

“The Letter of James: Worldliness”

James 4:1-12

Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. (Isaiah 45:22)

3 Lessons about Worldliness and the Grace of Christ

- Beware of friendship with the world, which is enmity with God.
 - The greatest (earthly) problem you have is you.

Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? ⁴ Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye? ⁵ You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye. (Matthew 7:3-5)

- We fight and quarrel because of desires denied.
- The root of all this is affection for the world instead of God.
- Application...

- See the futility and frustration of worldly living.
- Pay careful attention to the text and to your life.

Thankfulness is a soil in which pride does not easily grow. (John Calvin)

- Know that the antidote for dissatisfaction and discontent isn't more of the world but more of God.

If we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased. (C. S. Lewis)

O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where

there is no water. ² So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory. ³ Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you. ⁴ So I will bless you as long as I live; in your name I will lift up my hands. (Psalm 63:1-4)

- Be stunned at the offer of friendship with God, which is pure grace and mercy.
 - Notice one great command—humble yourself.

- Resist the devil.

There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors and hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight. (C.S. Lewis)

- Draw near to God.

One of the things the Puritans would pray for is tears. They would pray to be grieved by their sins. When they felt like the weight of their rebellion against God wasn't falling on their hearts, they would literally stop and they would pray and ask God to help them mourn about their own sin. I've never met anybody who prayed, "God, I just pray you would crush me completely. I just have not seen my sin for what it really is, so will you just turn me into a heaping, sobbing mess of regret?"

No. We want happy and chipper and someone to tell me how awesome things are. Yet it's in the dirt, being fully busted and fully understanding what's now at stake, through tears that the grace of God sends us into the orbit of joy. (Matt Chandler)

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. (Matthew 5:4)

- Notice one great word—"grace."
- Be a channel of grace and mercy to others, which is reasonable for those who've found the grace and mercy of Christ.

Judging others makes us blind, whereas love is illuminating. By judging others we blind ourselves to our own evil and to the grace which others are just as entitled to as we are. (Dietrich Bonhoeffer)