than Him is spiritual adultery.
- When we put our own desires before God’s desire we become enemies of God. (Matt. 6:24)
- Do not love the world or the things in the world. (1 John 2:15)

5 Or 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”?

- God is jealous for the affections of mankind. (Exodus 34:14)
- God created mankind with a “spirit”. (Genesis 2:7^{KJV})
- God desires that our spirits worship Him. (John 4:23-24)

6 But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

- God resists and sends judgement on the proud because they are God’s enemies. (Proverbs 16:5)
- The world tells us to have confidence in yourself, God tells us to trust in Him.
- Grace is the undeserved favor of God.
- God gives more grace to the humble.

7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

- The only way to resist the devil is by submitting and drawing near to God. (1 Cor. 10:13)
- Jesus submitted to the Father, was led by the Spirit and resisted the devil by the power of God’s word. (John 6:38) (Luke 4:1) (Luke 4:3-13)

8 Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.

- Cleanse and purify are OT terms for ritual purity and moral purity from sin.
 - Laughter shows how casually James readers were treating their sin.
 - The only proper reaction to God's judgement is to "be wretched and mourn and weep".
- Q: Why would God want us to repent and turn our joy to gloom?(Matt. 5:4, Matt. 5:8) (Hab. 3:18)

10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

- Putting selfish desires first is the root of all relational problem.
- God will not exalt people that exalt themselves.
- God exalts those who humbly exalt Him.

11 Do 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. 12 There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?

- Slander of others is the result of arrogant boasting, jealousy, self-centered desires and pride.
- Christians are to live by the "royal law" Q: What is the "royal law"? (Matt. 22:37-39)
- Jesus is Savior, King and Judge over everyone and everything. (heaven, hell and earth) (John 5:22) (Rev. 14:10) (Rev. 20:10)

- » Humbly putting God and others first will bring peace into our relationships.
- » God's kingdom ways are infinitely valuable and prosperous. (Matt. 6:33) (Matt. 13:44 read) ◀
- » God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him.
- » Devotion and relationship with God is eternally and infinitely satisfying.

GROUP READING

1John 3:15- Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

Matt. 7:7- "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

Matt. 6:33 - But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Phil. 4:19 - And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

Psalms 37:4 - Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.

John 5:19 - So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise".

1 Cor. 10:31- So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

Psalms 16:11- You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Matt. 6:24 - "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money".

1 John 2:15 - Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

John 4:23-24 - "But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. 24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

1 Cor. 10:13 - No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

John 6:38 - For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.

Luke 4:1 - And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness

Hab. 3:18 - Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, 18 yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation.

John 5:22 - The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son,

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James 4:13-17

Theme: ▶ **My Will vs God's Will**

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13 Come 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”

- James is addressing wealthy Christian merchants or businesspeople.
- This sounds like good business sense, but it masks a secular worldview that ignores God's will.

14 yet 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.

- Life is uncertain. (we are not guaranteed our next breath)
- Our lives should not be lived autonomous or independent from God.
- Our relationship with God affects everything we do.

Q: Who brings tomorrow? (Heb. 1:3) (Jer. 29:11)

- These people think they control tomorrow but fail to recognize that God's is in control. (Prov. 19:21)
- God is sovereign, we are not. (Ps. 115:3) (Eph. 1:11)
- God rules and reigns over all people, all things at all times. (Ps. 103:19) (1 Chron. 29:11-12)

Q: What is your life? (1 Cor. 6:19-20) (Rom. 12:1-2)

- Life is a gift from God. (Exod. 20:11) (Rom. 6:23)
- Do not forget the temporary nature of life, which can fade away at any moment.
- Life is short and Christians should press urgently to show the glory of God in their lives. (Phil. 3:14)

15 Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.”

- “the Lord” is referring to Yahweh as the Creator who sustains the universe and whose will controls all that happens. (Heb. 1:3) (Col. 1:15-17)
- James is echoing Jesus' call to His followers in Matt. 6:19–34 to choose their master, either wealth or God, and to choose their outlook on life, either worry or faith.
- Christians are not to worry about tomorrow, but are to humbly live full of faith and trust in God for all their needs to be met in the future. (Matt. 6:34) (Phil. 4:19) (Matt. 6:33)

Q: How do we live in the will of the Lord?

1) Immerse yourself in the written Word of God; saturate your heart and mind with it. (Rom. 12:1-2) (Ps. 119:105) (2 Cor. 5:17)

2) Pray that the Holy Spirit would lead and guide you and make you so new that the overflow of your heart would be the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God. (Luke 6:45) (John 16:13) (Ps. 25:4-5)

3) By the power of the Holy Spirit, God makes you a new creation, transforms your mind and guides your life with His word in order that your life will bring forth “spiritual worship”.

16 As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.

- Planning and investing are not wrong, but arrogant self-confidence and boasting are.
- When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with the humble is wisdom. - Prov. 11:2
- “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” - James 4:6 (Prov. 3:34)
- Everyone who is arrogant in heart is an abomination to the Lord; be assured, he will not go unpunished. - Prov. 16:5

17 So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.

- It is not only what people do that matters; the good that they fail to do is equally important to God.
- A Sin of Omission is failure to do what one can and must do.
- A Sin of Commission is to know something is wrong and do it anyway.

- Q: What are your priorities?**
Q: Have you lived a wasted life or a productive life?
Q: Does God's will come first?

- » Life is short and Christians should press urgently to show the glory of God in their lives. (Phil. 3:14)
- » Our goal in living should be to make our life "spiritual worship". Romans 12:1-2
- » God's will overrules my will and I trust that His will for my life is glorious for Him and good for me.
- » "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind" (Deuteronomy 6:5) (Luke 10:27) (Matthew 22:37) (Mark 12:30-31)

GROUP READING

Hebrews 1:3 // He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature, and He upholds the universe by the word of His power. After making purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

Jeremiah 29:11 // For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

Proverbs 19:21 // Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand.

Psalms 115:3 // Our God is in the heavens; He does all that He pleases.

Ephesians 1:11 // In Him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,

Psalms 103:19 // The Lord has established His throne in the heavens, and His kingdom rules over all.

1 Chronicles 29:11-12 // 11 Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head above all. 12 Both riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might, and in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 // 19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, 20 for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

Romans 12:1-2 // 12 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. 2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Philippians 3:14 // I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Colossians 1:15-17 // 15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. 17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Matthew 6:33 // **But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.**

Psalms 119:105 // Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

2 Corinthians 5:17 // Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

Psalms 25:4-5 // 4 Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths. 5 Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long.